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Perceptions of Instructional Faculty Regarding Their Professional Development Program

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This is to certify that the doctoral study by

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has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

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Walden University
2024

Abstract

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MA, Caribbean University, 2013

BS, University of Puerto Rico, 1997

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Final Study

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

The problem addressed through this study is the lack of understanding of the instructional faculty members' perspectives at southeastern university (SEU, pseudonym) on the strengths and professional activities for improvement of professional development program. The purpose of this study was to investigate how instructional faculty members at SEU perceive the strengths and opportunities for improvement of the professional development program. The conceptual framework for this program evaluation design study was based on Andragogy Theory. Fifteen instructional faculty members who participated in professional development activities and teach at least one course per year at SEU were interviewed. NVivo was used for coding process. The results showed recommendations about changes needed in the faculty development program and its offerings at the university. Faculty member found the professional development beneficial but need more efficient technology use. These results contributed positively to implementing new or improved professional development programs for SEU and universities where faculty development is or will become a priority. This study promoted positive social change by providing data for faculty professional development culture to improve teaching practice, professional goals, and skills to build institutional identity at SEU and any higher education institution.

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Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Faculty professional development programs are essential in higher education to promote each organizational component's development within an educational and practical approach (Salajeghe et al., 2021). Institutional development programs serve as tools for role stability in teaching, research, practice, and service (Ginsburg et al., 2020). Researchers have shown faculty participation in adequately constructed, developed, and implemented professional development programs elevate practical competencies, positively impact teaching and learning environments, and increase teacher retention, productivity, and promotion (Jeppesen & Joyce, 2018; Nkana, 2020; Sotto-Santiago et al., 2019). Higher education universities with successful professional development programs maintain quality academic experiences for faculty and students (Muammar & Alkathiri, 2021).

Problem Statement

The problem to be addressed through this study is a lack of understanding of the the instructional faculty members' perspectives at southeastern university (SEU, pseudonym) on the strengths and professional activities for improvement of professional development program. The Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) annually surveys to obtain faculty input on the professional development they have received during the current year. In 2021, 76% of SEU faculty members declared that they occasionally or never used the resources offered by TLC because of their relationship to their teaching and learning needs. After the survey analysis, the vice counselor of Teaching and Learning (2021), reiterated several points in a statement including future changes in

professional development activities such as the evaluation process of training activities or workshops and the development program in general. SEU administrators (2022) considered that the professional development program for the faculty needed changes since it did not maintain an adequate evaluation process and did not show a follow-up process concerning the needs of the faculty and the topics offered to them during the year in professional development activities. In addition, SEU administrators considered that the topics selected during that year did not meet the needs of the faculty based on the analysis of the survey for that year.

By the end of 2021, the SEU university administrator highlighted the development and professional growth of the instructional members of the faculty as a priority (December, 2021). Recently, during a meeting of the Teaching and Learning Center coordinators from SEU, the vice counselor of TLC demonstrated the positive relationship between professional development and improvement in teaching practices (Nkana, 2020; Stabile, 2021). In 2022, the pattern continued to be the same; an increase of 9% confirmed that the faculty did not use the resources offered by TLC in SEU. One faculty member argued in the 2022 survey that he would like to see an increase in up-to-date higher education professional development opportunities at SEU (TLC, 2022).

The university does not have a development program based on the faculty's needs, as demonstrated in the last two years in the survey carried out by TLC. Each year, each full-time faculty member must submit the Faculty Development Annual Plan. The document seeks evidence of those professional development activities the faculty attended during the year. The professional development activities listed in the plan are

related to professional development offered at SEU, outside events, or community service. The faculty member fills out the plan and submits it at the beginning of each year with expectations regarding their professional development. At the beginning of the year, the faculty member indicates which professional development events they will attend. At the end of the year, the faculty member reviews the plan, edits it according to what happened in the year, and submits it again. The only evidence is attendance at professional development activities, as captured through a manual attendance sheet. There is currently no evaluation at the end of each training, workshop, or professional development event.

Several questions could be identified to evaluate the faculty's professional development process. How are professional development events selected? Are the professional development activities aligned with the needs of the faculty? Is there any mechanism to measure these professional development events in the classroom or the teacher's performance? The evaluation is based on satisfaction surveys that do not provide much information. And the other evaluative method in practice is the evaluation of the course (EOC), where the student evaluates the teacher in various aspects through a survey. For example, on a scale of 0-5, the student rates the instructor's frequency of use of the syllabus in the course. This item is one of those that present the lowest score in most cases. Once the student completes the course evaluation, the associate dean sends the instructor a summary (average percentage of each item). Follow-up is only offered to those instructors who have obtained a score below 4 points. Therefore, the study project intends to examine faculty members' perceptions about their professional development

and offer alternatives to increase the strengths and reduce the weaknesses of their professional development program at SEU.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study is to investigate how instructional faculty members at SEU perceive the strengths and opportunities for improvement of the professional development program. The data may provide the necessary insights to make recommendations about changes needed in the faculty development program and its offerings at the university.

Some researchers in recent years have made recommendations in specific areas for improving instructional faculty professional development programs. One of these studies was by Kumar (2018), who showed that professional development programs are influenced by the needs of the faculty and maintain a close relationship with the context of teaching and learning activities. In another study, Doran (2019) demonstrated how the faculty members' experiences in professional development programs increase the quality of teaching, help maintain high pass rates, and help develop meaningful learning experiences in students. The professional development program at SEU does not have the structure to measure the effectiveness of the development activities or events in which the faculty participates annually. If the instructor finishes his course with a score close to 3.5 points in the course evaluation, then the Program Director holds a one-to-one meeting to see how they could help the instructor improve their teaching strategies. However, this process happened one or two months after the evaluation.

University institutions must go beyond putting the recommendations of previous studies into practice. It is necessary to prioritize the development of the faculty. Jacob et al. (2019) recommended the need to continue studies on the effectiveness and adequacy of faculty professional development and "prioritize faculty professional development as one of the most significant objectives in their development strategies" to improve the learning experience of students (p. 802). Therefore, my study seeks to investigate the opportunities for improvement of the professional development program from the perspectives of instructional faculty members at SEU.

Research Questions

This study is focused on two main research questions to address a program evaluation study design. The data may allow the researcher to make recommendations about needs in the faculty development program at the university.

RQ1: What are instructional faculty members' perceptions about the strengths of professional faculty development offerings and program at SEU?

RQ2: What are instructional faculty members' recommendations about how to improve the faculty development offerings and program at SEU?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this program evaluation study design will be based on andragogy theory. The conceptual framework selection was based on study importance, the relationship between participants and what was studied, and the interpretation of the findings generated by the qualitative data analysis (Burkholder et al., 2020). A theoretical framework is focused on generating new theories or testing existing

ones, fundamentals that are not aligned with the purpose of this study (Burkholder et al., 2020). The sources for this study, based on the conceptual framework, come from the participants' experience, evidence based on literature, and an integral theoretical component (Burkholder et al., 2020).

This study identifies instructional faculty members as adult learners. Knowles's theory of andragogy (1973) is based on six assumptions to explain adult learning for faculty development curricula (Pate, 2018). The andragogy theory assumptions are (1) the need to know, (2) the learner's self-concept, (3) the role of experience, (4) readiness to learn, (5) orientation to learning, and (6) motivation (Knowles et al., 2015). Knowles's assumptions will apply to instructional faculty members as adult learners in their professional development activities. This study will rely on the conceptual framework based on all six of Knowles's assumptions (instructional faculty members as adult learners) to explore how instructional faculty members are supported to implement instructional strategies to engage students in the classroom. The application of Knowles's theory serves as a guide for developing professional development programs to support and implement instructional strategies.

Definition of Terms

Andragogy: Teaching approach based on the how self-directed adults learn (Center for Online Learning, Research, and Service, 2022).

Instructional faculty member: Each member that offers classes in higher education at the undergraduate or graduate level (SACSCOC, 2018).

Professional development program: Organized and structured series of formal or informal activities, workshops, and training within a particular time frame for faculty to support their development (Ambarsarie et al., 2019).

Scope and Delimitations

The faculty professional development program is the best way to support faculty and help them to improve student outcomes (Harrington, 2020). In the studies from Harrington (2020) and Watson (2019), faculty have not typically received formal training on how students learn and how to increase their knowledge of evidence-based teaching methods and strategies (Harrington, 2020; Watson, 2019). SEU full-time faculty members only participate in the professional development plan on an annual basis. Part-time faculty members are not included in this process, although they may voluntarily participate in training or faculty meetings. However, the part-time instructor is evaluated in the same way as the full-time instructor using the evaluation of the course survey. Still, the follow-up offered to the full-time instructor is not as robust since they teach the course and do not necessarily recur every semester. Likewise, the dean makes classroom observations once a year that are discussed with the teacher, documented in a specific form, and a signed copy is filed in their records. However, follow-up is not necessarily given in all cases. This is why SEU faculty and administrators understand that improvements are needed in the professional development plan for both full-time and part-time instructors.

In my study, I seek to develop a professional development program model to support teaching faculty and their needs in academic subjects and offer suggestions on

PD program evaluation. When faculty use evidence-based teaching practices aligned with student learning outcomes, they can be experts in their disciples and the scholarship of teaching and learning (Harrington, 2020). The PD model will include a robust and structured approach to building housed professional development programs to promote higher levels of teaching and learning practices. The findings of this study can support institutional faculty members at other private universities such as SEU. This study will promote positive social change by providing faculty professional development culture to improve their teaching practice, professional goals, and skills to build their institutional identity.

However, university administrators may not find the expected results in my study. In this case, a factor to consider in future studies could be the increase in the number of participants. The most important thing is the relevance of the study. Based on the literature presented above, faculty professional development is an essential part of the university's culture and has been shown to have a positive social impact over the years. For this reason, I hope to contribute positively to implementing new or improved professional development programs for SEU and universities where faculty development is or will become a priority.

Limitations

All study designs have limitations, and this study is no exception. The primary limitation of this study was the scope of participants from a private university. Although I note a particular type of university, this does not create a feasibility problem in the study participants' access. However, this study project could be applicable in other public and

private universities. This study will provide recommendations on necessary changes in the faculty development program and its offerings at the university. Also, the study will pave the way for future projects and new academic trends at the higher level.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is its role in capturing the perceptions of the strengths and opportunities for improvement of a professional development program from the perspectives of instructional faculty members at SEU. This study will examine instructional faculty members' (IFM) perceptions of SEU's faculty development offerings, new workshop topics, methodologies according to delivery modalities, or change or create a robust professional development program. The problem goes beyond creating a professional development program, since existing research has determined the importance of a structured professional development program that enriches the teaching-learning skills of faculty members, increases student retention rates, positively impacts faculty evaluations, and maintains a high level of quality practices that increase student engagement (Eret-Orhan et al., 2018; Kumar, 2018; Meizlish et al., 2018; Su et al., 2018; Urban et al., 2017; Watson, 2019).

