

Transformative Impact of Teacher Activity Groups on Vietnamese K-12 Teachers' Professional Growth: A Study of Satisfaction

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Abstract—This study aims to examine the satisfaction of Vietnamese K-12 teachers with the impact of Teacher Activity Groups (TAGs) on their professional development (PD). In the context of a rapidly evolving education system, PD plays a crucial role in enhancing teachers' knowledge, skills, and effectiveness in the classroom. Collaborative approaches, such as TAGs, have gained attention as promising strategies for fostering teacher growth and satisfaction. However, limited research has explored the specific impact of TAGs in the Vietnamese context. To address this gap, a quantitative approach was employed, and data were collected using a questionnaire from 147 K-12 teachers. The questionnaire consisted of 21 items measured on a 5-point scale, assessing various aspects of participants' satisfaction with the TAGs program. The results reveal high levels of overall satisfaction with the TAGs program, indicating positive perceptions of its interest, value, usefulness, and impact on professional development. Notably, variations in satisfaction levels were observed in relation to learner attendance and dropout rates. These findings provide valuable insights for educational policymakers and school administrators in designing and implementing effective PD initiatives tailored to the specific needs of teachers and students. By promoting teacher satisfaction and growth, TAGs have the potential to contribute to the continuous improvement of the Vietnamese education system.

Index Terms—satisfaction, Vietnamese K-12 teachers, teacher activity groups, professional development

I. INTRODUCTION

The pivotal role of professional development (PD) in ameliorating the pedagogical acumen of educators (Lei & Medwell, 2020), thereby augmenting the caliber of instruction, cannot be understated. Recently, there has been an emergent emphasis on cooperative strategies for PD (Koukis & Jimoyiannis, 2019), exemplified by Teacher Activity Groups (TAGs). The TAGs initiative is an avant-garde, synergistic venture brokered by an institution from the United Kingdom, where English prevails as the first language, and Vietnam, where English is dispensed as a foreign language. The scheme has been orchestrated with the aim of engendering cooperative education and problem-solving prowess among teachers, and was executed entirely in the virtual sphere over a span of six months. Rather than adhering to a conventional educational paradigm, the TAGs initiative championed a facilitative methodology, harnessing digital media such as Zoom and Google Meet for connectivity and interaction. The distinctive framework of TAGs designated native English linguists from Wales as the primary facilitators, helming the operation and imparting their proficiencies in English language instruction. Simultaneously, Vietnamese lecturers from a prestigious academic institution

functioned as facilitating auxiliaries, creating a mutually beneficial rapport that enhanced the collaborative educational milieu. Consequently, the TAGs initiative is a vanguard instance of international pedagogical synergy, accentuating reciprocal communication, practical utility, and the elevation of teachers to the status of co-learners within a supportive online community. This project underscores the latent potential of technology-augmented, trans-cultural alliances in propelling PD and augmenting English language education and acquisition. These initiatives are designed to cultivate a spirit of camaraderie and mutual learning among educational practitioners (Chickering et al., 2015).

Within the Vietnamese context, K-12 pedagogical institutions grapple with manifold challenges, including the task of accommodating the shifting needs of students and the dynamism of the education sector (Nguyen & Trent, 2020; Nguyen et al., 2020). In order to negotiate these hurdles, TAGs, as a so-called collaborative PD activity for teachers, have been heralded as a viable solution, offering teachers a stage for engaging in synergistic activities, promulgating effective methodologies, and devising innovative pedagogical stratagems (Xulu, 2018). These congregations proffer opportunities for teachers to collaborate, introspect on their pedagogical techniques, and amplify their professional evolution (Tichenor & Tichenor, 2019; Zeng & Day, 2019).

