

Continuing education at ISPITSO: Challenges and prospects

BELHAJ Hanane*¹, BA-AQQA Zahra¹

¹Higher Institute of Nursing Professions and Health Techniques, BV El Maghreb El Arabi, Oujda, Morocco

*Corresponding author, Email address: hanaebelhaj02@gmail.com

Abstract:

This study explores the challenges, constraints, and prospects of continuing education for teachers at ISPITSO (Higher Institute of Nursing Professions and Health Techniques of Oujda), using a dual methodological approach: a questionnaire sent to teachers and a semi-structured interview conducted with continuing education managers. Cross-analysis of the data revealed several findings: a generally well-structured training program, but still modest participation, hampered by workload, lack of recognition and incentives, and the absence of formal monitoring mechanisms.

Despite these limitations, respondents expressed a genuine interest in strengthening their teaching and scientific skills. The proposals put forward highlight the need for better targeting of needs, a system for evaluating outcomes, and clearer recognition of teachers' investment.

Participants proposed several levers for improvement, including the digitization of content, the implementation of monitoring indicators, the strengthening of partnerships, and better recognition of training efforts. The study calls for a rethinking of the system, placing it within a framework of sustainable professional development.

Keywords: Continuing education; challenges; prospects; teachers; ISPITSO.

Received: 15/03/2024

Revised: 10/05/2024

Accepted: 15/05/2024

Published: 19/05/2024

I. Introduction

In the current context of higher education in the health sector, the quality of training for future professionals is closely linked to the continuous development of the professional, pedagogical, and scientific skills of teachers (Vescio et al., 2008). At the Higher Institute of Nursing Professions and Health Techniques of Oujda (ISPITSO), continuing education is mainly aimed at teachers, with the

ambitious goal of strengthening their ability to provide innovative teaching based on best practices and in line with current requirements in the field.

Indeed, the growing complexity of care, the incorporation of learner-centered teaching approaches, the accelerated progression of training standards, and digital innovations in teaching require the ongoing harmonization of teaching practices (Anderson & Dron, 2011). With this in mind, continuing education is a strategic issue for ISPITSO; it provides an opportunity not only to update and adjust knowledge, but also to develop skills in educational management and academic research (Borko, 2004).

This article examines the specific challenges of continuing education for ISPITSO teachers, highlighting its impact on institutional action and teaching quality, while exploring the prospects for consolidating and enhancing this process with a view to professionalization and academic improvement.

Teachers' professional development

The concept of professional growth is fundamental to understanding the impact of continuing education. Guskey (2002) presents it as an organized learning process aimed at developing subject knowledge, teaching skills, and professional conduct. This development is reflected in increased self-confidence, improved performance, and an excellent fit with the ever-changing world of teaching.

According to Vescio et al (2008), teachers' professional knowledge covers three areas: theoretical scientific knowledge, practical knowledge, and empirical and experiential knowledge. Continuing education should therefore enable the fusion and integration of these dimensions within a framework of professionalization.

Continuing education: lifelong learning

Continuing education adheres to the paradigm of lifelong learning, defined by UNESCO as a cornerstone of contemporary education (Delors et al., 1996). Teachers are therefore encouraged to constantly revisit and refresh their skills in light of successive changes in technology, science, and pedagogical approaches.

Continuing education is no longer considered an isolated act, but rather a systemic cycle, intertwined with professional careers, which supports both individual aspirations and institutional objectives (Borko, 2004).

Institutional challenges and implementation modalities

Continuing education can only be successful and effective if certain organizational and formal conditions are met, including funding, accessibility, institutional legitimacy, and alignment with the institution's educational objectives (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). The support of the institution is therefore essential for teachers to engage in a meaningful and ongoing training process.

In addition, difficulties such as unavailability due to workload, lack of follow-up, insufficient commitment and motivation, or unsuitable content can hinder the effectiveness of these programs if the real needs of teachers are not taken into account (Opfer & Pedder, 2011).

