Learning and Development Factors Affecting Professionalism: The Evidence from Young Professionals of Law Enforcement Agencies in Pakistan

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The learning and development of young professionals (YPs) of an organization are important because it is directly linked to the attainment of strategic objectives by that organization. The subject is a growing field of study which needs to be further explored. For the purpose learning and development-related issues of YPs in hierarchical non-profit organizations such as Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) have been focused in this article. The researcher has probed to what extent learning and development factors i.e. career counseling, team-based learning, and talent-oriented development with mediating effect of 'motivation to learn' impact professionalism of YPs, in Police Organizations and Civil Armed Forces (CAFs) based at Islamabad, Rawalpindi, and Peshawar, Pakistan. A simple random sampling technique was adopted for data collection. Out of 400 YPs chosen for the sample, only 302 responded. To see the relationship between the variables, a regression test was run using SPSS. Results showed that all learning and developmental factors mediated by 'motivation to learn' have a significant positive effect on professionalism. The study established that LEAs and other such hierarchal organizations can train and develop their young professionals well by adopting a practical approach instead of following the least effective traditional methods. Such development initiatives not only benefit individuals but also become a source of strength for the organizations. Since LEAs have a vital role in maintaining law and order, highly essential for the stability and economic strength of the countries like Pakistan therefore, the subject needs to be explored further in future studies.

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Learning is defined as a change in knowledge taking place due to some experience (Budhiraja, 2022). Likewise, development is an enduring and evolutionary process that involves many experiences caused by lifelong learning (Liu, 2017). It can therefore, be claimed that development takes place due to learning experiences (Mason & Brougham, 2020). The learning and development of young professionals in an organization are important because it directly affects the strategic objectives of that organization (Pashak et al., 2018). Such objectives can only be achieved through well-planned initial grooming and development of young professionals Harikrishnan (2015). In order to link the human resource development (HRD) policies and activities with the strategic objectives of the organization, it is assumed that human resource (HR) handlers must set actions and decisions that influence professionalism. Thus the policy of raising professional standards right from the start of the career of a fresh entrant is not only essential for the success of an individual but that of the organization as well (Salminen & Miettinen, 2019). Many contemporary leaders in the field of law enforcement are also strong advocates of the development of young professionals entering law enforcement agencies (Akey et al., 2017). Because it is argued that the success and failure of LEAs have great implications for the peace, prosperity, and development of countries like Pakistan (Abbas, 2011) which in turn is dependent upon the quality development of young professionals being a strategic asset. However, in LEAs and other such hierarchical larger organizations, a lot of talent is being wasted due to lack of focused initial development (Landry, 2015). Many highly talented professionals do not get the right opportunities to explore their real talent to become true professionals, upon joining such organizations (Kayani, 2022). They either are assigned tasks beyond their talent or are not guided properly. Hence, they hardly come up to their true potential. Despite having capabilities they do not get the requisite progression in their careers due to a lack of professionalism (Khan & Sana, 2014). Since LEAs are deficient of quality development schemes, therefore, authority and discipline are used as the main tools for

instilling professionalism. Grades and results are focused without appropriately steering young professionals in the right direction. The career and long-term success of fresh entrants are mostly dependent on background schooling and the environment provided to them before entering the organization (Hilal & Litsey, 2020). The situation is more challenging because LEAs need to train new professionals comparatively on a fast-track basis due to the high attrition rate and application of the principle of survival of the fittest (Ghezzi et al., 2021).

Rationale of the Study

Literature review on learning and development has revealed that the focus of majority of the researchers has mainly been on the financial, telecom, and banking sectors as well as on NGOs and to a lesser extent on the public sector (Mulvie, 2021). Only few of the studies related to security or law enforcement organizations are available in the body of knowledge (Winda et al., 2017) even though no business or economy can be successful unless there is stable law and order situation in a country. This is particularly true in the case of Pakistan where hardly anyone would be interested to invest unless there is a stable security environment, which is only possible with effective and well-trained law enforcement agencies. In this regard, Satterfield (2019) argues that the subject of learning and development programs for professionalism in LEAs is a growing field of study therefore, there is limited research and the subject needs to be further explored, while Khan (2018) recommends that future study should be carried out to evaluate how issues of learning and development are handled in institutions and how they affect staff motivation and professionalism. Rowley (2016) also highlights the need for research to study the extent to which learning and development practices reflect the alignment of individual professionalism and organizational management strategies. Many other scholars have also carried out research work on learning, 'motivation to learn, and professionalism but not in the context the researcher intends to. This research does fill this deficiency in existing knowledge thereby making it a great addition to the literature on the subject.