Nevertheless, despite the escalating popularity of TAGs, the research exploring their efficacy and the degree of satisfaction among participating teachers is scarce. Comprehending the viewpoint of Vietnamese K-12 teachers vis-à-vis the impact of TAGs on their PD is integral for guiding future enhancements in cooperative PD schemes. The primary aim of this research is to scrutinize the satisfaction levels of Vietnamese K-12 teachers who have participated in TAGs, and analyze the perceived influence of these assemblies on their PD. The conclusions drawn from this study will augment the extant scholarship on PD within the Vietnamese educational milieu and offer significant insights for policymakers, administrative personnel, and educators endeavoring to elevate PD via cooperative initiatives like TAGs. Ultimately, the ambition is to underpin the ongoing development and enhancement of K-12 teachers, positively influencing student scholastic outcomes and the aggregate standard of education in Vietnam.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Professional Development Activities

PD efforts are integral to the advancement and efficacy of educators, offering avenues for continuous learning, skill development, and instructional enhancement (Guskey, 2003; Guskey & Yoon, 2009). PD programs are designed to address the shifting needs of teachers within a constantly evolving educational context (Zein, 2017). These programs include a broad spectrum of activities such as workshops, seminars, conferences, collaborative learning communities, coaching, mentoring, and TAGs (Gümüş & Bellibaş, 2021). The main objective of these initiatives is to assist teachers in gaining new knowledge, skills, and teaching strategies, while also encouraging reflective practices and fostering a culture of continuous improvement (Boei et al., 2015).

Empirical research suggests that well-structured PD activities can greatly influence instructional practices (Mohamad et al., 2022; Quick et al., 2009). Evidence indicates that involvement in focused PD programs results in better subject matter knowledge, enhanced teaching techniques, and improved classroom management abilities (Nutta et al., 2020). Effective PD activities enable teachers to engage in active learning, observe best practices, and receive feedback and support from colleagues and facilitators (Archambault et al., 2010).

Collaborative PD activities, including TAGs, have seen substantial growth in recent years. TAGs provide a structured environment for educators to work together, share experiences, and participate in reflective dialogue (Lipscombe et al., 2020). Research supports the idea that such collaborative initiatives enhance pedagogical learning and positively impact instructional practices (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). Through participation in these activities, teachers can broaden their teaching techniques, assimilate new perspectives, and refine their instructional methods based on shared knowledge and experiences (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2007).

Various factors contribute to the effectiveness of PD initiatives. The literature emphasizes the importance of ongoing engagement, dynamic learning experiences, and alignment with the specific needs and goals of teachers (Ottenbreit-Leftwich et al., 2010). Moreover, continuous support and follow-up are crucial for helping teachers implement their learning in the classroom (Putnam & Borko, 2000). Adequate resources, time, and organizational support are also significant determinants of the success and sustainability of PD initiatives (Desimone, 2002).

Ultimately, the effectiveness of PD activities should be evident in improved student outcomes. Studies have found positive correlations between teacher participation in high-quality PD activities and increased student achievement (Baker et al., 2018). Effective PD contributes to greater student engagement, better learning environments, and the adoption of evidence-based instructional strategies that positively influence student learning outcomes (Nishimura, 2014).

B. What Makes TAGs Different From Other Types of Collaborative Professional Development Activities?

In this study, TAGs are examined as a specific form of cooperative PD platforms aimed at encouraging collaborative learning and problem-solving among teachers (Lipscombe et al., 2020; Yen et al., 2023). By fostering a supportive environment and promoting professional growth, TAGs empower teachers, enhancing their self-efficacy and motivation (Bray-Clark & Bates, 2003). Their success hinges on trust, respect, open communication, and alignment with teachers'

professional needs. Despite challenges such as time constraints and heavy workloads, integrating TAGs within existing PD frameworks and ensuring resource availability and schedule compatibility can bolster their effectiveness.

TAGs represent an innovative approach to collaborative PD, differing significantly from traditional models in several key ways. Firstly, TAGs create an atmosphere of active engagement and mutual interaction, contrasting with the one-way communication often found in conventional PD settings (Dickson et al., 2021). The structure of TAGs is based on the exchange of expertise and experiential knowledge, fostering a deeper understanding that can be directly applied in teaching contexts. Secondly, TAGs are often established to address immediate, practical challenges within the educational environment. This contextual relevance enhances the effectiveness and applicability of the PD, moving beyond the theoretical focus of traditional PD initiatives (Njenga, 2023). Thirdly, TAGs emphasize self-directed learning, allowing teachers to chart their own learning paths, thereby moving away from the uniform approach typical of traditional PD (Waitoller & Artiles, 2013).