Prospects and avenues for innovation:

Finally, continuing education opens the door to a multitude of opportunities, namely: adherence to active methods, the integration of recent educational technologies, knowledge sharing, and interdisciplinary cooperation. The use of online training also helps to alleviate professional

constraints and promote skills development (Anderson & Dron, 2011). These processes open up new horizons for pedagogical renewal and the transformation of higher education in health.

II. Materials and methods

1. Methodological approach

This research is based on a mixed approach with a descriptive and exploratory intent. It combines quantitative data, collected through questionnaires, with qualitative data obtained from semi-structured interviews. This methodology made it possible to explore overall trends in teacher's perceptions and in-depth opinions of managers on the conduct of continuing education.

2. Population and sample

The study was conducted at the Higher Institute of Nursing Professions and Health Techniques of Oujda (ISPITSO). It targeted two dissimilar populations:

- Teachers.
- Administrative and educational managers responsible for continuing education.

According to an exhaustive sampling, all members of the target population are included in the sample, without selection.

3. Data collection

- **Semi-structured interviews:** Conducted with continuing education managers to identify implementation constraints, institutional challenges, intended outcomes, and areas for improvement.
- **Self-administered questionnaire:** Sent to teachers, it contained closed-ended questions and Likert scale questions on the following aspects: Participation rates, challenges and obstacles, motivations, perceptions and experiences, impact on practice, perceived benefits and satisfaction, expectations, and suggestions.

4. Ethical considerations

All participants were informed of the voluntary nature of participation, the respect for anonymity, and the objectives of the study. The questionnaires were submitted and the interviews were conducted with informed consent.

III. Results

Most teachers have more than 10 years of seniority (52.6%). Teachers with between 1 and 5 years of seniority represent 42.1%, while those with between 6 and 10 years are very few (5.3%).

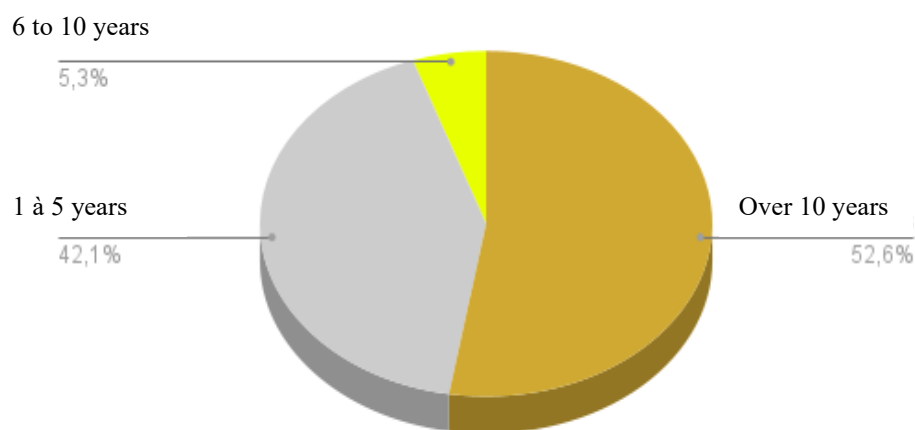


Figure1. Seniority of teaching at ISPITSO.

All respondents (100%) reported having participated in at least one continuing education course.

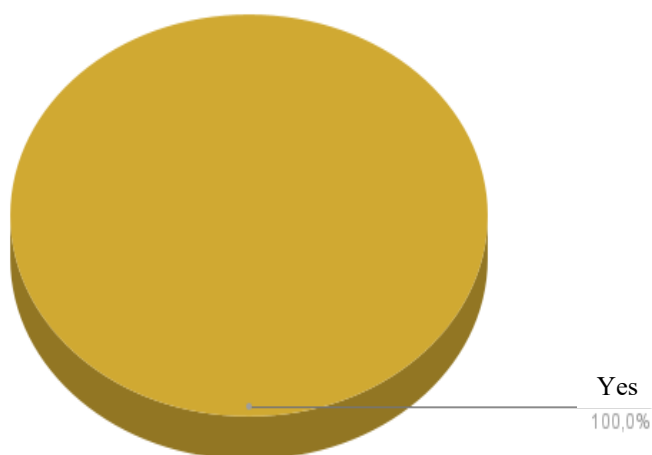


Figure 2. Participation in at least one continuing education course at ISPITSO.