Increasing challenges of vibrant societies demand LEAs have highly motivated, skilled, and loyal employees, who are committed to the success of the organization while planning a long-term career within the organization (Thomas, 2019). Therefore, the study will investigate such initial learning and development-related issues of young professionals in two different contexts, i.e., Police and Civil Armed Forces (CAFs). For the purpose, the impact of three development strategies on professionalism i.e., career counseling (Di Fabio, et al., 2022), team-based learning (Pandey e al., 2019), and talent-oriented development (Ratnawati, et al., 2022) with mediating role of 'motivation to learn in the LEAs perspective has been focused, in line with Harikrishnan (2015) argument that firms would have to educate and develop a core group of professionals who have a quest for continuous learning and the ability to deal with doubt and changing job assignments.

Learning and Development

Learning and development elaborate several activities directed at enhancing both individual and organizational performance (Hong & Minor, 2016). It can be said that development is the long-term process of breeding and cultivating the shape of the individual's working life to make the best use of inherent talents, skills, knowledge, and interests for that person (Peel, 1992). Learning and development can also be defined as an ongoing process by which an individual progresses through a series of stages, each of which is qualified by a comparatively unique set of issues, themes, or tasks (Andresen et al., 2020). Alnajim (2022) defined learning and development as a formal approach to ensure that professionals with proper qualifications and experience are available when needed. According to Schuler and Jackson (2011) learning and development can be perceived as a means by which organizations address employees' needs. Taking into consideration Maslow's hierarchy of needs and ERG theory, it can be deduced that learning and development are central to motivation and personal fulfillment, not only in working life but spreading also in social areas of an individual's life (Peel, 1992). By offering development opportunities, organizations support employees to develop their competitive advantage and ensure their long-term employability. When

they receive such opportunities, employees are likely to commit to the organization (Khan et al., 2020).

Professionalism

The study of professionalism and professions has a wide-ranging historical background starting from the descriptive explanations of Carr-Saunders and Wilson (1933), to the quasi-scientific trait work of Greenwood (1957), to the professional models developed by Larson (1977). Profession, professional, and professionalization, are all highly indistinct terms. Likewise, Janowitz (2017) has defined professionalism as specific expertise earned through rigorous training, a sense of a group distinctiveness, values and performance, and good management mechanism. The role of professionalism incorporates the criterion of education, training, integrity, specialized knowledge, and science and technology into the profession (Abbas, 2015). Today learning and development have a central place in enhancing individuals' professionalism (Mignonac et al., 2019). LEAs also need to support professional advancement and be committed to it through an ongoing process of learning and development of their professionals (Carter, 2021). A professional whom the LEA is promoting to a higher rank or appointing him/her to a senior position could benefit from that promotion or appointment, while the LEA as an organization benefit from his/her professional standards.

Career Counseling

The origin of career counseling can be traced to the beginning of the 20th century with Frank Parson's approach to helping clients develop an understanding of self and the world of work. Parson's career counseling approach constituted the basis for his launching of the Vocation Bureau at Civic Service House in Boston in 1908. This was the first institutionalization of career counseling (Ginzberg, 1972). The terms career counseling and career development came into more common usage in the 1950s through the work of Donald Super and were institutionalized when the name of the National Vocational Guidance Association (1913-1983) was changed to the National Career Development Association in

1984 (Pope, 2000). But the field of career counseling as a distinctive area was acknowledged in the early 1980s with the establishment of career counseling competencies, credentials, and preparation and ethical standards. According to Tahir et al. (2018), counseling is an interactive process conjoining the counselee who is vulnerable and needs assistance and the counselor who is trained to give this assistance. The goal is to help the counselee learn how to deal effectively with himself and the reality of his environment. According to Engelkes and Vandergoot (1982) counseling is an interactive process soldering the counselee who is weak and requires assistance and the counselor who is an expert to give this assistance. The goal is to help the counselee learn how to deal effectively with himself and the reality of his environment.