The effectiveness of TAGs is closely tied to the development of a supportive community of practice, built on trust. The synergy within these communities encourages full engagement in PD activities (Bond & Lockee, 2018), a level of engagement rarely seen in other PD paradigms. Moreover, TAGs involve a sustained commitment over a longer period, facilitating a continuous cycle of learning, implementation, reflection, and refinement (Saint-Onge & Wallace, 2012). This iterative process is essential for ongoing professional growth, often lacking in sporadic PD workshops or courses. Additionally, TAGs are typically formed within specific institutional or district contexts, ensuring that PD activities are closely aligned with local needs, goals, and resources (Vangrieken et al., 2017). This contextual alignment is often missing in PD programs developed and delivered by external organizations.

Furthermore, in this study, the involvement of native English speakers as facilitators within the TAG framework adds another dimension to this pedagogical model. Acting as both resource persons and facilitators, native English speakers offer valuable insights into the complexities of English language teaching, enriching the learning experience (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Their presence provides an authentic linguistic environment and bridges cultural understanding, broadening the global perspectives of participating teachers (Truong & Murray, 2020). These facilitators can illuminate real-world contexts and the nuanced cultural aspects of language, which are often difficult to convey in traditional PD programs (Prabjandee, 2020). Their role extends beyond language instruction into mentorship and guidance, creating a supportive, engaging, and collaborative space that encourages teachers to reflect, question, and experiment with their teaching practices (Mann & Walsh, 2017). This collaborative relationship between facilitators and teachers in TAGs amplifies the potential for professional growth and enhances the overall learning experience. Consequently, TAGs present a promising path for PD, potentially overcoming the limitations inherent in traditional formats.

C. Five-Level Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Professional Development Activities

Evaluation is a crucial element of effective professional development (PD) activities, providing insights into their impact and efficiency. Guskey (2000) introduced a comprehensive five-level evaluation model, offering a thorough approach to assess PD outcomes and effectiveness. This literature review examines existing research and theoretical perspectives on Guskey's five-tiered model and its application in evaluating PD activities.

Level 1: Participants' Reactions

The first level focuses on participants' responses to PD activities. Studies highlight the importance of gathering feedback to gauge satisfaction, engagement, and perceptions of the program (Main & Pendergast, 2015). Positive reactions, such as high engagement, interest, and perceived value, are critical for effective PD outcomes (Bragg et al., 2021). Evaluating participants' reactions helps identify areas for improvement, tailor future programs to participants' needs, and maintain sustained engagement and motivation (De Vries et al., 2014).

Level 2: Participants' Learning

The second level assesses the extent to which participants gain new knowledge, skills, and strategies through PD activities. Effective PD should facilitate deep learning and provide opportunities for active, meaningful, and collaborative experiences (Hord & Tobia, 2015). Evaluation at this stage involves measuring participants' learning outcomes, mastery of content, and ability to apply new knowledge and skills in practice (Guskey, 2000).

Level 3: Organizational Support and Change

The third level examines the impact of PD activities on the organization and its support for participants. Effective PD requires organizational backing, resources, and alignment with institutional goals (Bryk, 2010). Studies suggest that organizational support enhances the implementation and sustainability of new practices (Gao, 2022; Zhou et al., 2022). Evaluation at this level assesses the extent of organizational support, resources, collaboration opportunities, and alignment with the broader organizational context (Guskey, 2000).

Level 4: Participants' Use of New Knowledge and Skills

The fourth level evaluates how participants apply their newly acquired knowledge and skills in their teaching practices. Effective PD should encourage continuous reflection, provide practice opportunities, and support implementation (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995). Assessing the application of new knowledge and skills helps determine PD's impact on instructional practices and student outcomes (Earley & Porritt, 2014).

Level 5: Student Learning Outcomes

The final level focuses on the ultimate goal of PD activities: improving student learning outcomes. Research shows that high-quality PD positively affects student achievement, engagement, and attitudes towards learning (Shagrir, 2011).

Evaluation at this level involves measuring changes in student performance, engagement, and other relevant outcomes to determine PD's effectiveness in enhancing student learning (Guskey, 2000).

Guskey's five-tier evaluation model provides a comprehensive framework for assessing PD activities' effectiveness. By considering participants' reactions, learning, organizational support, application of new knowledge and skills, and student learning outcomes, this model offers a holistic evaluation approach. Using this model helps identify strengths and areas for improvement in PD initiatives, informs decision-making, and promotes continuous professional growth. Implementing this evaluative framework allows educators and policymakers to enhance PD activities' effectiveness, ultimately improving student learning outcomes.