The majority of participants (94.7%) reported having participated in continuing education courses over the past three years, although 5.3% did not participate.

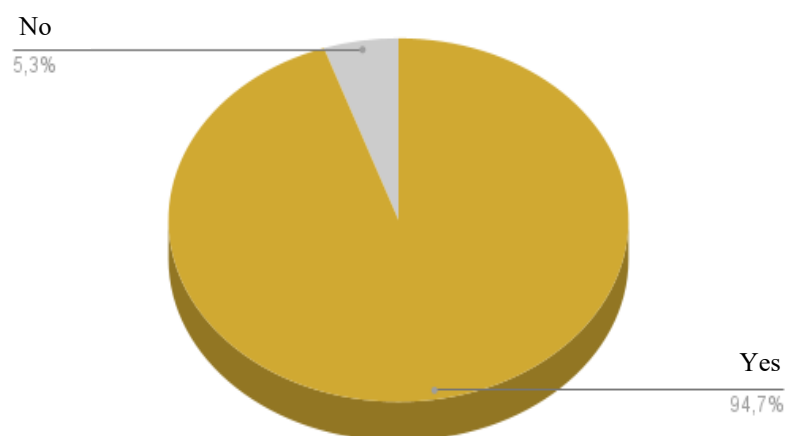


Figure 3. Participation in continuing education courses over the last three years.

55.6% of respondents participated in more than five continuing education courses, 38.9% participated between one and two times, and 5.6% participated between three and five times.

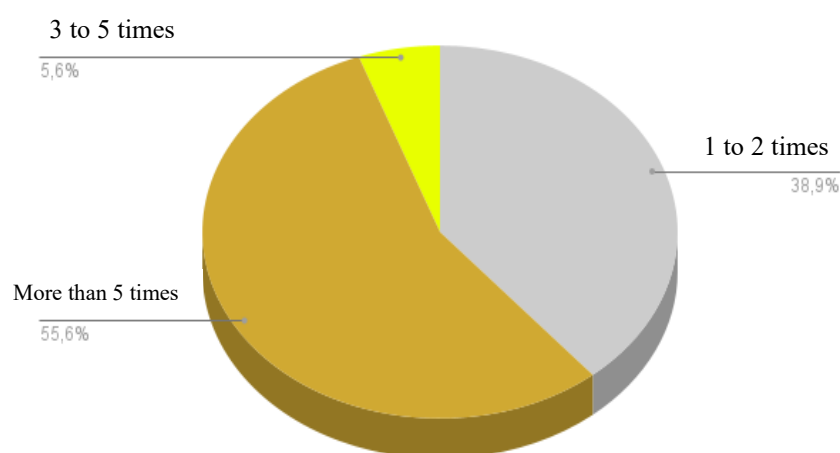


Figure 4. Frequency of participation in continuing education courses over the past three years.

52.6% of respondents consider the training courses to be “somewhat” relevant, 36.8% consider them to be “very relevant” and 10.5% consider them to be “moderately” relevant. No one reported that they were not relevant or only slightly relevant.