Team-Based Learning

In recent years, scholars have made claims about the positive benefits of work teams for organizations (Ford & Watts, 2018). Söderhjelm et al. (2018) and Pandey et al. (2019), in their studies, found out that when teams are learning then individuals learning performance is also enhanced. The overall results of their studies established that team-based learning has a positive strong effect on knowledge and performance. Shujaat, Set al. (2017) also concludes that learning through peers is highly beneficial for infusing professionalism in employees. Hence, according to the majority opinion of specialists, team-based learning should help both to enhance organizational performance and also to boost employees' professional standards (Davis, 2015). Cook (2021) also noted that member beliefs in the team's effectiveness can be a key factor and beneficial in raising their professional standards. Whereas Wilderom (2017) found that team members' beliefs in team effectiveness were related to higher levels of motivation to learn. These factors inculcate professionalism in individuals and teams both (Watzek et al., 2019).

Talent Oriented Development

Talent-oriented development (Awan, 2016) is about identifying, developing, motivating, and promoting people who have the potential to succeed within an organization (Bruque, 2019). It is an ongoing and

proactive activity (Hsieh, 2019).   Likewise, Piech (2016) states that organizations that embed talent-oriented development into their very core can have better success over the long run. It has also been stated that augmenting the organization's human talents will lead to the organization booming (Pinnington, 2017). According to Rita (2013), talent management involves positioning the right people for the right jobs. The study also established that the application of talent management practices enhances professionalism and organizational growth. It is also found that the pursuit of a strategy focusing on retaining talent has the greatest effect on the learning process and professionalism. The study by Khan and Sana (2014) established that talent-oriented development and management practices positively affect the organizational strength of law enforcement forces. It is, therefore, generally acknowledged amongst management researchers that talent-oriented development influences the professional standards of individuals.

Motivation to Learn

Motivation is considered a highly important aspect of the learning process. It is the force that drives professionals to do things, take up opportunities, and show commitment to what they want to achieve (Rowold, 2007). In other words, motivation to learn contributes to professionalism. An individual's motivation to learn and learning-related attitudes have each been shown to play a vital role in the development of practices and professionalism (Mishra & Sahoo, 2021). For example, mindset towards learning has been defined as the extent to which a professional conceives positively about the development of professional skills (Maurer, Weiss, et al., 2003) or the level up to which an individual thinks learning and development activities are imperative for professionalism and whether an individual finds himself inspired to participate in development activities (Mishra & Sahoo, 2021). Therefore, an individual's motivation to learn is a significant predictor of their developmental intents and ensuing conduct. Without motivation to learn, the development practices cannot be effective (Ryan & Deci, 2016). Learning activities must generate motivation to learn which leads to professionalism. Hence, motivation can be a predictor of professionalism

and is being studied as a mediator between independent and dependent variables in this study.

Problem Statement

The researcher intends to investigate to what extent learning and development practices like career counseling, team-based learning, and talent-oriented development influence the infusion of professionalism in young professionals, particularly in hierarchical organizations such as law enforcement agencies in Pakistan.

Study Objectives.
- To investigate the impact of learning and development strategies on young professionals of law enforcement agencies with mediating role of 'motivation to learn.
- To help human resource managers of larger hierarchical organizations in raising the professional standards of their young professionals through effective and focused human resource development practices.