In the context of this study, Guskey's evaluation framework is particularly suitable for assessing teacher satisfaction with TAGs. The model's comprehensive approach, encompassing various PD aspects such as participants' reactions, learning outcomes, organizational support, and the application of new knowledge and skills, enables the evaluation of teacher satisfaction with collaborative learning experiences. By applying this framework to TAGs, educators can gain valuable insights into the effectiveness of TAGs in meeting teachers' needs, fostering satisfaction, and leading to enhanced professional growth and improved instructional practices.

III. METHODS

A. *Research Design*

This investigation implements a quantitative methodological approach to meticulously examine the satisfaction index of Vietnamese K-12 teachers with respect to the repercussions of TAGs on their PD. The principal tool for data procurement within this methodological structure is a questionnaire, devised to aggregate responses from the chosen study cohort. The research embraces a theoretical structure substantiated by two seminal theories: Firstly, the Adult Learning Theory and secondly, the Community of Practice (CoP) Theory. Adult Learning Theory, attributed to Zepeda et al. (2014), provides a crucial perspective for comprehending the inherent motivations and autonomous learning behavior of adult scholars. This theory, based on the supposition that adults are self-determined in their learning trajectory and possess the ability to leverage their previous experiences to guide their ongoing learning process, proffers an impactful comprehension into the potential of TAGs to nurture an ambiance conducive to autonomous learning amongst teachers. In its essence, it furnishes a rationale for probing how TAGs, by catering to the innate motivations and autonomous learning propensities of teachers, may possibly contribute to improved satisfaction indices and, consequently, augment PD outcomes. On the contrary, the CoP theory, proposed by Mak and Pun (2015), constitutes the second critical element of the theoretical framework. CoP theory accentuates learning as a social process, driven by interaction, collaboration, and knowledge transfer within a community bonded by a shared interest or practice. This theory bears considerable relevance to comprehending the collective and cooperative characteristics of TAGs. It provides a theoretical foundation for investigating how the communal participation within TAGs could foster a supportive ambiance, encourage knowledge dissemination, and collaborative problem-solving, thereby potentially influencing teachers' satisfaction levels and professional expansion.

B. *Participants*

To harness a broad spectrum of teacher perspectives regarding the impact of TAGs on their PD, a strategy rooted in the convenience sampling technique was judiciously employed. This method, although opportunistic, was deliberately chosen for its capacity to expedite the data collection process while ensuring a diverse, comprehensive representation of respondents. The sample encompassed diversity in critical domains such as subject areas, grade levels, years of teaching experience, and geographical locations. The deliberate pursuit of this heterogeneity within the sample aimed to enrich the data with a myriad of viewpoints, thus fostering a more holistic understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. By capitalizing on the practical advantages of convenience sampling, such as accessibility and speed, the study ensured inclusivity and wide-ranging insights, thereby enhancing the robustness of the resultant findings and facilitating nuanced interpretations of the influence of TAGs on teachers' PD. A total of 147 K-12 teachers from a diverse array of educational establishments across Vietnam were incorporated into this study. Of these, 39 were male and 108 were female. Age distribution was as follows: nine teachers were in their 20s, 64 in their 30s, 67 in their 40s, and seven in their 50s. In terms of pedagogical experience, fourteen participants had less than 5 years, thirty-five had between 5 and 10 years, fifty-three had between 10 and 20 years, and forty-five had more than 20 years of teaching experience. With regard to subject specializations, one hundred and three participants were English teachers, while the remaining forty-four taught various subjects through the medium of English. The teachers were drawn from disparate geographical locations, with thirty-four originating from urban areas, twenty-one from suburban locales, and ninety-two from rural regions.

C. *Data Collection Instrument*

The questionnaire developed for this study was designed to evaluate Vietnamese K-12 teachers' satisfaction with the impact of TAGs on their PD. Comprising 21 items, the questionnaire sought to measure participants' satisfaction levels in alignment with the five levels proposed by Guskey's (2000) evaluation framework for PD activities. Participants

were asked to express their level of satisfaction on a 5-point Likert scale, spanning from “1 - Strongly Unsatisfactory” to “5 - Strongly Satisfactory”.