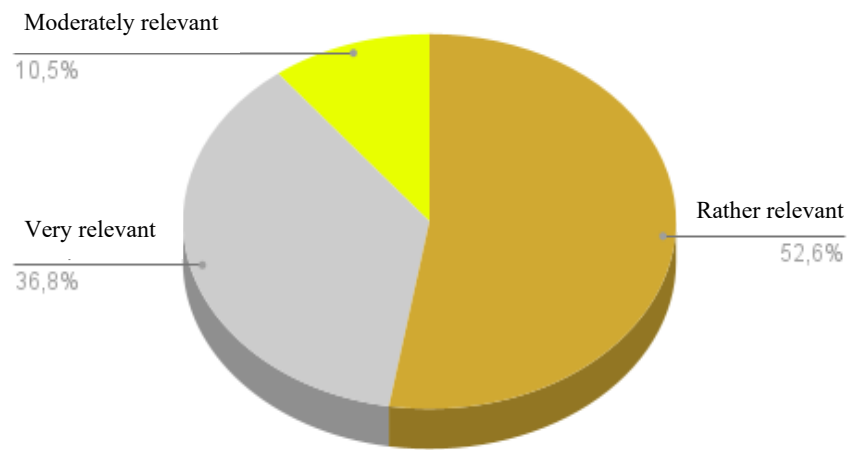


Figure 5. Relevance of training courses offered for teaching practice.

26.3% of respondents reported difficulties in participating in continuing education, compared to 73.7% who reported no difficulties.

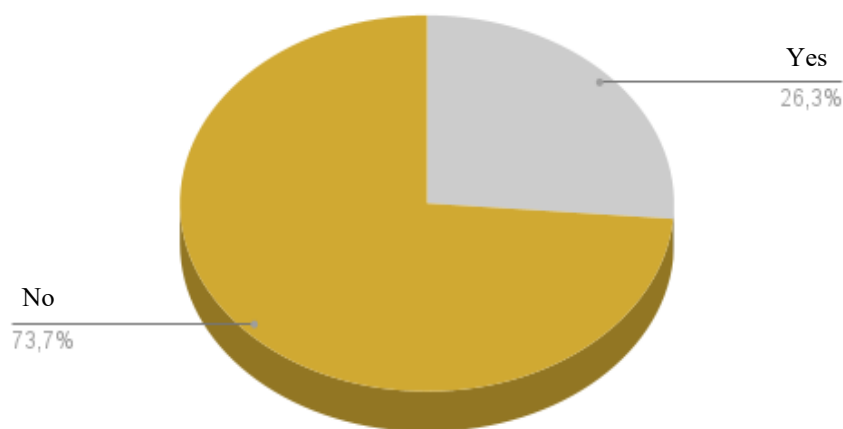


Figure 6. Challenges faced in participating in continuing education programs.

The most frequently cited training courses are those related to academic research (94.7%). Next are courses related to new technologies and digital teaching (78.9%), as well as those on innovative teaching methods (73.7%). Courses on classroom and student management attract moderate interest (47.4%).