Research Question

Do learning and development practices like career counseling, team-based learning, and talent-oriented development motivate young professionals, working in law enforcement agencies to learn, and does it impact their professional standards?
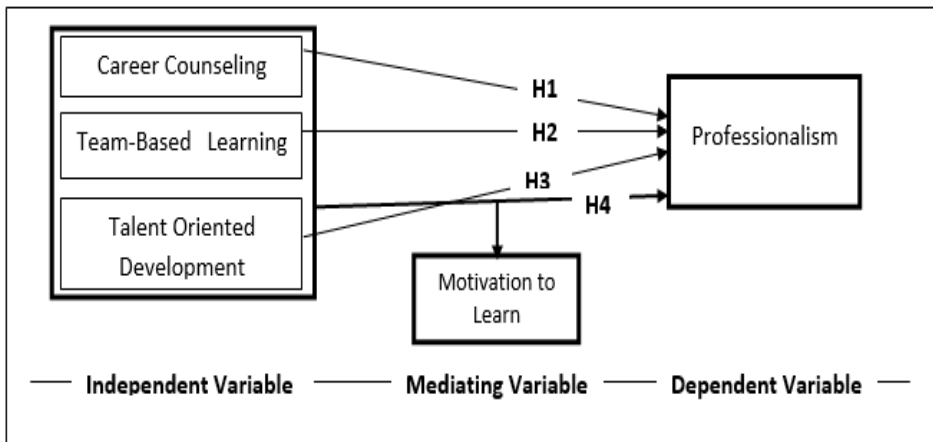
Hypotheses

The research hypotheses for this study are as under:

- H1a: Career counseling has a significant positive effect on the professionalism of young professionals.
- H1b: Team-based learning has a significant positive effect on the professionalism of young professionals.
- H1c: Talent-oriented development has a significant positive effect on the professionalism of young professionals.
- H1d: 'Motivation to learn' mediates the relationship between career counseling, team-based learning, talent-oriented development, and young professionals' professionalism.

Method

Research Design

Non-contrived settings and cross-sectional methods were employed to establish the relationship between professionalism and learning and development factors.

Sampling Strategy and Sample

The research population comprised Police and CAFs based at Rawalpindi-Islamabad and Peshawar including training centers of LEAs. A simple random sampling technique was used for data collection. Out of 400 respondents chosen for the distribution of the questionnaire, 302 all ranks of different outfits returned the survey questionnaire as shown in Table 1 below:-

Table 1

Table of sampling details

Department	Officers	Other Rank
Civil Armed Forces	47	120
Police	25	110
Total	72	230
Overall Total		302

Research Instrument

The research questionnaire was adapted from research studies by Miller & Fry (1976), Douglas (1997), Ntege & Kochf (2006), Mikander (2010), Chan, et al. (2012), and Roper (2013). The Likert rating scale was used with a sampling frame from 1-5; where "1" meant 'strongly disagree' and "5" intended for 'strongly agree'. For professionalism and team-based learning, seven items each, and for career counseling, talent-oriented development, and 'motivation to learn', six items each were made part of the questionnaire.

Data Analysis Techniques

SPSS 20 was used to analyze the data. Regression, correlation, ANOVA, and Shapiro-Wilk tests were conducted for hypothesis, correlation and mediation testing as well as to see the normality of the data.

Factor Analysis

A questionnaire adapted from various research studies was used. A factor analysis was performed to ascertain whether the questions put forth in the questionnaire contributed significantly to the factor, which they measure.

Table 2

Table of factor analysis test results

Items No.	Values	CC	TBL	TOD
1-19	Eigenvalue	8.70	3.32	2.15
	% of variance	27.20	10.33	6.78
	Cumulative %	27.20	37.59	50.53

Note. Source: Primary Data

Career Counseling has an Eigenvalue of 8.705 and a percentage variance of 27.203. Team-based learning has an Eigenvalue of 3.324 and a percentage variance of 10.338.   Talent-oriented development has an Eigenvalue of 2.159 and a percentage variance of 6.784. Overall, the

factors contribute to 50.531% of the variance in Learning and Development practices.

Cronbach's Alpha Test

This test is applied to check the reliability of the instrument. The reliability is considered better if the value is closer to 1. The value is not acceptable if it is below 0.5. In this case, the reliability of all the constructs is closer to 1 which is quite better and acceptable.