Summary

In Chapter 1, the problem and purpose of the study were defined. The problem for this project is a lack of understanding regarding the strengths and opportunities for improvement of the professional development program at SEU from the instructional faculty perspective. I noted the comprehensive conceptual framework review, and the research questions defined the study path to develop the qualitative project study. The

delimitations were explored to evaluate the study scope and support positive social change. The study's significance is in its investigation of the strengths and opportunities for improvement of the professional development program from the perspectives of instructional faculty members at SEU.

In Chapter 2, the literature review includes a review of related concepts about the history of university faculty professional development, the role of faculty in higher education, the faculty development and participation in professional development activities, and the faculty effective practices of professional development programs, along with additional details about the research framework. Chapter 3 includes the research methodology with a detailed description about the participant selection and the procedures for recruitment and data collection. Also in this chapter, I describe the instrument used to collect the data, the pilot process to validate the interview questions, and the ethical procedures. Chapter 4 includes the results of my study and how these results are aligned with the research questions. Chapter 5 presents an interpretation of these results from chapter 4. Also, this chapter includes discussion, conclusions, and recommendations based on the findings in this study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Literature Search Strategy

This study aims to investigate the perception of faculty members (adult learners) about the strengths of professional faculty development and make recommendations about how to improve the faculty development offerings and program at SEU. The sections presented in the following literature review are based on professional experiences and an understanding of previous studies related to the problem of this study. The first part helps to mark the critical aspects in higher education. The second part offers different perspectives on the faculty role and how professional development programs are closely related to these roles. The third, fourth, and fifth parts of the literature review present the relationship between the history of professional development in university institutions and the findings related to the impact of these development programs, since each faculty member is an adult learner. The last three parts showed the participation and effective practices in professional development programs and how universities build their PD in Florida's higher education system.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework clarifies aspects of the foundation of these previous studies and helps identify arguments and possible explanations within the literature (Burkholder et al., 2020). The theoretical framework is used to generate or test theories based on context. In contrast, the conceptual framework used in this study is based on professional literature and professional experiences that provide arguments that support

the purpose of the study (Burkholder et al., 2020). The conceptual framework for this program evaluation study design will be based on andragogy theory.

Knowles's Theory of Andragogy

The concept of andragogy was first described in 1833 by German educator Alexander Kapp (Henschke, 2019; Pina, 2019). In the 1970s, Knowles's theory of andragogy was founded by Malcolm Knowles, an American educator involved in areas of adult-learning education who theorized the concept in four assumptions (Roy & Halder, 2021). Knowles defined andragogy as the art and science of helping adults learn (Loeng, 2018). Knowles's theory of andragogy was oriented on four assumptions: the self-concept of the learners, the role of the learner's experience in learning, the learner's readiness to learn, and orientation towards learning. Then, Knowles added the fifth assumption, the internal motivation to learn (El-Amin, 2020; Henschke, 2019; Loeng, 2018; Mohammed et al., 2018; Roy & Halder, 2021).

Knowles (1984), as pointed out by Roy and Halder (2021), discussed how adult learning centered on these five assumptions: (1) self-concept promotes that adults learn and understand independently; (2) a learner's experiences build self-confidence; (3) readiness to learn can be used to positive educational outcomes; (4) orientation to learn within application problems during and after any learning process; and (5) motivation to learn when adults have internally motivated to learn something valuable to them. Higher education students must reorient and change their mindset from passive to active adult learners using a fundamental assumption of learning and adjusting the needs of students in higher education (Abdullah et al., 2020). Ozuah (2005) reviewed the origins of

andragogy theory and applied the theoretical assumptions in medical education universities as an appropriate educational paradigm for students and faculty members. Andragogy theory supports the self-directed approach to the learning process and the role of faculty as a facilitator in the adult education process (Chinnasamy, 2013)

Many researchers use the theory of andragogy to support their investigations of faculty professional development (Cordie & Lin, 2020; Jaramillo-Baquerizo et al., 2019; Mohr, 2020; Pate et al., 2018; Wynants & Dennis, 2018). The andragogy theory provided adult learners with characteristics and principles of adult learning in higher education based on andragogy foundational assumptions (El-Amin, 2020). In the past decade, universities have understood the need to incorporate changes within andragogical learning experiences for instructional faculty members as adult learners (El-Amin, 2020). The theory of andragogy addresses different learning styles of instructional faculty members as adult learners in practice (El-Amin, 2020). Knowles (2015), explained by Pina (2019), described the andragogy in practice model in three essential areas: identifying goals and purpose for learning, establishing the differences between content focus, and learning styles, and applying the andragogy learning assumptions.

The andragogy framework in practice demarks the instructional faculty's perceptions of adults interested in their learning with the responsibility to change and participate in their learning process (Pina, 2019). Mohr (2020) identified faculty members as learners in professional development to help them provide the best educational experiences using the theory of andragogy. Jaramillo-Baquerizo et al. (2019) conducted a qualitative study that supports the theory of andragogy, considering the faculty member

as a student or learner used the same theory perspectives. Maddalena (2015) described how the theory of andragogy applies when the faculty member is considering an individual to coach: (1) self-driven initiative to be coached; (2) coaching seeks self-awareness and acceptance; (3) coaching provides spaces to evaluate what they have learned, should change, and could learn; (4) coaching embraces new opportunities for continuous growth; and (5) coaching inspires the development of new skills.

Furthermore, Pate et al. (2018) presented a significant relation between Knowles's adult learning theory principles and participation in professional development opportunities. The role of adult learning theory in a faculty professional development program was suggested by Pate et al. (2018) as follows: (1) the faculty member participated voluntarily in nature in professional development activities (self-concept principle); (2) use their experiences as learning resources (adult learning experience principle); (3) stimulate interest to know what they learn (readiness to learn principle); (4) evaluate what is relevant and valuable (orientation to learning); and (5) determine a better way to learn (motivation to learn).

Other researchers relate the adult learning theory (andragogy approach) to the role of faculty members in higher education institutions. Cordie and Lin (2020) recognized the need to move from a traditional instructional faculty-directed approach to a more learner-centered approach within an andragogical framework to address 21st-century learning. Also, Wynants and Dennis (2018) highlighted that faculty members in higher education are hired for their expertise and are rarely given training in the andragogy approach. The actual perspective stated faculty members are excellent professionals in

the content of their fields. However, they worked in higher education institutions with minimum preparation for teaching, pedagogy, and differences in academic cultures (Alkathiri & Olson, 2019; Harrington, 2020; Muammar & Alkathiri, 2021; Wynants & Dennis, 2018). This minimum preparation is a starting point for rethinking faculty's relationship as learners in professional development and preparing professional development programs to address all these challenges.

Literature Review Related to Key Concepts

History of Universities

During the American colonial period, institutions focused on preparing men to be ministers or priests (National Center for Education Statistics, 1993; Thelin et al., 2021). The first colonial college was founded in 1636, now recognized as Harvard University (National Center for Education Statistics, 1993). After the Revolutionary War, an emphasis on faculty research arose with a considerable discussion about establishing national universities and normal schools with various academic disciplines (National Center for Education Statistics, 1993; Rutter, 2017; Thelin et al., 2021). These normal schools or national universities were designed to prepare teachers and were focused on expanding the school systems within a 2-year educational program (National Center for Education Statistics, 1993).

During the nineteenth century, the lecture-centered approach and the faculty role were more specialized, professionalized, and departmentalized (Rutter, 2017). The college and universities experienced a diverse structure during the period, including academies, normal schools, engineering institutes, liberal arts colleges, community

colleges, and regional universities (Rutter, 2017). Each institution creates a distinct identity, mission, vision, and educational strategies for their student population (Rutter, 2017).

The community college system (public and private colleges) was born after the postwar education legislation and provided courses in medicine, languages, mathematics, philosophy, and sciences (National Center for Education Statistics, 1993; Rutter, 2017). Despite few colleges, the GI Bill legislation helped more college students receive financial aid to complete their studies in higher education. In this way, the student population increased significantly, and the need arose to create more community colleges (Thelin et al., 2021). Also, this flexible financial program enabled an unprecedented number of veterans to attend colleges or universities and return to domestic military roles (Thelin et al., 2021). However, in the twentieth century, American higher education institutions are driven by critical challenges: cultural changes, new non-traditional students' population, and new educational technologies (Rutter, 2017).

The new landscape of higher education evolved into curricular expansion, the concept of a student body, and teaching methods to engage an increasingly diverse population of learners and non-traditional learners (Rutter, 2017; Thelin et al., 2021). Since their inception in the US, universities have constantly changed, which has manifested itself in various ways. However, students and faculty have always been crucial to achieving the university's goals, mission, and vision in the face of all these changes and challenges over time (Gupta et al., 2021).

Role of Faculties

The literature on the role of faculty members in higher education confirmed the faculty's influence on students' pathways during and post-college (Taylor & Haras, 2020). The faculties played an essential role in multiple dimensions during this educational and instructional period. Gupta et al. (2021) stated some of these dimensions, such as curricular, co-curricular, evaluation, administrative, managerial, research, and service. The faculty members prepare and develop competencies in students through their curricular and co-curricular learning activities to help them address the world's challenges (Gupta et al., 2021). The authors argued the faculty's role-based management and administrative functionalities help develop the institutional climate and effective functioning to achieve the institute's goals and satisfy the students' learning needs. The faculty members achieve their individuals' goals and are motivated to lead co-curricular activities, publicize the institutions' achievements, and contribute to community development activities in their programs within the managerial role (Gupta et al., 2021).

The role spectrum of faculty members aids "in assuring the quality of teaching-learning process which results in the completion of the curriculum, better result in annual and competitive examinations and admission of students in higher education programs and placement in an industry of their choice" (Gupta et al., 2021, p. 8). According to Gupta et al. (2021), the role spectrum dimensions are curricular, co-curricular, examination, administrative, managerial, and research.

1. In a curricular role, the faculty members prepare subject lesson plans, manage time during their teaching-learning process to ensure completion of the curriculum, and develop and use learning resources to enrich the learning process.
2. The creation of professional competencies activities and the participation in different awareness programs, workshops, and community development programs are roles that the faculty members play in the co-curricular role dimension.
3. In an examination role, the faculty members contribute to conducting examinations, and assessments, and declare the results with recommendations for improvement.
4. In an administrative and managerial role, the faculty members inform the student of resources related to study, submit, and discuss the progress report to develop programs and events, and contribute to the institute's achievements.
5. The faculty members introduce innovations, conduct research studies to develop a new body of knowledge, and guide other faculty members to perform new roles effectively and efficiently within a research role.

Of all the roles that faculty members play in their professional career, the most notable is that of a role model. The faculty members act as role models for students, employers, and institutes in their fields (Taylor & Haras, 2020). The authors highlighted the influence of faculty members as a model for students inside the classroom. Faculty promote substantial and beneficial student-faculty interactions, guide the students to identify their potential for career development, and help them create their professional ambitions and career aspirations (Gutpa et al., 2021; Taylor & Haras, 2020).