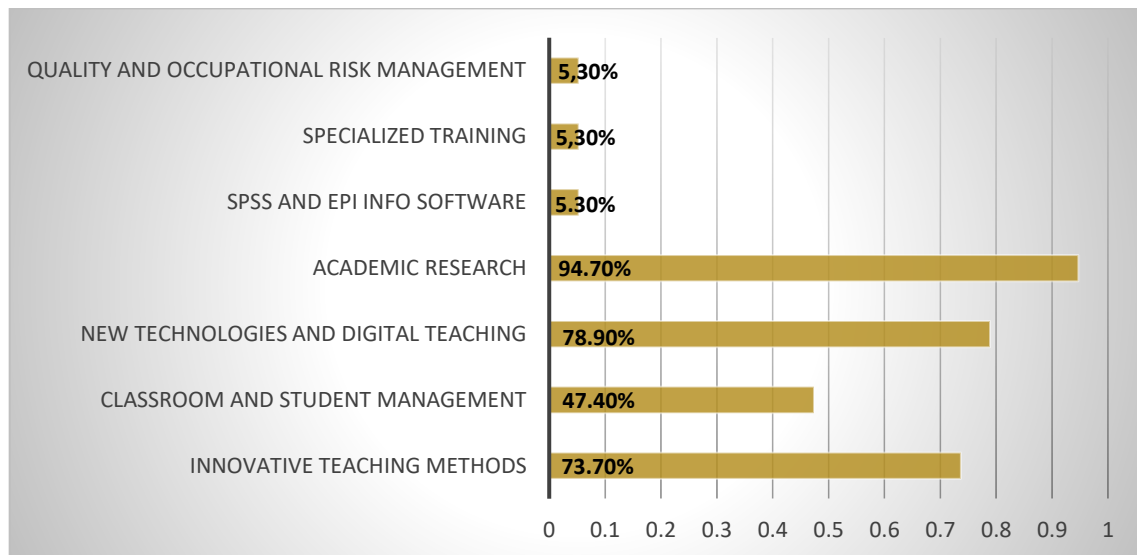


Figure 7. Types of training useful for professional development.

The main obstacle to participation is lack of availability (89.5%). Participants also highlight the lack of practical workshops (57.9%) and, to a lesser extent, the lack of suitable training (31.6%) and lack of personal interest or commitment (31.6%). Lack of information is an obstacle for 21.1% of respondents. Finally, 5.3% added that the topics offered should be developed and new.

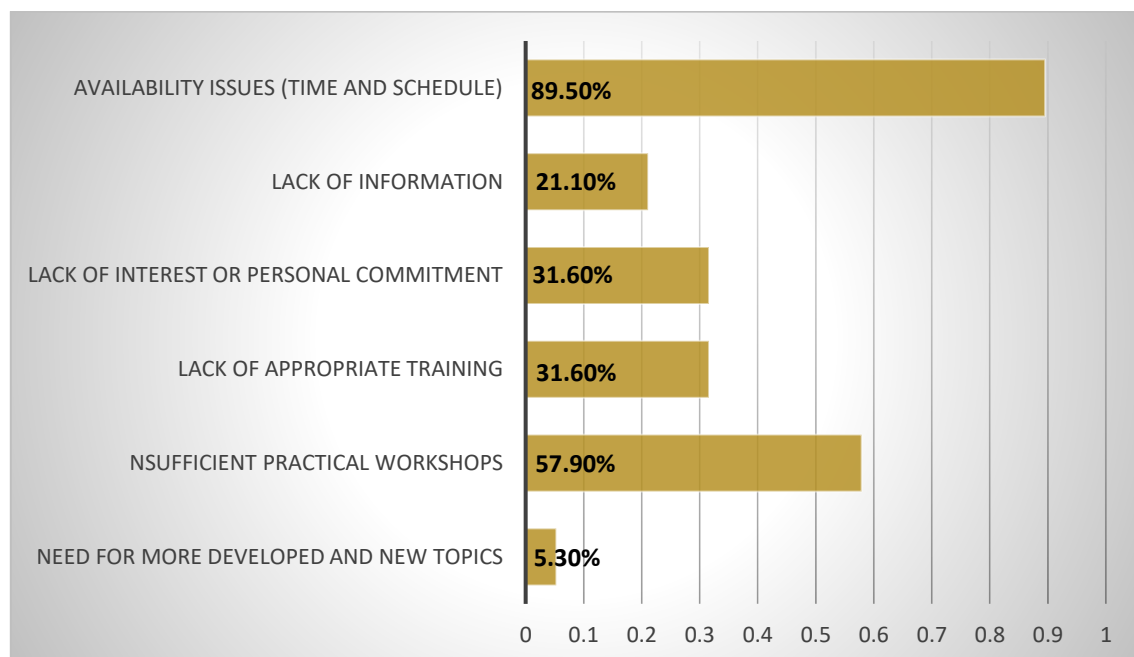


Figure 8. Main barriers to regular participation in continuing education.

The lack of motivation and incentives for beneficiaries is highlighted by 78.9%. Lack of funding is cited by 68.4%, and lack of resources by 52.6%. Lack of training and lack of institutional support are each mentioned by 21.1%. Lack of staff commitment is reported by 5.3%.