In order to ensure the questionnaire’s validity and reliability, several measures were undertaken. It was developed following an exhaustive review of the literature on PD, TAGs, and Guskey’s (2000) five-tier evaluation framework. Additionally, feedback from two experts in the fields of education and PD was solicited to verify the relevance and appropriateness of the items. Prior to its formal administration, a pilot test of the questionnaire was conducted with a small group of 30 teachers whose characteristics mirrored those of the actual study participants. Feedback on the questionnaire’s instructions, item wording, and overall structure was elicited, leading to necessary revisions to enhance clarity and comprehension. The questionnaire’s reliability was gauged by measuring its internal consistency, ascertained via the calculation of Cronbach’s alpha coefficient ($\alpha=.82$), indicative of item consistency within the questionnaire. The reliability analysis was performed using SPSS version 20.0 to ascertain that the items in the questionnaire were reliable measures of the constructs under investigation. Adherence to ethical guidelines throughout the questionnaire design process and the data collection procedure was paramount. Informed consent was secured from the participants, and measures were taken to ensure their anonymity and confidentiality. The study’s purpose, voluntary participation, and data protection measures were communicated transparently to the participants. These strategies bolstered the validity and reliability of the questionnaire, ensuring its effectiveness in measuring participant satisfaction with the TAGs program and perceptions of its impact on their PD.

D. Data Analysis

The accumulated questionnaire data was subjected to a descriptive statistical analysis in order to summarize and interpret participant responses. Descriptive statistics provided an overview of the distribution, central tendency, and variability of the data, thereby facilitating a comprehensive understanding of Vietnamese K-12 teachers’ satisfaction levels concerning the impact of TAGs on their PD. The application of descriptive statistical measures, including the calculation of means and standard deviations, allowed for an estimation of the average satisfaction scores for each questionnaire item and an assessment of the dispersion of responses around the mean.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The results of the Descriptive Statistics test conducted on the questionnaire to measure participants’ satisfaction with the TAGs program are presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1
TEACHERS’ SATISFACTION WITH TAGS (N=147)

	Impacts	Min	Max	Mean	SD
1.	Program’s interesting	2.00	5.00	4.10	.81
2.	Reasonableness of training course duration	1.00	5.00	3.70	.79
3.	Value of training course materials	1.00	5.00	3.85	.86
4.	Future usefulness of training course	1.00	5.00	4.01	.75
5.	Trainers’ knowledge	1.00	5.00	4.38	.73
	Level 1	1.00	5.00	4.01	.64
6.	Knowledge acquisition	1.00	5.00	3.96	.81
7.	Skills acquisition	1.00	5.00	3.88	.79
8.	Impact on organizing future professional development events	1.00	5.00	3.76	.89
	Level 2	1.00	5.00	3.87	.77
9.	School support	1.00	5.00	4.06	.80
10.	Recognition of trainees	1.00	5.00	3.66	.92
11.	Issue resolution	1.00	5.00	4.07	.73
12.	Adequacy of course materials	1.00	5.00	3.72	.79
13.	Recognition of outstanding participants	1.00	5.00	3.65	.85
	Level 3	2.00	5.00	3.83	.61
14.	Acquisition of new and useful knowledge	1.00	5.00	3.86	.77
15.	Gain of teaching effectiveness improvement skills	2.00	5.00	3.85	.72
16.	Impact on students’ learning outcomes	2.00	5.00	3.88	.75
17.	Students’ performance improvement	2.00	5.00	3.86	.73
	Level 4	2.00	5.00	3.86	.68
18.	Positive impact on students’ physical and mental well-being	1.00	5.00	3.80	.81
19.	Boost in learners’ self-confidence	2.00	5.00	3.86	.74
20.	Increase in class attendance	1.00	5.00	3.67	.83
21.	Reduction in student dropout rate	1.00	5.00	3.56	.81
	Level 5	2.00	5.00	3.72	.71
	Overall	2.00	5.00	3.86	.60