However, the literature also includes studies on how faculty can deliver these roles through instructional experiences in the classroom (Taylor & Haras, 2020). The authors concluded in their research that faculty felt challenged and unprepared to teach in their fields without engaged professional development. The faculty professional development value in instructional roles was studied by Heffernan and Heffernan (2018), who surveyed 109 participants and found that 10% of the participants identified professional development, mentoring programs, and career advice as valuable attributes of their roles. In this same study, the authors concluded that faculty members who do not receive the necessary support to carry out their responsibilities in their respective roles decide to leave the university; in the study, 80% of the participants agreed to have changed colleges for this reason.

To support a teaching culture, academic leaders should consider opportunities that allow faculty to experiment with new teaching practices, refine their roles on reflection, and share how career-relevant skills are embedded into the curriculum (Taylor & Haras, 2020). Until the 1980s, many campuses were creating new teaching centers to develop professional development for faculty to support the new instructional approaches (teaching culture) within the new student population (Kinzie et al., 2019). For higher education faculty members, success in their teaching roles may look like increasing confidence in their capacity and capabilities to see the value of their students' career-relevant instruction and career-ready needs (Taylor & Haras, 2020).

History of University Faculty Professional Development

Universities have adopted different educational approaches according to new paradigms and educational models over time. The growth of new educational models has been part of a process of revision of essential structural aspects of professional development programs, such as the theoretical framework used; the focus of faculty development and its role in the curriculum and organization; the integration of learning into non-traditional learners; and the expectations of the entire academic community (Ambarsarie et al.,2019). Therefore, universities have found it necessary to change the structure of professional development programs for faculty, staff, or instructional personnel, from an institutional-centered and lecture-centered approach to a diverse and student-centered approach to meet the needs of each change in higher education.

In the early 1920s, colleges such as Columbia University developed the first professional development programs for faculty (Watson, 2019). In the mid-1980s, faculty development programs were considered a priority in the university's strategic plans and private and public institutions (Jacob et al., 2019). Some of the criticisms of these staff development programs were the loss of consistency and rigor; some university disciplines did not have staff development programs (Watson, 2019). However, some of these criticisms were alleviated when the professional development programs were focused on studying how students learn (Jackson & Keys, 2019; Watson, 2019). At the end of the eighties and nineties, universities continued to be criticized for poor quality staff development, which affected their productivity, satisfaction, and performance in their courses (Alkathiri & Olson, 2018; Muammar & Alkathiri, 2021). This led universities to

focus more on developing more rigorous staff professional development programs, strategic approaches, and an evidence-based era that was about to begin (Harrington, 2020; Watson, 2019).

Beginning in the twenties, the higher education ecosystem responded to accelerated growth and developed professional development programs for faculty members focused on knowledge in their professional discipline, research, teaching, and administration skills (Dunagan et al., 2021). In the twenty-first century, university administrators directed resources to develop professional development programs for instructional faculty to address the learning, teaching, and strategies, technological, and leadership challenges (Alkathiri & Olson, 2018; Muammar & Alkathiri, 2021). Under this new paradigm, the university institutions began the professional growth of the faculty members and their development programs. Faculty professional development programs prepare instructors for their roles and careers, develop teaching skills, and adopt key teaching technologies and methodologies for higher-level institutions (Abdulghani et al., 2021; Dunagan et al., 2021; Salam & Mohamad, 2020).

This new paradigm, different teaching methodologies, and advanced technologies accelerated quickly in the United States. Jeppesen and Joyce (2018) highlighted three goals (founded by Pamela L. Eddy, 2005) that drive adaptability to all these changes in faculty professional development programs: (1) creating a culture of teaching excellence; (2) advancing new teaching initiatives; and (3) responding to faculty goals. Traditionally, university faculty members have been revered as experts in their professional fields but have had little preparation for teaching competencies such as knowledge of pedagogy and

academic cultures (Alkathiri & Olson, 2019; Harrington, 2020; Muammar & Alkathiri, 2021; Wynants & Dennis, 2018).

The field of health science education is an example of adaptability to change in professional development programs. Most health faculty instructional members used all development activities to improve their knowledge, skills, and competencies required for their roles (Salajegheh et al., 2020). Yilmaz et al. (2020) reported a positive impact of five educational strategies based on a technological approach that the health science department developed in the professional development program. The authors highlighted how the professional development program helped faculty members align their teaching methodologies with their technology routine (Yilmaz et al., 2020). Carvalho-Filho et al. (2019) highlighted the importance of teaching and learning practices in medical education. The authors of their study showed that communities of practice in professional development programs helped faculty members share their knowledge in the context and co-create solutions in applying effective practices in their area of expertise.

Faculty Development in Universities

Faculty development (FD), for decades, has been one of the keys to improving the higher education quality of U.S. universities (Desimone, 2011). However, some studies of faculty development focused mainly on faculty satisfaction, attitude change, or generic skills rather than FD's results on the teaching process, quality of university pedagogy, flexible learning paths, practices of teaching and learning, and student learning approach (Desimone, 2011; Kalman et al., 2020). Researchers agreed that faculty members do not

receive formal development in higher education (Alkathiri & Olson, 2019; Harrington, 2020; Muammar & Alkathiri, 2021; Noben et al., 2021; Wynants & Dennis, 2018).

Kalman et al. (2020) highlighted three complex FD concepts regarding the student-centered approach, scholarship of teaching, and the faculty learning communities. These three concepts are faculty practice-focused experience, teaching practice-focused, and student learning-focused. The last conception is the most complex development view as a faculty member and occurs when the FD aims at improving students' learning (Kalman et al., 2020). Pelletreau et al. (2018) supported the student learning approach to promote instructional changes and added the faculty learning communities to provide the opportunity to discuss and implement changes, reflect on their practice, and design instructional content using active-learning pedagogy. Furthermore, the framework of faculty development learning communities plays a crucial role in changing faculty approaches to teaching (Kalman et al., 2020).

However, a lack of time, rewards, motivation, and professional development initiatives impedes creating new instructional content and redesigning curriculum in their disciplines (Pelletreau et al., 2018; Weiss et al., 2021). Weiss et al. (2021) found supportive evidence about the lack of faculty development support as the main barrier (3% of the participants described such support). Moreover, Van de Poel and Verpoorten (2019) found data to support the use of MOOCs as a delivery instrument in faculty development to fix the other two major issues: cost and time. And Morales (2016) proved how faculty members need to become lifelong learners to keep abreast with their students in challenging eras through faculty preparation in the learning process. Universities

recognize that the principles of the theory of andragogy are applied in practice and adapt their approaches to their instructional faculty members in professional development events or programs (Mohammed et al., 2018).

Faculty Participation in Professional Development Activities

Challenges, new paradigms, and teaching methodologies are part of significant challenges in higher education. However, researchers have focused their studies on faculty participation in professional development activities and their perceptions regarding their professional growth. Delello et al. (2018) conducted a mixed-methods study on faculty participation in professional development activities through flexible delivery methods (i.e., virtual meetings, online workshops, open-discussions sessions, and on-demand training). The participants were faculty members from a public institution in Texas with 75-degree programs (Delello et al., 2018). The authors reported that 11.4% did not participate in professional development activities, 50.7% participated occasionally, 33.6% participated moderately, and 4.3% invested all available time in professional development activities in the study listed above. Findings indicated occasional participation in professional development activities where participants (faculty members) expressed that the challenge in participating in professional development activities was the time and funds available to pay for such activities (Pavia, 2020).

Besides limited time, the lack of research, lack of interest, faculty laziness, limited funds, and lack of institutional support are considered barriers to faculty development (Quitoras & Abuso, 2021; Roberts et al., 2019). Hammad and Al-Ani (2021) attributed the lack of research to institutional insolation and a lack of connection between the

institution and its application in practice. The lack of time emerged as a challenge to research development, participation in professional development, and academic commitments (Hammad & Al-Ani, 2021). The lack of institutional support (such as budget, time on the academic calendar, and technical support) impacts the implementation of a community of practice for faculty development (Carvalho-Filho et al., 2019). Other studies have identified other professional development-related factors related to faculty attitudes and perceptions about their professional development growth. Kezar (2019) examined a lack of opportunity to perform in faculty development product of the last-minute hiring process, a lack of stable teaching planning and preparation, and participation in departmental meetings and curriculum development workshops. Also, Salajegheh et al. (2020) found a lack of professional identity as educators to produce organizational change and a lack of teaching quality in development and innovation in teaching and learning programs. These factors, mentioned above, led other researchers to focus studies on possible solutions that would help university institutions establish robust, personalized professional development programs that are valuable in practice (Harrington, 2020; Mohr, 2020). Some of these solutions were developing programs focused on active engagement, creating professional development opportunities to produce organizational change, and creating professional development environments where the capacities of faculty members in leadership areas are strengthened (Harrington, 2020; Mohr, 2020).

Effective Practices of Professional Development Programs

The university administrators have made progress in addressing their institutional challenges by prioritizing the professional development of the faculty. However, research in recent years has focused on effectiveness and participation in professional development programs. Jeppesen and Joyce (2018) examined seven outcomes in three-year Teaching and Learning Program for instructional faculty members to develop community as a practical application of theory to practice. The results supported the perspective that faculty participation in an appropriate developmental program positively impacts classroom faculty (Jeppesen & Joyce, 2018). The authors demonstrated in their study that college teaching development programs positively impact face-to-face seminars, self-reflective discussions, and learning-centered practices.

In a similar study, Pavia (2020) concluded that the challenges to participating in professional development programs are minimized if faculty members are included in the design and planning of professional development plans. Both studies highlighted the importance of faculty participation in professional development programs. The PD benefits include professional growth by connecting pedagogical practice and faculty expertise, effective teaching and learning practices to serve the students' needs, and effective collaboration skills in the active learning environment (Jeppesen & Joyce, 2018; Pavia, 2020).

However, another study went beyond examining the attitudes or perceptions of the faculty. Geitsman (2020) concluded that the campus culture, administrative support, and funding are statistically significant in faculty participation in professional

development activities (Geitsman, 2020). The academic culture through PD promotes a powerful organizational mechanism and recognize as a valuable PD activity (Carvalho-Filho et al., 2019). Furthermore, faculty development programs must be successful in the campus culture, and administrative support must provide time to participate in PD activities and offer effective training (Jeremiah et al., 2021). Moreover, faculty members highlighted the lack of funding for PS activities creating frustration and dissatisfaction with administrative support (Pavia, 2020). The study's findings mentioned above confirmed that the administrative support and the management of institutional funds produced a lack of funding and the implementation of effective professional development programs (Pavia, 2020). Jacob et al. (2019) established a critical issue of how to motivate faculty members to participate in development programs and proposed a rewards structure system as a best strategic practice for attending PD programs.

However, staff development professionals are bewildered about creating professional development programs that meet the needs of the faculty and fulfill the institutional mission (SACSCOC, 2020). Nkana (2020) noted that when faculty development is constructed and implemented properly, the higher education competencies increase and contribute to instructional practices. Meizlish et al. (2018) showed positive impact results in a quasi-experimental evaluation of a faculty development program. The evaluation results demonstrated that the faculty members found the program valuable, recognized improvements in their preparation and teaching methods, and increased their participation in teaching center services (Meizlish et al., 2018). Also, Sotto-Santiago et al. (2019) presented evidence that faculty development

programs increase faculty retention, maintain interest in leadership positions, and promote faculty members in their institutions. The construction of effective and robust professional development programs has demonstrated the effectiveness of professional development programs for instructional faculty (Meizlish et al., 2018; Nkana, 2020; Sotto-Santiago et al., 2019).