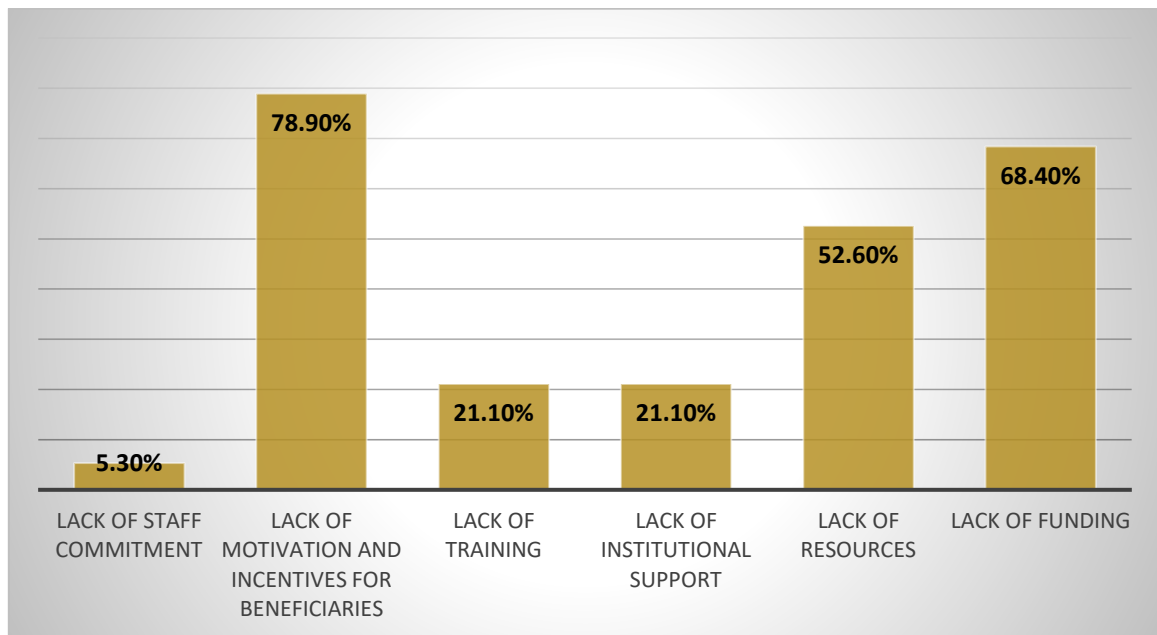


Figure 9. Main challenges related to continuing education at ISPITSO.

The majority of respondents report a positive impact “to some extent.” A smaller proportion indicate a “significant” impact. A minority report that the impact is “absent or minimal.”

● Yes, considerably ● No ● Yes, to some extent

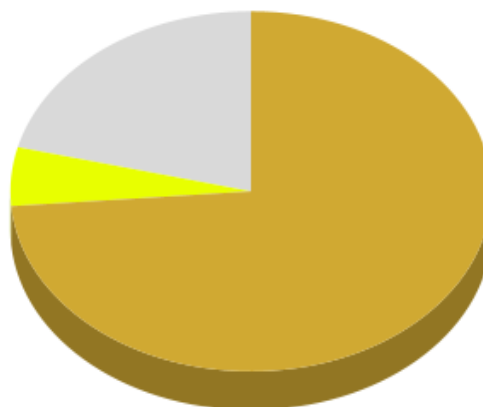


Figure 10. Positive impact of continuing education on the quality of teaching at ISPITSO.

The majority of respondents (31.6%) gave a score of 3 out of 5. A score of 4 was given by 26.3%, while 21.1% gave a score of 2. The extreme scores of 1 and 5 were each given by 10.5% of respondents.