Table 3

Result of Cronbach alpha test

Career Counseling	0.81
Team-Based Learning	0.92
Talent Oriented Development	0.84
Motivation to Learn	0.87
Professionalism	0.74

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Table 4

Table of descriptive statistics results (N=302)

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Professionalism	1.21	5.00	4.03	.59
Career Counseling	1.19	5.00	5.019	1.09
Team-Based Learning	1.38	5.00	4.82	.71
Talent Oriented Development	1.11	5.00[a]	5.21	1.09
Motivation to Learn	1.29	5.00	3.75	2.78

Note. The statistics in Table 4 show the mean value in respect of all the independent and mediating variables as well as the dependent variable i.e. Professionalism.

Correlation, Regression, and ANOVA Test

Table 5

Table of Correlation, Regression, and ANOVA Test (N= 302)

Correlation Results

		Career Counseling	Team-Based Learning	Talent Oriented Development	Professionalism
Career Counseling	Pearson Correlation	1	.51**	.58**	.47**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.00	.00	.00
Team Based Learning	Pearson Correlation	.56**	1	.58**	.39**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00		.00	.00
Talent Oriented Development	Pearson Correlation	.59**	.54**	1	.48**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00	.00		.00
Professionalism	Pearson Correlation	.43**	.39**	.52**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00	.00	.00	

Regression Results

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.21	.20		10.56	.00
Career Counseling	.08	.04	.11	1.79	.05
Team Based Learning	.28	.06	.33	4.71	.00

Talent Oriented Development	.08	.04	.12	1.89	.04

ANOVA Results

	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	24.98	3	8.32	32.03	.00[b]
1	Residual	77.87	299	.26		
	Total	103.76	302			

*Note. ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

a. Dependent Variable: Professionalism

b. Predictors: (Constant), Career Counseling, Team-Based Learning, Talent Oriented   Development

The strength of the relationship has been explained between dependent and independent variables in Table 5 under correlation results. All the independent variables are correlated with professionalism which is the dependent variable as the values lie between -1 and +1. The value of $\beta 0$ in Table 5 under regression results is 2.21 indicating that the y-axis will be intercepted by the regression line at this point. For finding out the impact of each variable on professionalism separately, the effect of all the other independent variables was considered constant.

- **Career Counseling**. Table 5 regression results show that career counseling is significant at a 5% (0.05) level and the Beta value against career counseling indicates that keeping all other factors constant, on average1 unit increase in its value will increase Professionalism by 0.082 units.
- **Team-Based Learning**. Team-based learning is significant at a 1 % level as shown in Table 5 under regression Beta value of team-based learning indicates that on average 1 unit increase in its value will increase professionalism by .28 units keeping all other factors constant.
- **Talent Oriented Development**. Results in Table 5 under regression show that talent-oriented development is significant at 4% (.04) level of significance and the Beta value of talent-oriented development

means that on average one unit change in its value will cause a .081units increase in Professionalism keeping all other factors constant.

Effect of Independent Variables on Dependent Variables (H1a, H1b, and H1c)

The mean square value in Table 5 under ANOVA results depicts the fitness of the model which means a 26.6 % change in professionalism i.e., the dependent variable is explained by career counseling, team-based learning, and talent-oriented development. Moreover, the value of F-calculated under ANOVS results is 32.03, which is greater than F-tabulated. This implies that three independent variables have a combined significant effect on the dependent variable i.e. professionalism.

Results Model Summary

Table 6

Table of Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.51[a]	.26	.24	.561	1.68

Mediating Effect of 'Motivation to Learn' between Independent Variables and Dependent Variables i.e. Professionalism (H1d)

Table 7

Table of Regression Results for Mediation

	Index	SE (Boot)	LL95% CI	UL 95% CI
Bootstrap results in the indirect effect of career counseling, team-based learning, and talent-oriented development on professionalism	.02	.01	.00	.05

Note. Unstandardized regression coefficients reported. Bootstrap sample size 302. LL = lower limit; CI = confidence interval; UL = upper limit

To test the mediation effect of 'motivation to learn', the bootstrapping method was used. It is indirect mediation testing applied in multiple regression analysis. For this test, sample means are computed repeatedly to make it free of error biasness. According to the results reflected in Table 7, it is evident that the mean indirect effect of learning and development practices (career counseling, team-based learning, talent-oriented development) on the dependent variable i.e. professionalism through the mediation of 'motivation to learn' is significant. The bootstrapping values are .00 to .05 with a 95 % confidence interval excluding zero. These results sufficiently support that 'motivation to learn' mediates the association between learning and development practices and professionalism.