Despite the improvements in staff development programs and a wealth of research on university PD, there remains a gap between the theoretical basis and the real scenario in academia and their real field world in practice (Kinsella & Waite, 2021). The gap between teaching, research, and services theory and the faculty members' work experience produces unprepared faculty for careers in their field (Kinsella & Waite, 2021). One study proposed six transformational changes within professional development programs for successful faculty development (Kumar, 2018). These key transformational factors were: (1) create faculty identity, (2) promote faculty vitality, (3) incorporate faculty partnerships with peers, (4) integrate faculty mentoring support, (5) focus on what and how of change at the end, and (6) develop the practice of reflection in faculty development programs (Kumar, 2018).

Some researchers support these transformational factors in faculty PD. Fernandez and Audetat (2019) and O'Sullivan and Irby (2021) highlighted the importance of creating identity – challenging their assumptions about their professional identities and roles and considering future career choices through professional development in medical education. O'Sullivan and Irby (2021) provided evidence of the influence on professional development in three professionals' identities: context (how faculty members feel

supported), roles (how their feel engaged), and agency (how faculty members feel empowered). The overlapping of these identities is evolving dual professional roles: educators in new practice models and agents of change in new institutional norms and culture (Fernandez & Audetat, 2019). The faculty that teaches clinical courses develops a dual identity to provide patient care and teach. Bair et al. (2019) studied other essential factors described above, concluding that mutually supportive faculty members through peer mentoring programs examined effective teaching methods and reflected on their teaching practices. The reflective practice addresses the understanding of what and how of change at the end of the PD and improves the faculty member's abilities for self-assessment in day-to-day practice (Kumar, 2018).

Other researchers recognized the gap in the practice and illustrated the value of formative evaluation (which emphasizes adaptability) as a model for revising and improving faculty development initiatives (O'neill, 2019). In this second study, the author proposed four dimensions to create faculty development programs within successful pathways: authentic learning, personalized learning, and student-centered learning strategies. These dimensions were: (1) a better understanding of their new start students, (2) rethinking of teaching and learning practices, (3) a peer-faculty approach, and (4) new perspectives of faculty roles on their campus (O'neill, 2019). The first dimension addresses the need to include PD spaces where the faculty improves their teaching practices, demonstrating a sense of care for their new-start student and prioritizing the student's success (Chasteen & Mills, 2019). Rethinking teaching and learning practices is a dimension of professional development focused on preparing

faculty members for new teaching and assessment methodologies (Shafi et al., 2020). Leaders have prioritized preparing faculty for deeper learning in new institutional teaching methods by providing guidance, ongoing support, and equity while participating in educational communities of practice within their professional development programs (Darling-Hammond et al., 2019). Another dimension in PD highlights the peer-faculty approach within faculty learning communities that promote peer observation, reflection among peers, and faculty mentors' development to develop current and new teaching perspectives (Bair et al., 2019).

Moreover, Muammar and Alkathiri (2021) studied 2,330 faculty members within three areas objectives and content, instructor and delivery, and logistics and supporting facilities. The authors found seven factors within three studied areas related to professional development programs:

1. Achievement of the objectives of the training program
2. Appropriateness of the program topics
3. Appropriateness of the training activities
4. Duration of the program
5. Facilitator's use of teaching skills
6. Appropriateness of the objectives of the training program
7. Facilitator's ability to manage discussions

However, the higher education institutions have some challenges, such as new and different pedagogical approaches (i.e., learner-centered pedagogy), integration of new technology, and a need to promote a faculty identity approach (Carpenter et al., 2019;

Keith, 2019). In the Educause Horizon report, Brown et al. (2020) identified three teaching and learning trends in higher education related to the future professional development model. These trends are changes in the student population, alternative pathways to academic programs, and online education. The report highlighted the need to rethink how to get university leaders to focus on the professional development of their faculty by addressing the needs of a diverse student population and with financial limitations. In addition, the report mentions as possible alternative teaching paths the integration of alternative pathways such as nano- and micro-degrees, competency-based programs, and online education, impacting, in turn, the professional development programs of the faculty. The third factor mentioned by the Educause Horizon report (2020) is online education causing universities to redesign their PDs to prepare the faculty for online teaching and new models for online programs under the possible increase of a non-traditional student population. Higher education is constantly changing, and faculty members need to update their skills, enrich their knowledge, and prepare for new trends and educational paradigms.

Faculty Development at Florida a University

The Higher Education system in Florida U.S.A is one of the most robust and robust nationwide. The Commission regulates college and university systems in Florida for Independent Education, the Florida College System, and the State University System (Florida Department of Education, 2022). Florida's higher education system, between 2021 to 2022, comprises 372 colleges and universities; 92 are public institutions, 280 are

private institutions, 75 are nonprofit private schools, and 205 are for-profit private institutions (Florida Colleges Statistics, 2022).

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2022), the nationwide faculty distribution is 56 percent full-time and 44 percent part-time. In Florida, the faculty distribution is 54 percent full-time and 46 percent part-time (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022). However, 47 percent of full-time college faculty in Florida were female, and 53 percent were male (Florida Colleges Statistics, 2022). Also, 52 percent of part-time college faculty in Florida were female, and 48 percent were male (Florida Colleges Statistics, 2022). Southern Regional Education Board (2021) highlighted that the current college faculty do not reflect the diversity of their students (46.6% of students in Florida) and argued that faculty diversity is not a new issue. The changing landscape of higher education, with an increasingly diverse student body, and unprecedented rapid advancement of knowledge and understanding, have led postsecondary institutions to strengthen the scope of professional development opportunities available to teachers (Handler & Hays, 2019).

Faculty development is used to describe activities and programs designed to enhance instruction in higher education (Handler & Hays, 2019). Malvik (2020) described the faculty members are the lifeblood of their institutions and highlighted that colleges and universities are beginning to recognize the importance of investing in faculty development programs.

One example of investment in faculty development programs is the University of Central Florida (UCF), which used EDUCAUSE Teaching and Learning resources to

build a toolkit for the higher education community to develop high-quality faculty development programs. UCF created four exemplary initiatives to provide professional development programs that support faculty members in and outside the classroom or research laboratory. These initiatives are peer communities, a leadership development series, the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning, and an institutional membership with National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity (UCF, 2022).

Another example of the faculty development program is the Office of Faculty Development and Advancement at Florida State University (FSU). FSU created the faculty career development timeline, which includes five stages: prospective faculty, early career, middle career, established career, and administrative and mentoring faculty (FSU, 2022). Also, FSU launched the Academic Leadership Toolkit, designed to provide department chairs and other academic leaders with a user-friendly timeline that gives guidance about essential policies and procedures (FSU, 2022).

The University of South Florida (USF) is another institution dedicated to promoting evidence-based practices to advance learning, teaching, and scholarly activity. USF includes valuable services and development programs through the Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning (CITL): faculty learning communities, grant programs, one-on-one faculty consultations, in-class observations, and faculty workshops and events (USF, 2022). All the universities mentioned above are committed to evolving the professional development of faculty members and hold high expectations for the growth of their members and their students. In addition, their teaching and learning

centers focus on the six Andragogy theory elements discussed in previous sessions in the literature review, forming an essential part of this study.

Summary and Conclusions

In this chapter, the literature review was presented describe how it is aligned with key concepts about the faculty professional development activities in higher education. An analysis of this literature review included valuable aspects about the challenges in participating and engaging in professional development activities (Quitoras & Abuso, 2021; Roberts et al., 2019; Taylor & Haras, 2020), and how the professional development helped faculty to improve their technology uses in the new teaching practices (Carvalho-Filho et al., 2019; Yilmaz et al., 2020).

In this literature review, no studies were found about strengths and professional activities for improvement of professional development program. Also, no research presented an analysis about how professional development programs are related with faculty needs. Some studies included in this literature review examined specific factors to incorporate in the improvement of professional development programs but limited to determined methodology or model. However, my study has the intention to examine the perceptions from the instructional faculty members' perspectives at SEU of the strengths and professional activities for improvement of professional development program.

Chapter 3: Research Method

This qualitative study aimed to examine instructional faculty members' perceptions about SEU's faculty development offerings, as well as their recommendations on how to improve the faculty development program. For this study, I used a program evaluation design to describe instructional faculty members' perceptions and recommendations about how to improve faculty development offerings and programs at SEU. The problem to be addressed through this study is the lack of understanding of the perceptions of instructional faculty members' regarding the strengths and professional activities for improvement of SEU's professional development program. The study identified the need to address a gap in practice to improve the faculty development program. The data may provided the needed information to make recommendations about changes needed in the faculty development program and its offerings at the university.

The following research questions guide this program evaluation study:

RQ1: What are instructional faculty members' perceptions about the strengths of professional faculty development offerings and programs at SEU?

RQ2: What are instructional faculty members' recommendations about how to improve the faculty development offerings and programs at SEU?

Research Design and Rationale

The literature review indicated the importance of the professional development of faculty members in university institutions. At the beginning of the 21st century, faculty professional development was focused on teaching strategies, integrating technology into practice, and developing leadership skills (Alkathiri & Olson, 2018; Muammar &

Alkathiri, 2021). However, many studies conclude that faculty members lack robust professional development that meets their needs and remain responsive to academic competencies within their culture (Alkathiri & Olson, 2019; Harrington, 2020; Muammar & Alkathiri, 2021; Wynants & Dennis, 2018).

Based on this need in practice, this study sought to improve the professional development program at SEU using a qualitative methodology. For this study, I selected a program evaluation design to evaluate the professional development best practices to improve the PD program at SEU. The qualitative approach describes a phenomenon that occurs naturally, unlike a quantitative study where the method is based on numerical data and statistical analysis (Burkholder et al., 2020). In this study, the qualitative approach seeks to describe faculty members' perceptions of the professional development program and its offerings by exploring their experiences. Program evaluation studies support qualitative methods and conduct analysis between a gap in practice and the current practices in the investigated program (Butin, 2010). The qualitative approach and program evaluation design support the research questions of this study. The program evaluation design is oriented to build a systematic assessment using the nature and purpose of the problem and recommend the best strategies to employ in their improvements into a practice (Burkholder et al., 2020).

As discussed above, each qualitative study is based on a research approach and design. The most common design frames are action research, case study, ethnography, evaluation research, grounded theory, narrative inquiry, participatory action research, phenomenological research, and practitioner research (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I selected a

program evaluation design study to support the type of research and its purpose. However, other research designs were evaluated, such as the phenomenological study and the action research design. The phenomenological study seeks to examine the experiences of a group of individuals and how they feel (Burkholder et al., 2020). Although this study is related to experiences, this type of design was not chosen because the results are not based on emotions. Under an action framework design, the experiences of individuals before the event or phenomenon are examined in practice, offering a holistic vision between theory and practice (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). This type of design seeks to generate responses focused on only the positive actions of a phenomenon, an approach that does not align with the research questions of my study.