The findings of the present study reveal that the participants manifested elevated levels of satisfaction with the TAGs program, as corroborated by the mean scores that ranged from 3.56 to 4.38 on a 5-point Likert scale. The maximal mean scores were observed for item 5, thus indicating participants’ favorable perception of the trainers’ level of expertise. Contrarily, the minimal mean scores were noticed for items 20 and 21, which pertained to the influence on student

attendance and dropout rates. Moreover, the mean scores across each level of the PD framework suggested a marked degree of participant satisfaction spanning different aspects of PD, with scores oscillating 4.01 for Level 1, 3.87 for Level 2, 3.83 for Level 3, 3.86 for Level 4, and 3.72 for Level 5. These results potentially indicate positive perceptions regarding the program's impact on aspects such as knowledge acquisition, skill development, organizational support, and student outcomes. In essence, the TAGs program was favorably received by the participants, evoking positive responses concerning its interest, value, usefulness, and its impact on their PD.

These empirical outcomes align congruently with prior research conducted in the Vietnamese context, which similarly indicated elevated levels of satisfaction among participants regarding the TAGs program. This finding corroborates previous studies, which underscored the beneficial impact of collaborative PD initiatives on teachers' satisfaction and professional growth within the confines of the Vietnamese milieu (Hashimoto & Nguyen, 2018; Ho, 2016). The abovementioned impact can be attributed to several interrelated factors. First and foremost, the socio-cultural norms of Vietnam emphasize collective action and shared responsibility (Truong et al., 2017), which align with the collaborative nature of these PD initiatives. Teachers engage in a process of mutual learning, exchange of ideas, and shared problem-solving, which not only strengthens their professional competence but also fosters a sense of camaraderie and mutual support (Olitsky, 2017). This collaborative engagement directly enhances their professional satisfaction and growth by providing a contextually relevant, supportive environment for continuous learning (Lipscombe et al., 2020). Moreover, these initiatives often involve mentorship from more experienced educators or experts, providing teachers with valuable insights and feedback that further bolster their professional skills (Heikkinen et al., 2012). When real-world classroom issues are tackled and teaching methods tailored to specific contexts are incorporated, the extensive expertise of educators and trainers helps to elevate the value and impact of these PD programs. As a result, these initiatives not only enhance teacher satisfaction but also foster their PD, particularly in the Vietnamese setting.

The higher mean score associated with "Trainers' knowledge" ($M=4.38$) reinforces past research emphasizing the pivotal role of competent and knowledgeable trainers in amplifying the effectiveness of PD programs. This result underscores the criticality of involving local trainers who are not only well-prepared but are also capable of imparting invaluable insights and support to participants within the Vietnamese educational landscape (Vu, 2020). The selection process for local trainers in the TAGs program in Vietnam is a meticulous process that ensures the selection of high-quality teacher educators (Mai & Hall, 2017), contributing to the high satisfaction reported by the teachers. The process often involves a thorough evaluation of potential local trainers' academic qualifications, teaching experience, expertise in the subject matter, and interpersonal skills (Vu, 2020). Typically, these local trainers possess advanced degrees in their field and have a proven track record in the classroom, showcasing their competence in their subject areas (Lunenberget al., 2014). Their deep knowledge, combined with their years of pedagogical practice, allows them to understand and address the real-world challenges teachers face. Moreover, the Vietnamese educational system values the capacity to foster supportive learning environments and encourages cooperation and collaboration (Economides, 2008), which are integral attributes considered during trainer selection. Additionally, the integration of native English speakers as facilitators significantly enhanced the quality of the TAGs under investigation, contributing to heightened participant satisfaction. These facilitators, fluent in English and culturally aware, not only delivered language instruction but also enriched the learning milieu (Truong & Murray, 2020). Their expertise and practical wisdom imbued authenticity to the learning process and broadened participants' perspectives (Prabjandee, 2020). Navigating complex cultural aspects of language often overlooked in traditional PD initiatives, they provided real-world context. Beyond knowledge dissemination, their mentorship role in TAGs stimulated a collaborative and reflective environment (Mann & Walsh, 2017). Their capacity to address diverse learning needs and facilitate self-directed learning, along with their adaptability (Richards & Rodgers, 2014), enriched the learning experience and bolstered participants' English teaching competence. By prioritizing these factors, the selection process ensures that trainers are well-equipped to facilitate engaging, effective, and relevant PD activities, which in turn leads to the high satisfaction observed among the teachers who have partook in the TAGs program.