Discussion

The purpose of this research was to illuminate the process of learning and development practices leading to professionalism in law enforcement organizations. The study confirms the importance of the initial environment for young professionals found in previous studies like those of Smith (2003), Vaughan (2010), and Alnajim (2022). Moreover, the study extends the literature that various aspects of basic guidance and grooming environment affect the development process in different ways. The way in which young professionals are treated is not only seen as amplifying professionalism but the one in which motivation is seen as necessary for professional competence through learning (Andresen et al., 2020). Given that co-workers' support has a direct relationship with young professionals' development, equipping work colleagues to support and encourage one another in the learning process may enhance the feelings of motivation for infusion of professionalism in fresh entrants (Mostafa, 2022). In view of this, it would be worthwhile to engage young professionals in group activities to help them assess their strengths and weaknesses and identify any opportunities for their professional development (Maurer, 2003). Professionalism must be taught (Cain, 2020)

but, it is equally important that young professionals have a consistent message from colleagues and training organizations (Klimova & Kondykov, 2021).

The results of correlation analysis confirm the findings of Ramadhan (2021) that when young professionals are guided and directed well regarding their role, they get motivated to learn and improve their professional skills, which is highly essential to improve their professional standards (Suwardi, 2021). The current study also supports findings by Kayani (2022) that a practical and focused approach to the development of fresh entrants not only motivates them to learn but also professionalizes them for their success in the long run. Hence, professionalism is directly linked to the success and strength of the organization (Numonjonov, 2020). For 'motivation to learn' and professionalism, organizations must focus on human-related issues. When individuals see the benefits of learning then they participate in development activities voluntarily (Tharenou, 2001). Because of these effects, organizations may wish to examine the extent to which learning and initial development are valued, emphasized, and communicated through organizational policy and practice (Dalal & Akdere, 2021). However, research shows that all young professionals do not have the same level of access to training and development opportunities (Bryson, et al., 2006). Therefore, it would be judicious for organizations to examine the availability and distribution of such opportunities as also suggested by Melnyk et al. (2021), to ensure that all young professionals can develop their full potential.

Recommendations

This study highlights that focused learning and development practices are highly valuable for the professionalization of young professionals and the effectiveness of the organization as a whole. Therefore, Police and CAFs, and other such non-profit hierarchal outfits must focus on quality learning and development of their young professionals by addressing their major issues. Being a strategic asset, they must be energized to learn and raise their professional standards. Satisfied and true professionals are more productive and beneficial for organizations. Some of the relevant recommendations suggested are:-

- Leaders should receive training in career counseling, coaching, and mentoring to enhance the professional competence of their subordinates.
- Team-based learning should be used as validation tests to identify talent to best fit young professionals in the jobs and make this a baseline when designing development programs.
- It is strongly recommended that LEAs should start adopting diversified learning and development tools and allocate budgets for employees' professional activities, related to the job and organization development goals.

Conclusion

One of the primary goals of HRD in LEAs is to improve the capability of young professionals so that they can contribute more effectively to the organization's goals (Washington, 2003). This study allows a grasp of factors essential for realizing professionalism such as Career Counseling, Team-Based Learning, and Talent Oriented Development. Organizations can handle the development affairs of young professionals well by focusing on practical policies instead of traditional and status quo approaches. When employees' development needs are catered for chances of their success as well as that of the organizational are enhanced.

Limitations

Law enforcement agencies all over Pakistan should have been covered instead of covering just a few institutions. Moreover, a comparative study of organizations having more number of true professionals and vice versa should have been carried out for better findings.

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