Another example of a design framework that does not apply to this study is grounded theory research. This design frame focuses on developing theories from data collected from interviews, observations, and other sources (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The grounded theory research approach is not aligned with the purpose of my study. Furthermore, the study data only comes from interviews with faculty members, not from various sources of information as required in this last type of design frame.

However, the program evaluation study design is closely related to the research questions, the problem, and the purpose of my study. My role was not that of the study participant. Rather, my role was an objective and unbiased evaluator of a professional development program. Therefore, the program evaluation study design shows the relation between professional development activities and the perceptions of what is going well and what needs to be improved. The program evaluation study design collects different

data types, such as archival data, field observations, interviews, documents, observations, focus groups, and surveys (Burkholder et al., 2020). In terms of the outcomes of this study, the program evaluation study design provides an in-depth understanding of the perceptions of faculty members to examine that case and learn from it to make decisions about their strengths and how to improve the professional development programs.

In this study, interviews were selected as the primary source of data collection. The interviews in evaluation program research can contribute to identifying best practices on the process and outcomes of a professional development program (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The data triangulation technique was used to avoid potential bias in this program evaluation study.

Role of the Researcher

For the past 10 years, I have worked at various levels of the educational sector teaching mathematics and continue to do so; however, another facet of my professional career has focused on the professional development of educators, the creation of curriculum, and the development of professional development programs or events. At the time of this study, I teach mathematics to adult students and am part of the staff responsible for creating, measuring, and improving professional development events for faculty members. My experience allows me to understand the scenario where this study is carried out. Also, I can identify what benefits may or may not occur at the end of the study, always considering the professional environment and the relationship with the participants.

Methodology

Participant Selection

The general population is all instructional faculty members. The sample in this study will be instructional faculty members at a local campus. The sample includes instructional faculty members, of which 51 are full-time and 14 are adjunct or part-time. The potential participants of this study were a minimum of 15 instructional faculty members at the local SEU campus who participated in faculty development activities. If there were not at least 15 participants from the local campus when conducting the study, participants from other campuses at SEU who meet the established criteria would have been invited.

This program evaluation study design deliberately selected a convenience sample to participate in this study to focus on the effects and outcomes of participants' needs (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The convenience sample refers to selecting participants based on availability due to their geographical location and joint employment by an SEU university. The 15 potential participants receive an initial invitational group email requesting their voluntary participation in the study (Appendix A). A second invitational email followed when potential participants did not respond to the first email communication within a week. This second invitation is considered a friendly reminder, and they were given one week to respond. If they did not respond to either of the two emails, I counted it as a lack of interesting in participating in the study. IRB approval at Walden University and SEU consent determine when invitations are sent to potential participants.

I offered a $5 gift card to the participant to complete the interview and as a token of appreciation for their participation in this study. I also continually assessed the adequacy of the sample size. All participants were able to decide not to continue their involvement before the study's end. If the sample size was not adequate, I could have used more participants from other SEU campuses. I provided a thank you email to all participants that completed the interviews. In the same communication, the participant received the gift card.

Establishing a Researcher-Participant Working Relationship

Burkholder et al. (2020) highlighted the importance of maintaining a professional relationship with interviewees to get research questions answered. I am an employee of SEU, which offer courses at the university, and I receive professional development as an instructional faculty member; however, I do not supervise any faculty members participating in this study. As a researcher, I maintained a professional relationship with the interviewees during the interviews. The confidentiality and integrity of the data were not affected; however, I understand that there could be the possibility of personal bias due to having previous experiences with the study participants within the same professional development events offered by SEU. To prevent bias, I created semi structured questions for the interview that seek to avoid exposing my opinion or sharing my personal beliefs with the interviewees.

My role is that of a researcher. My responsibility was to ensure reliable reports based on what I heard from someone eeking to answer the research questions within a comfortable and professional environment. During an interview, answers can take

different directions; as a novice researcher, my job was to work with the interviewees and ensure a comfortable environment for each one (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Also, I maintained a high level of confidentiality.

The ethical dimension of this study was addressed using an informed consent form (Thomas, 2017). Interviewees were informed of how their privacy is protected, how they would be kept anonymous, and how their responses would be kept completely confidential using an informed consent. Informed consent also gave potential participants information about the study goals, the roles of the participants and researcher, and their voluntary involvement in this study. After receiving indication of their willingness to participate, the informed consent form was sent to each participant via email or in person.

Instrumentation

In qualitative studies, the instrument is the tool developed to collect the data in the research (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The data collection instrument for this program evaluation study was an interview. I designed this instrument to determine instructional faculty members' perceptions of the faculty development offerings and program at SEU. The interview format includes two sections: demographic questions and interview questions. Before the pilot process, I had decided to send demographic questions by email along with the invitation; however, the two members who participated in the pilot process of the interview questions considered that more faculty members could join if they were asked simultaneously during the interview process.

I created all the questions and disclosed confidentiality during the process in the consent letter. The semi structured interview was used to organize and guide the

interview; it included specific questions and sub-questions to achieve a unique and conversational path with all participants (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Also, I utilized probe and follow-up questions to allow participants to provide any other information. The informed consent indicated to the participants that their interview time would be conducted within a confidential environment.

In this study, I selected semi structured open questions to be answered by the participants through interviews. I followed the protocol described below to create the instrument for this study. I made the interview questions based on the relationship between the research questions, the conceptual framework, and the literature. Then, I brainstormed all possible questions aligned with each research question. After that, questions followed by what was found in the literature were discarded or modified. All final questions demonstrated alignment with the conceptual framework and research design. In other words, the conceptual framework presents the structure of the study based on arguments supported by the literature and data collected from interview questions based on the research questions. Each question in the interview is closely related to a research question. This relationship supports the purpose of arguing and generating data that answer the study's research questions.

Research and Interview Questions

RQ1: What are instructional faculty members' perceptions about the strengths of professional faculty development offerings and program at SEU?

1. Tell me about the professional development program activity you recently attended.

   a. When did that happen?
   b. Is this professional development activity a part of the professional development program in the University?
   c. In what ways, if any, do these professional development activities impact your teaching practice?
2. Tell me about the strengths of the professional development program at SEU.
   a. Would you give me an example?
3. What kinds of professional development opportunities do you feel are more beneficial for you?
4. What is the most importance experience you have had in the professional development program at SEU?

RQ2: What are instructional faculty members' recommendations about improving the faculty development offerings and program at SEU?

1. How do you believe that SEU should improve the professional development program at SEU?
   a. Would you give me an example?
2. In general, what do you need in your professional development program?
   a. Can you elaborate on that?
3. What do you need in your professional development program to help you in the classroom?
   a. Would you give me an example?

4. How do you describe the best professional development program within higher education?
5. Suppose you were part of a committee working to improve the professional development program for instructional faculty members. What could be the priorities for improving the professional development program at SEU?
    a. Is there anything else that you want to explain more?

In this study, two people will be selected to pilot the interview questions. These people are not going to participate in this study; however, they have instructional experiences with professional development. The purpose of piloting the interview questions is to validate that each question is understandable to the participants. Sometimes during the pilot testing, the researcher can be given to start developing the code book (Burkholder et al., 2020). However, during the pilot testing process in this study, I identified no codes, although questions were modified that were better understood by the interviewees and more productive in answering the research questions. The researcher will use interviews (synchronous or asynchronous) using audio-recorded tools to conduct semi structured interviews of instructional faculty members. The interview protocol will ensure that the participants are consistently asked questions (Burkholder et al., 2020).

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

The semi structured interviews are audio-recorded and transcribed to ensure accuracy—a copy of the interview transcript is sent to each participant to measure meaning accurately. The interview transcripts will be open-coded and thematically

analyzed. The coding process will also analyze the data and synthesize all significant findings (Burkholder et al., 2020). The data analysis process involves reading and listening to the data from each interview several times. Then, common themes show how participants have behaved or reacted in relation to these themes. The researcher will use a combination of coding procedures and software digital applications to analyze the data. The researcher groups the data, examines, and compares articles to determine the research findings during this process.

Table 1

Proposed Timeline

Date	Task
	Create and deliver all first initial invitation emails.
Sept-Oct	Send a friendly reminder (second invitation).
	Organize responses and select all participants.
Oct-Nov	Conduct the interviews and start analysis.
Nov-Dec	Continue analysis, coding, and results evaluation.

Suppose sufficient information is not collected or the number of people established in this study has not been interviewed, I will conduct the same protocol with participants from other SEU campuses. In addition, to safeguard the confidentiality of the interviewees' responses, I will store the interviews' recordings on a drive outside of any device belonging to SEU.

In this evaluation program study design, understanding data collection, analysis, and findings is a significant approach to conducting valid and rigorous (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The unit of analysis here is the individual perceptions of each of the 15 faculty members in SEU who participated in professional development activities. Faculty members' interviews will be in quiet areas via Zoom or Teams or face-to-face. The

interviews will be transcribed, and the researcher will save the data on a drive that will not be located on any SEU device. The analysis of the data generated from the transcript of each interview will be organized by themes that will provide various analytical angles to help in the coding process.

Data Analysis Plan

In qualitative case studies, the precoding process organizes the data thematically, and maintaining a relationship with the research questions (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I will use the Nvivo technological tool to guide the presentation of data findings from the precoding process. The next step involves the coding process. In this program evaluation study, the first round of coding is used to identify the possible themes to be explored, and the second round focuses more on the themes aligned with the study's research questions (Burkholder et al., 2020; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). In the first round of coding, one good practice is retaining the meaning as much as possible using individual words or short phrases (Basham, 2022). Another best practice in the first coding round is combining different systems to gain multiple views of the same data (Basham, 2022).

The coding process is a cycle (Basham, 2022). I will start by including code notes and bracketing the transcripts using a spreadsheet. Then, I will use in vivo coding to create the first coding round and maintain the original meaning. Also, I will use the 3d coding colors to identify any wording relation. Once the data is analyzed, it will be determined if a second coding round is necessary.

The second coding round organizes the data to identify duplicate codes and how many people have the same principle. The second round's goal is to add as many notes as

possible to modify the codebook and see if the researcher processed any discrepant data (Basham, 2022). In this study, the second coding round is intended to identify any discrepancies in the data. In this process, similarities, differences, and the relationship with the context will be observed to determine possible saturation.

Regarding saturation, the data is considered sufficient if what has been collected answers the research questions (Burkholder et al., 2020). If this is not the case, the collection of new information is continued until this requirement is met and the study's trustworthiness is evidenced. At the end of the coding process, the topics analyzed are organized in tables that facilitate alignment with the research questions. Next, the results are summarized, and the findings are evidenced. Triangulation is used to validate the study findings.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Qualitative research related the concept of validity to the meaning of truth or trustworthiness in terms of the quality of a study (Burkholder et al., 2020). The methodology, types of data collected, and valid results that answer the research questions are indicators of quality of my study. To support the trustworthiness in my qualitative study, I highlighted how used various strategies of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability to reiterate the quality, assess the validity, and evidencing the rigor to affirm that the results are transparent from our participants in this study (Burkholder et al., 2020; Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

Credibility

Burkholder et al. (2020) defined credibility as an internal validity criterion that confirm the alignment between the data collected and the research questions. In qualitative studies, the credibility is implemented using validity strategies such as peer debriefing, member checking, triangulation, persistent observation, reflexivity, and prolonged engagement (Burkholder et al., 2020; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). In my study, I used the peer debriefing strategy to validate that each interview question was understandable to the participants and aligned with the research questions. In this process, qualified colleagues validated the interview questions, and they are not involved in this study as participants.