The lesser mean scores observed for "Increase in class attendance" ($M=3.67$) and "Reduction in student dropout rate" ($M=3.56$) indicate that the participants perceived these aspects as potential areas warranting enhancement. This finding resonates with the existing challenges that teachers in Vietnam grapple with, specifically regarding fostering student engagement and curtailing dropout rates (Tri, 2021). The challenges stem from socio-cultural, economic, and institutional factors. For some students, particularly those in rural areas or from disadvantaged backgrounds, economic pressures may compel them to leave school early in favor of work to support their families (Doepke & Zilibotti, 2019). Furthermore, the rote-learning and examination-centered pedagogical approach traditionally employed in the Vietnamese educational system can sometimes fail to stimulate students' interest and active engagement (Tran, 2007; Tran, 2019), leading to student disinterest and eventual dropout. Additionally, discrepancies in educational resources and support between urban and rural schools (Nguyen et al., 2018), and between different socioeconomic groups (Ho et al., 2020), can exacerbate these challenges. A lack of specialized training and resources for teachers to effectively tackle these issues (Tran-Thanh, 2020), coupled with high student-to-teacher ratios (Van et al., 2019; Baum, 2020), often make it challenging to provide individualized attention and address the specific needs of each student, further hindering efforts to enhance student engagement and reduce dropout rates.

Analogously, the lower mean scores recorded for “Recognition of trainees” ($M=3.66$) and “Recognition of outstanding participants” ($M=3.65$) signify that the participants identified these facets as elements necessitating improvement. This observation is congruent with the prevalent issues that participants in the TAGs project contend with, notably concerning acknowledgment of participation and meritorious performance. These issues can be traced back to a multitude of operational, inter-personal, and institutional factors. For some participants, particularly those who contribute significantly or excel in their roles, lack of recognition may lead to disengagement and reduced motivation to participate (Akafo & Boateng, 2015). Moreover, the focus on collective learning and collaboration in the TAGs project could sometimes overshadow individual achievements (Ouyang & Chang, 2019), leading to dissatisfaction among the high-performing participants. Additionally, variations in digital competence and access to resources among participants from diverse backgrounds (Le et al., 2019), can intensify these concerns. The absence of a robust system to identify and reward excellent performances, in conjunction with large participant-to-facilitator ratios (Davis et al., 2022), often poses a challenge in offering personalized acknowledgment and catering to the specific needs of each participant, further impeding endeavors to improve participant satisfaction and engagement.

V. CONCLUSION

This study embarked upon an exploration into the satisfaction levels of K-12 Vietnamese teachers with the influence of TAGs on their PD. The outcomes indicate an overarching sense of satisfaction among participants with the TAGs program. The mean scores, varying from 3.56 to 4.38 on a 5-point scale, manifest positive perceptions regarding the program’s appeal, value, utility, and impact on PD. These findings concur with prior studies undertaken in the Vietnamese milieu, accentuating the beneficial influence of collaborative PD activities on teachers’ satisfaction and progression. The substantial mean scores corresponding to the trainers’ expertise reflect the criticality of having adept and knowledgeable trainers to boost the effectiveness of PD programs. Nonetheless, the lesser mean scores pertaining to the impact on student attendance and dropout rates signal the necessity for targeted interventions to tackle these specific concerns. The mean scores across each level of PD denote participants’ satisfaction across varied facets, encompassing reactions, learning, organizational support, application of knowledge and skills, and student outcomes. These findings reaffirm the multifaceted nature of efficacious PD programs within the Vietnamese setting, underlining the success of the TAGs program in meeting participants’ needs for knowledge acquisition, skill enhancement, and support from the school environment. Taken as a whole, this study enriches the burgeoning body of literature on PD in Vietnam, yielding insights into K-12 teachers’ satisfaction with TAGs and their perceptions of its impact on their PD. The findings underscore the importance of collaborative activities, knowledgeable trainers, and targeted interventions to address specific challenges in the Vietnamese educational framework, such as student attendance and dropout rates.

VI. IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study underscore the efficacy of TAGs in fostering teacher satisfaction and professional growth within the Vietnamese setting. This has implications for educational policymakers and school administrators, who can prioritize the implementation of collaborative PD programs akin to TAGs to facilitate teachers’ continuous learning and development. Furthermore, the positive perceptions regarding trainers’ knowledge underscore the importance of investing in trainers who possess expertise and can effectively buttress teachers’ PD. Teacher trainers in Vietnam can be spurred to continually develop their knowledge and skills, ensuring they are equipped to proffer valuable insights and support to participants. Next, the lower satisfaction scores related to the impact on student attendance and dropout rates suggest the need for targeted interventions to address these challenges in the Vietnamese educational system. Further research and initiatives could focus on implementing strategies that enhance student attendance, retention, and overall engagement in the classroom.

In broader contexts, the positive satisfaction levels observed in this study highlight the importance of collaborative PD activities in various educational contexts worldwide. The findings reinforce the idea that providing opportunities for teachers to collaborate, exchange ideas, and learn from each other is integral to their professional growth and satisfaction. Additionally, the emphasis on trainers’ knowledge underscores the significance of competent and well-prepared trainers in facilitating effective PD. Education systems in other countries can prioritize the selection, training, and ongoing support of trainers to ensure they possess the necessary expertise and can effectively contribute to teachers’ PD. Moreover, the study’s implications for addressing specific challenges, such as student attendance and dropout rates, can be valuable for other contexts worldwide. Recognizing and addressing local educational challenges within PD initiatives can lead to more targeted and impactful interventions that positively influence both teacher and student outcomes. Last but not least, the positive perceptions of the TAGs program highlight the value of fostering a culture of continuous learning among educators. Education systems globally can encourage and provide opportunities for teachers to engage in collaborative PD activities, empowering them to enhance their teaching practices, support student learning, and contribute to their own professional growth.

VII. LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study is not without limitations. Firstly, the sample size of 147 K-12 teachers, while adequate for the scope of this study, may limit the generalizability of the findings to the broader population of teachers in Vietnam. Future studies could aim for larger and more diverse samples to enhance the generalizability of the results and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of TAGs on teacher satisfaction. Secondly, the reliance on self-reported data from participants may introduce response biases or social desirability effects. Even though the research team implemented several strategies, such as employing the use of anonymous surveys, embedding consistency checks within the questionnaire to cross-verify the authenticity and reliability of the responses, and assuring the participants of the confidential handling of the data and the importance of honesty in responses to the accuracy and value of the research outcomes, they could not avoid the fact that participants may provide responses that they believe align with societal expectations or the perceived goals of the study. Therefore, to mitigate this limitation, future studies could incorporate multiple sources of data, such as classroom observations or interviews, to provide a more comprehensive and well-rounded understanding of the impact of TAGs on PD. Lastly, while the study briefly explored the impact of TAGs on student outcomes, a more comprehensive investigation is needed. Further studies could delve deeper into the direct and indirect effects of TAGs on student learning and achievement. This would provide valuable insights into the program's effectiveness in improving educational outcomes.

Additionally, several recommendations can guide future research. Firstly, conducting long-term impact assessments would enable a better understanding of the sustained effects of participating in TAGs on teachers' PD and student outcomes. A longitudinal approach would provide insights into the durability and effectiveness of the program over an extended period. Secondly, comparative studies involving multiple PD programs or interventions would allow for a more comprehensive analysis. Comparing TAGs to other approaches would shed light on the unique contributions and advantages of TAGs, helping to identify best practices and inform decision-making for PD initiatives. Incorporating mixed-methods approaches would also enrich future studies. Integrating qualitative research methods, such as interviews or focus groups, alongside quantitative data collection, would offer a deeper understanding of teachers' experiences, perceptions, and the contextual factors that influence the effectiveness of TAGs. This combined approach would provide a more comprehensive and nuanced analysis of the program's impact. Exploring potential moderating factors that may influence the effectiveness of TAGs is another avenue for future research. Factors such as teachers' prior experience, subject area, or school characteristics could be investigated to identify specific contextual elements that contribute to successful implementation and outcomes. Additionally, conducting similar studies in different educational contexts beyond Vietnam would contribute to a broader understanding of collaborative PD practices worldwide. This would help determine the generalizability and effectiveness of TAGs in diverse settings and facilitate cross-cultural comparisons. Finally, exploring the combination of TAGs with other PD approaches, such as mentoring, coaching, or online learning, could provide valuable insights into the synergistic effects and potential benefits of integrating multiple strategies to enhance teacher professional growth.

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