In addition to peer briefing strategy, I used a member checking who is participant or people that participated in this study to confirm that their transcripts are accurate (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Also, member checking involved feedback about data and feedback from their responses during the interview. At the end of the interviews, each participants received a copy of transcript and they signed and dated to validate that the information used as data was true. Also, during this transcript review validation process all participants are allowed to make any corrections.

Transferability

According to Ravitch and Carl (2016), the transferability is defined as external validity process related to variation in participant selection, description of the setting, and applicability of the findings. The transferability is supported using two main strategies: thick description and maximum variation (Burkholder et al., 2020). For this evaluation

program study, I used the thick description strategy by presenting details about the setting, participant selection process, and description of evidence to support the results. Also, I used the maximum variation sampling strategy with the intention of invite a variety of participants such as instructors from different disciplines, and various degree and years of experiences. However, this study was conducted in a private higher education university, for this reason the transferability is limited.

Dependability

Dependability in qualitative studies is related with the consistency and stability of the data (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The strategies to achieve dependability are inquiry audits and triangulation (Burkholder et al., 2020; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). In this study, I used inquiry audits strategy by detailed description about how data were collected and analyzed. Also, I used the triangulation strategy centralized on data sources using different times of the day and places to complete the interviews. Using triangulation strategy, I provided a systematic data collection process that allowed consistent results.

Confirmability

The confirmability is based on confirmable procedures, analyses, and conclusions from findings of the study (Burkholder et al., 2020). The triangulation strategies, researcher reflexibility processes, confirmability audits, and external audits are methods to achieve confirmability or objectivity in qualitative studies (Burkholder et al., 2020; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). In my study, I used the reflexibility to documented notes during the interviews and analyzed my role during this research process.

Ethical Procedures

Ethics procedures are crucial in qualitative research and in this study is not the exception. Ethics guidelines include, but not limited to, the language to engage in the study, informed forms about purpose, data collection, anonymity assurances, and participants confidentiality. I submitted the Institutional Review Board (IRB) application to Walden University. After I received Walden IRB approval, I submitted other IRB application at SEU. After this second IRB approval, I explained the interview process with a representative SEU dean. As part of the ethics procedure, the personal information from any participants is not used for protecting confidentiality.

Each participant was invited by email and in this electronic communication, I shared the informed consent letter. The participant accepted the invitation to participate in my study, when they signed in person the informed consent letter. The second invitational email, as courtesy reminder, was not necessary because all 15 potential participants accepted the invitation within the following two weeks after the first invitation. I collected all informed consent letter to scheduling the interviews. All volunteer participants selected the date and time to complete the face-to-face interview. The audio recordings of each interview were protected and storage on a secure and on-site device. These recordings will be destroyed after the study is complete.

Other method to protect the confidentiality was a document storage procedure. The interviews were transcribed and saved on a drive not located on any SEU device. The drive and all interview transcripts must be stored for at least five years from completion of my study. During the interviews, no participants refused their participation or

requested early withdrawal from the study. And they received their gift cards in person after they signed the interview transcript.

Summary

In this chapter, I explained the research design and provided rationale arguments. Also, the role of researcher and professional relationships with participants were provided in this chapter. In addition, the chapter included the methodology procedure with details about the participant selection, recruitment and participation process, a data collection instrument and how I used the pilot interview process to validate the interview questions, and detailed data analysis plan. At the end of this chapter, ethical procedures were discussed and how the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability established trustworthiness in my study.

The next chapter includes the results, but not limited to, such as demographic participants information, description of how the data were collected and coded, and summary of results using tables and diagrams to illustrate data that support each finding related to the research questions.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate how instructional faculty members perceived the strengths and opportunities for improvement of the professional development program at SEU. The conceptual framework for this program evaluation study design and the research questions were based on andragogy theory. The study was centered on the following research questions.

RQ1: What are instructional faculty members' perceptions about the strengths of professional faculty development offerings and program at SEU?

RQ2: What are instructional faculty members' recommendations about how to improve the faculty development offerings and program at SEU?

This chapter presents the results of this program evaluation study. The chapter includes a description of the setting, demographics information from all participants, and the data collection process. Also, this chapter includes relevant information about the data analysis conducted in this study, the evidence of trustworthiness, and the study results. A summary of the results is noted at the end of this chapter.

Setting

The analysis of this evaluation program study focused on how instructional faculty members perceived the strengths and opportunities for improvement of the professional development program at SEU . The professional development activities are for both fulltime and parttime instructional faculty members. However, only fulltime faculty members accepted the invitation to participated in this study, which took place in 2023.

For this study, I invited 42 faculty members via email. From the first invitational email, 15 faculty members confirmed their interest to participate in this research. The second invitational email was not necessary because all required participants responded to the first invitational email. The first interview took place on July 21st, 2023 in a private room. The interview was recorded using ScreenPal, and the interview time was 9 minutes (approximately). As per Walden's policy, the committee chair member, Dr. Koss, listened to the interview recording and read the transcript to confirm that the interview occurred as it was described in the study. All interviews were face-to-face on the recording with the screen as a background to kept them anonymous. Only one faculty member rescheduled the interview because the participant was off campus that date. All interviews started on time, and no one required stopped the interview or left early. The interview average time was 24 minutes. Table 3 shows the participant interview duration and their role at SEU.

Table 2

Participant Interview Details

Participant	Role at SEU	Interview Duration (min)
1	Faculty	9:25
2	Faculty	25:46
3	Faculty	30:17
4	Faculty	32:31
5	Faculty	23:43
6	Faculty	28:30
7	Faculty	14:59
8	Faculty/Director	30:35
9	Faculty	25:48
10	Faculty	20:21
11	Faculty	24:35
12	Faculty	21:09
13	Faculty	25:29
14	Faculty	28:06
15	Faculty	15:55

Table 2 summarized their role at SEU, noting that they each offer at least one course per year (in accordance with the inclusion criteria in the informed consent letter). The participants in my study included 15 instructional faculty members from SEU, which is a private university representing various disciplines. Table 3 details the participants' demographic information by discipline.

Table 3

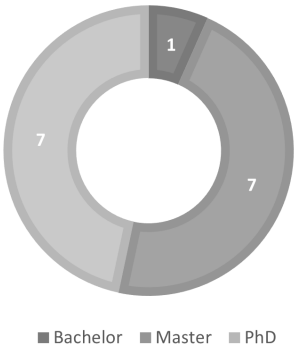
Demographic Faculty Members Information by Disciplines

Disciplines	Quantity of Faculty
Biomedical	1
General Education (Mathematics, Sciences, English)	6
Health Sciences Administration	1
Information Technology-Cybersecurity	2
Legal	1
Psychology	2
Radiology Technology	2

General education, with 40% of the faculty members, had the most representation in this study. The rest of the academic departments were represented by at least one faculty member each, except two programs, nursing and occupational therapy assistant; although, SEU considers these two programs and radiology technology as part of the health sciences department. Figure 1 and Table 4 present other valuable demographic information related to higher degree attended, years worked in higher education level, and years worked at SEU.

Figure 1

Demographic Faculty Information by Higher Degree Attended



The figure showed that the same amount of the participants has a doctoral and master's degree, and only one participant has a bachelor's degree. According to the figure, most of the participants in this study have a higher-level degree attended (14 participants in total).

Table 4

Demographic Faculty Information by Years Worked in Higher Education and at SEU

Length	Quantity in Higher Education	Quantity at SEU
0-5 years	4	9
6-10 years	3	4
11-15 years	6	1
16-22 years	2	1

Table 5

Demographic Faculty Members Information by Frequency of Participation

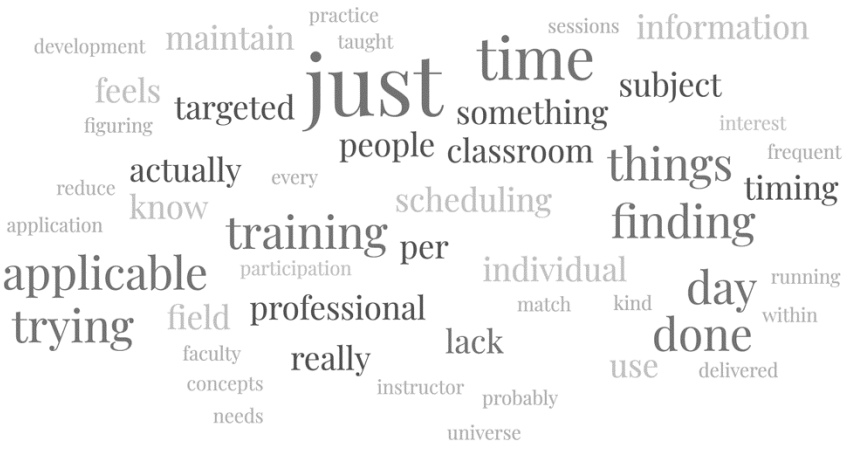
Frequency	Quantity
Twice a month	2
Monthly	5
Each 2 months	3
Each 3 months	1
Quarterly	1
Yearly	1
Everyone that I can	1
Never	1

This table idicates that most of the faculty members at SEU participate monthly in professional development events. Only one participant indicated that they participate in professional development events every time that they have the opportunity. Also, only one participant said that never participate in professional development events. In fact, the faculty members demonstrated some confusion with this question because they were not all clear about what events were included in professional development.

The last question within the demographic part during their interview was what are the challenges in the professional development teaching practice program. The following figure shows the common words that represent the challenges in their professional development events.

Figure 2

Word Cloud Analysis of Challenges in the Professional Development Events



This figure demonstrated the common challenges that all participants described and highlighted, such as time, scheduling, applicable, lack of participation, and faculty needs. Six participants expressed concern about that these professional development events aren't applicable to the day-to-day basics duties and teaching practice. Participant 9 declared that "It's not directly applicable to my course instruction." Also, participant 13 noted that "it's just not applicable to what we do on a day to day basis." This valuable information is related to the research questions regarding the strengths of professional faculty development, and ways or improving the faculty development offerings and program at SEU.

Data Collection

The data collection began after I received the permission from the SEU IRB to send the invitational email to all faculty members on June 13, 2023 (Protocol number: IRB000MY23JBG135). All faculty members, parttime and fulltime, could be potential

participants because they met the inclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria were experience with faculty development activities and offering at least one course at SEU per year. All potential volunteer participants, 42 faculty members, received the invitation letter (Appendix A) and the informed consent letter via their institutional emails. I requested they sign the informed consent letter and return to me by email or in person if they wanted to participate in my research study. I received 15 signed informed consent letter and then, all 15 participants completed the interview process. All participants were fulltime faculty members at SEU from various disciplines.

Over three weeks, I conducted the interviews on the campus (SEU) in a private room. These interviews were scheduled outside of the instructors' teaching schedules. The data were collected between July 21st, 2023 and August 16th, 2023. I used ScreenPal to record the audio from each interview. The audio of each interview were stored in a personal drive including their transcripts, in accordance with the procedures approved by the IRB. After all face-to-face interviews, each participant received a copy of their transcript to validate the data information. The copy of the transcripts were on paper because the majority of the faculty members requested their copy on paper instead electronically. They also signed the transcripts using their initials, and these documents were stored in my home. During this review transcript process, no one requested any changes, other than one faculty member that corrected a few grammatical errors. I printed the transcript again, and the participant validated the document with their initial.

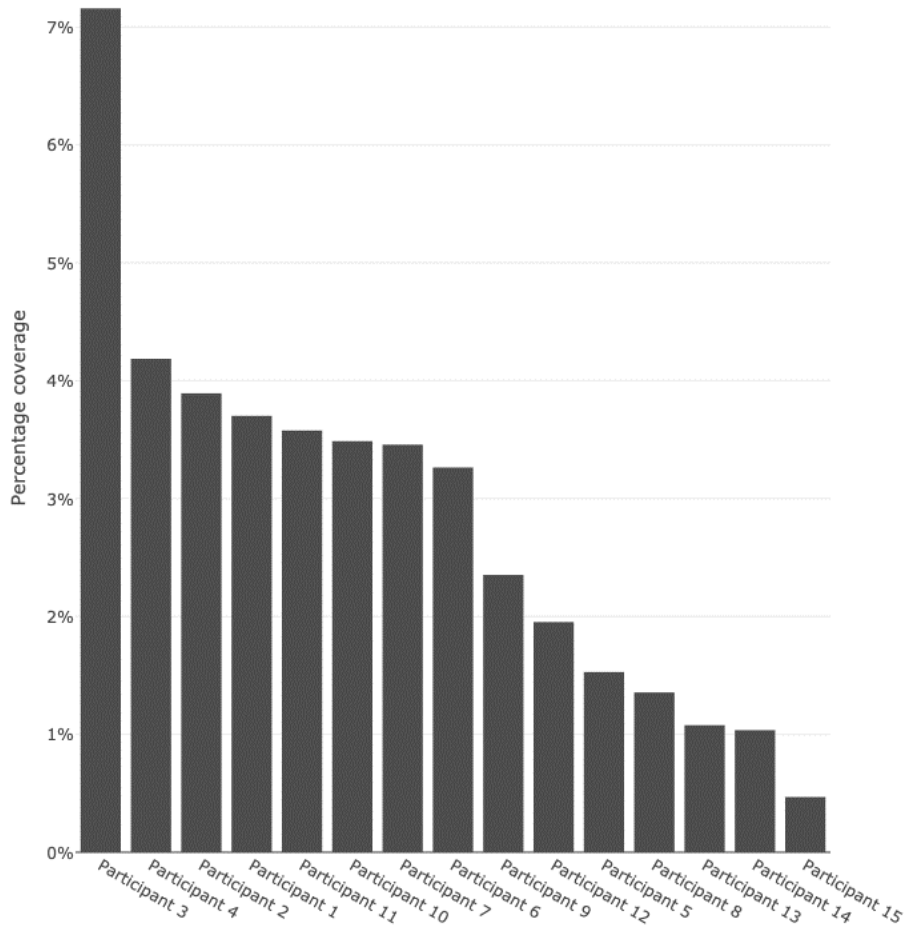
Data Analysis

After reviewing the transcripts, I analyzed the data using the Nvivo Student tool. Each transcript was identified using the following format: Participant #. I transferred the transcripts from participant 1 to participant 15 into NVivo to evaluate their data. The demographic data were organized to establish any pattern and themes that emerged from the data. From the participants' transcript, I used the coding tool from Nvivo to identify codes, themes, and patterns from the data using two categories: strengths of professional development program (addressing research question #1) and improvement for professional development program (regarding research question #2). A similar process was used with the demographic data regarding challenges in professional development.

The NVivo analysis showed the relationships between how much of the data coded were related with the participants' contribution from their interviews. All questions related with RQ1 were coded, as shown in Figure 3. Figure 4 demonstrates the same relationships for RQ2.

Figure 3

Chart of RQ1 of References Coded



As shown in Figure 3, nine participants highlighted that there is some strength in the new faculty roundtable meetings. These meetings take place once a month for the first 12 months for fulltime faculty members. The following was noted by Participant 3:

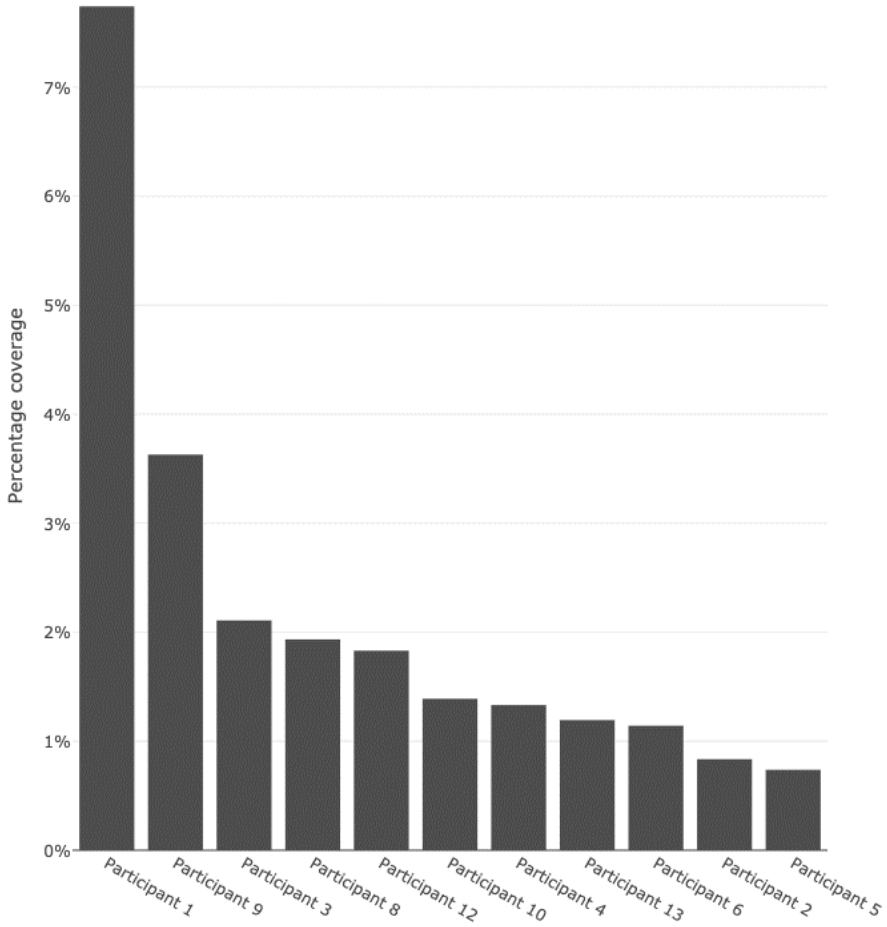
> We just had a tremendous training here with the new faculty roundtable. That we do here at the campus and it was based on active learning techniques, right, that teachers can use in the classroom to keep students engaged in the lesson and it was tremendous.

Other participants shared this opinion about the new faculty roundtable meetings for fulltime faculty members; however, they didn't perceive their professional development events beneficial after the first year in the institution. Participant 10 confirmed that fact:

> So, when we have our new faculty roundtables, we do that monthly, we get together, we discuss, we do group activities together to can I drive in these professional development things instead of just sitting there with the PowerPoint slide we have the little tutoring session on how to implement these.

Figure 4

Chart of RQ2 of References Coded



Using the Nvivo coding tool, common themes emerged from the data such as challenges in PD, faculty roundtable, pedagogy, strengths, technology, teaching practice, more beneficial, and faculty needs. In this data analysis, there were not any discrepant cases. After coding the data and discussed this process with my dissertation member chair, the second coding was considered not necessary because the study was conducted using a small sample, and the first coding process described specific codes, themes and patterns needed to analyze the data.

Results

The results from the data using the interview transcripts are presented below according to their relation to the demographic information and research questions. Table 6 shows the preliminary codes and the final code from the demographic question about the challenges in the professional development teaching practice programs.

Table 6

Coding from Demographic Data

Preliminary Codes	Final Codes
Lack of interest, lack of participation, matching with instructor needs, what people need, keep interesting	Instructor needs
Applications on what I do, directly applicable to instruction, not applicable, information that we can use	Daily basis application
Timing, scheduling, more time	Time
Generalized, focused on the entire university, lack of individual approach	Departmental training

All 15 participants identified at least one challenge in their professional development teaching practice program. These final codes in Table 6 will be discussed in the next chapter regarding their relationship with the research questions.

The research question for this study were as follows:

RQ1: What are instructional faculty members' perceptions about the strengths of professional faculty development offerings and program at SEU?

RQ2: What are instructional faculty members' recommendations about improving the faculty development offerings and program at SEU?

The codes related to these research questions are presented in Table 7. The codes generated per research question are produced after an autocode process using Nvivo tool.

Table 7

Codes from Nvivo per Research Question

Research Question	Autocodes
RQ1: Strengths of Professional Faculty Development	Beneficial
	Content Area
	Faculty Roundtable
	Pedagogy
	Strengths
	Teaching Practice
RQ2: Improvement for Faculty Development Program	Benefits
	Faculty Needs
	More efficient
	Technology

I found that 7 participants identified beneficial a few professional development activities and the new faculty roundtable as a strength in their professional development program. In the interview, Participant 4 stated "I would certainly carry on something like the new faculty roundtable that I went through my first year. I think that was really important that helped me a lot." Participant 10 noted, "when we have our new faculty roundtables, we do that monthly, we get together, we discuss, we do group activities together to can I drive in these professional development things instead of just sitting there with the PowerPoint slide." Participant 11 said, "I think that the new faculty roundtable had the has the right idea, especially like the second-half that I participated in,

like the first one we did the book study." These three participants' quotes represented their perception of the benefits from the new faculty roundtable development program.

Also, nine of 15 participants explained at least one strength in their professional development offering at SEU. However, six of 15 participants offered details about their professional development program needs and the needs as faculty instructional member at SEU. For example, Participant 1stated "As a faculty instructional member, we need better online instructional tools and technology to facilitate our classes that can include more hardware, computer hardware as well as software tools like." In addition, Participant 4 stated, "The ability what would help faculty professional development in the classroom is the ability to use technology to a greater degree." Both participants highlighted their needs as faculty instructional member at SEU related with the technology in the classroom.

Other participants noted their needs in relation to the professional development program in overall. Participant 13 stated, "I want to be talking to the faculty about what are their priorities, what they need." Also, Participant 8 said "Everybody's needs are different. Then let's get it more focused to the needs of those particular departments. More departmental like versus global." All participants identified their teaching needs, and pedagogy gap from their professional development (Alkathiri & Olson, 2019; Harrington, 2020; Muammar & Alkathiri, 2021; Wynants & Dennis, 2018).

Evidence of Trustworthiness

The credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability implementation process were conducted as described in Chapter 3. No adjustments were necessary, and the evidence of trustworthiness was presented in this study.

Summary

In this chapter, I presented the results of this study, detailed the setting, the participant selection strategy, and the data collection process. I summarized participants' responses that address each research question and the demographic data. The data analysis presented in this chapter demonstrated the evidence of trustworthiness. The final codes from demographic data were instructor needs, daily basis application, time, and departmental training. Therefore, the autocodes from both research questions were beneficial, content area, faculty roundtable, pedagogy, strengths, teaching practice, benefits, faculty needs, more efficient, and technology. The final chapter includes a discussion, conclusions, and recommendations from an interpretation of the results presented in Chapter 4. Also, chapter 5 will present the limitations of the study and implications for a potential positive social change.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate how instructional faculty members perceived the strengths and opportunities for improvement of the professional development program at SEU. The resulting data included information from which to make recommendations about changes needed in the faculty development program and its offerings at the university. Data were collected in response to the following two questions.

RQ1: What are instructional faculty members' perceptions about the strengths of professional faculty development offerings and program at SEU?

RQ2: What are instructional faculty members' recommendations about how to improve the faculty development offerings and program at SEU?

Interpretation of the Findings

The program evaluation design used in this study is oriented to build a systematic assessment using the purpose of the problem and recommend the best strategies to employ in their improvements into a practice (Burkholder et al., 2020). All data supported the evaluation of the professional development program at SEU. Below, I present the findings and recommendations per research question from the faculty members' perspective regarding the strengths and improvement opportunities in their professional development program.

Research Question 1

What are instructional faculty members' perceptions about the strengths of professional faculty development offerings and program at SEU?

According to the literature, faculty professional development programs prepare instructors for their roles and careers, help them develop teaching skills, and adopt key teaching technologies and methodologies for higher-level institutions (Abdulghani et al., 2021; Dunagan et al., 2021; Salam & Mohamad, 2020). The RQ1 codes are beneficial, content area, faculty roundtable, pedagogy, strength, and teaching practice. Beneficial and faculty roundtable codes were considered strengths in their professional development program.

All participants shared at least one strength of the professional development activities. For 60% of faculty members, the greatest strength of their professional development program is the new faculty roundtable. In this study, more than half of the participants supported the format, methodology, and approach in their new faculty professional development program. For this reason, the new faculty roundtables is a model to follow in their future professional development activities with more pedagogy skills, knowledge in the content area, and the positive impact on their teaching practice. Heffernan and Heffernan (2018) concluded that faculty members who do not receive the necessary support in their professional development decide to leave the institution. Probably for this reason, faculty members at SEU agreed that the new faculty roundtable activities support them in their professional development needs, but did not relate this to teaching practice.

The teaching practice was a code that highlighted a similar perception about their professional development experiences. Participant 1 noted a positive impact on their teaching practice from outside professional development events. Participant 12

highlighted that their professional development program didn't impact their teaching practice. Both participants agreed that a new faculty roundtable program is beneficial for them, but their professional development program overall is a teaching practice gap. Professional development studies conclude that activities related with teaching practice provide the opportunity to create solutions in applying effective practices in their area of expertise within pedagogical environments (Carvalho-Filho et al., 2019; Pelletreau et al., 2018). This criteria will be considered during the evaluation program at SEU to improve their professional development program.

Other theme coded was pedagogy. The participants highlighted their need related with pedagogical practices. Participant 10 noted the importance of knowing how to apply different pedagogical techniques discussed in their professional development activities. Participant 2, 7, and 15 highlighted the need to improve their development professional activities to incorporate training more related with pedagogy within the classroom.

Research Question 2

What are instructional faculty members' recommendations about how to improve the faculty development offerings and program at SEU?

The literature stated that faculty members are excellent professionals in the content of their fields with minimum preparation for teaching, pedagogy, and differences in academic cultures (Alkathiri & Olson, 2019; Harrington, 2020; Muammar & Alkathiri, 2021; Wynants & Dennis, 2018). This minimum preparation was a starting point for rethinking faculty's relationship as learners in professional development and preparing professional development programs to address all these challenges. The participants of

this study echoed the literature when they stated their needs as faculty instructional members. The results noted how faculty members stated their challenges when they participated in professional development activities. Also, participants stated how the knowledge of their needs will improve their professional development program at SEU.

The RQ2 codes are benefits the faculty, faculty needs, more efficient, and technology. The results presented by four participants stated the need to discuss and implement changes, and reflect on their professional development practice. Another two participants highlighted the importance about how the instructional design in their professional development training is a more effective way. Universities recognized that the theory of andragogy in professional development is an effective approach for FD programs (Mohammed et al., 2018). Findings in my study from references coded in research question two supported the same approach.

Another theme coded within RQ2 was technology, which was evidenced with 67% references coded. Results indicated that technology is one of the top needs in the professional development program. Participants highlighted the following areas of opportunities in their professional development program: more certifications about how use artificial intelligence and new technology, better technological-instructional tools, workshops about how use technological techniques in the classroom, and more resources to get better technology in the classroom. These findings in my study help to identify what technology faculty members need and how design professional development activities to promote the new technology in their classroom with focus on active learning.

Besides limited technology, the lack of a stable professional development plan, a lack of connection between their needs and professional development sessions, and limited departmental professional activities were considered relevant needs from the participants in my study. Studies demonstrated effective professional development programs in higher education when faculty members participated in their PD design and planning (Pavia, 2020). In my study, 53% of references coded invited leaders at SEU to redesign their professional development program based on faculty needs. Part of this reflection process will consider how faculty members feel supported, how they feel engaged, and how faculty members feel empowered. (O'Sullivan & Irby, 2021).

Limitations of the Study

The primary limitation of this study was the scope of participants from a private university. Although I established a particular type of university as the setting, this does not create a feasibility problem in the study participants' access. The specific demographic or characteristics of the sample may limit the generalizability of the results. In my study, the participants are all fulltime faculty members who had participated in the professional development annual plan. While they did not participate in the study, part-time faculty members are invited to participate in professional development activities.

Another limitation was the geographical scope of the study. The study was limited to one SEU campus versus; however, this limitation does not state a feasibility issue. The scope helps to manage the study, contribute meaningful insights, and interpret the findings appropriately. Although all SEU campuses are in a single state, this region is not necessarily considered a limitation because the institution created campuses in this

particular location. In general, the study demonstrates transparency and clear understanding of the study's boundaries. Other practical considerations such as budget, access to data, and inclusion research criteria are not recognize limited factors in my study.

Recommendations

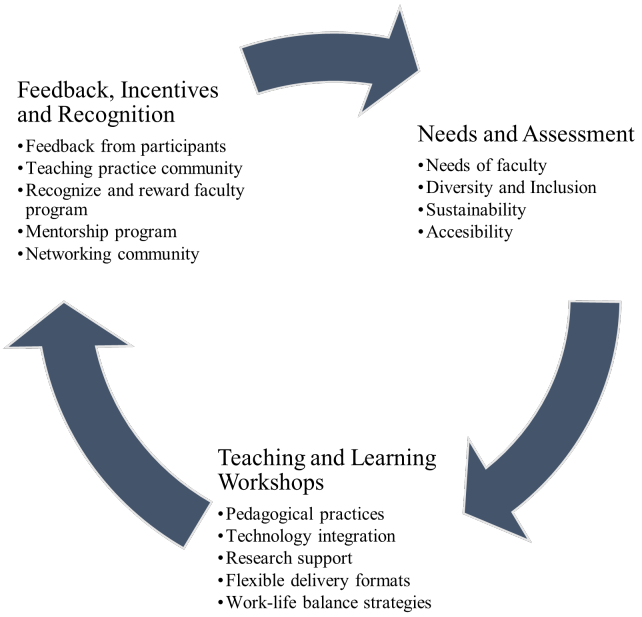
When faculty use evidence-based teaching practices aligned with student learning outcomes, they can be experts in their disciples and the scholarship of teaching and learning (Harrington, 2020). For future research, I recommend expanding the scope to other campuses at SEU or private universities. Also, expanding the study will include other private and public universities to examine their teaching practices aligned to student outcomes to improve their professional development programs. Other recommendation related with expanding this study include a robust and structured approach to building housed professional development programs to promote higher levels of teaching and learning practices using larger sample of participants.

Based on findings and results in this study, I recommend create a Professional Development Committee at SEU to evaluate, change, and create a new approach for their professional development program including both full-time and part-time faculty members. To implement a successful professional development program, SEU will considerate a specific needs assessment through annual surveys and/or focus departamental group discussions, recognize the diverse needs of faculty to select their training topics for all disciplines and years of experience, and flexible delivery formats including seminars, online workshops, mentoring program, and rewards program. I

recommend keep in mind that all faculty members are adult learners with different learning and teaching styles interested and responsible in their learning process (El-Amin, 2020; Mohr, 2020; Pina, 2019). The following figure includes key components for an effective professional development program that SEU can use as continuous model. I recommend this model to establish their needs, identify all resources, and create a plan to improve their professional development program.

Figure 5

Recommendations for Professional Development Program



Implications

This study promoted positive social change by providing data for faculty professional development culture to improve teaching practice, professional goals, and skills to build institutional identity. Based on the literature presented above, faculty professional development is an essential part of the university's culture and has been

shown to have a positive social impact over the years. In the educational field, the faculty member is a essential component to achieve the university's goals, mission and vision (Gupta et al., 2021). For this reason and based on the results of this study, the professional development program needs to prioritize workshops on pedagogical principles, technological innovations, new teaching strategies, and technology in the classroom. These results can contribute positively to implementing new or improved professional development programs for SEU and universities where faculty development is or will become a priority.

Conclusion

The conceptual framework was aligned with the research questions and the problem statement. The results and their interpretation supported and addressed the problem in this study. The problem was to examine faculty members' perceptions about their professional development and offer alternatives to increase the strengths and reduce the weaknesses of their professional development program at SEU. I believe that my study presented significant data to improve the professional development program at SEU based on faculty perspectives. Some studies discussed in the literature review chapter examined the professional development activities based on student outcomes. However, this study was necessary because I examined the perceptions about professional development at SEU based on their faculty members needs.

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Appendix A: Initial Invitation

Dear Instructional Faculty Member,

I am a doctoral student at Walden University and working on my doctoral project study about the strengths and opportunities of professional development activities for improvement of the professional development program from instructional faculty members at SEU. Your participation in my research is relevant and valuable. Attached is an informed consent letter that include a description of my study, the study purpose, procedures, and all measures to conduct confidential qualitative interviews. Each interview will take approximately 30 minutes and will be audio recorded via asynchronous or synchronous interview. For your time, you will receive a $5 visa gift card when the interview was completed.

If you would like to participate in this study, please sign and return the informed consent letter at your earliest convenience by email (brenda.gonzalez@waldenu.edu). If you do not wish to participate in this study, you do not have to return the consent letter.

I appreciate your support and interest in my project study.

Brenda Gonzalez

Graduate Student

Walden University