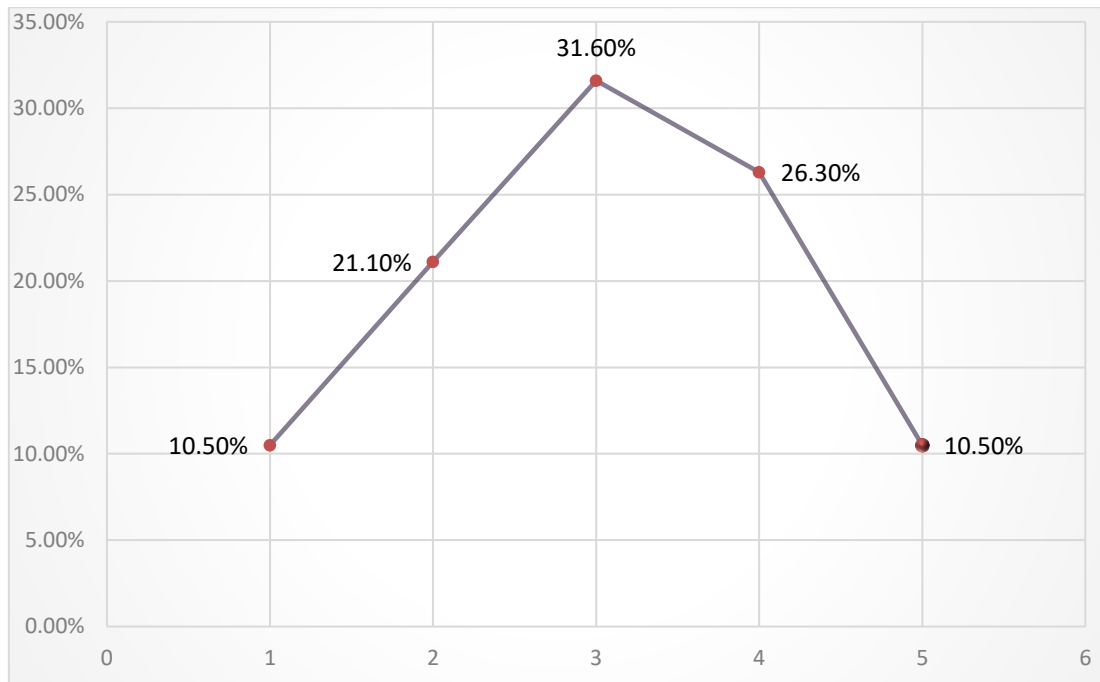


Figure 11. Degree to which continuing education contributes to improving teaching skills.

63.2% of participants say they are satisfied with the quality of the training courses they have taken. 26.3% say they are not very satisfied. 10.5% say they are very satisfied.

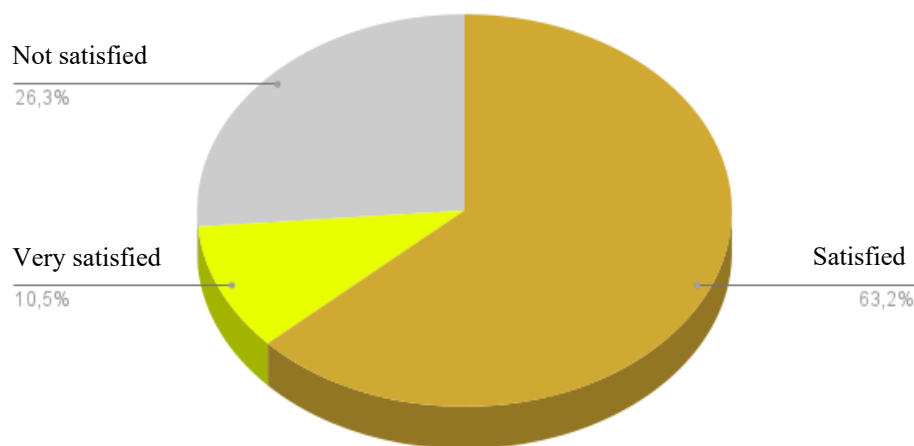


Figure 12. Satisfaction with the quality of training courses attended.

The most common suggestions relate to adapting training topics to needs (78.9%), motivation and incentives for participation (63.2%), followed by flexibility and encouragement to share best practices (57.9%).

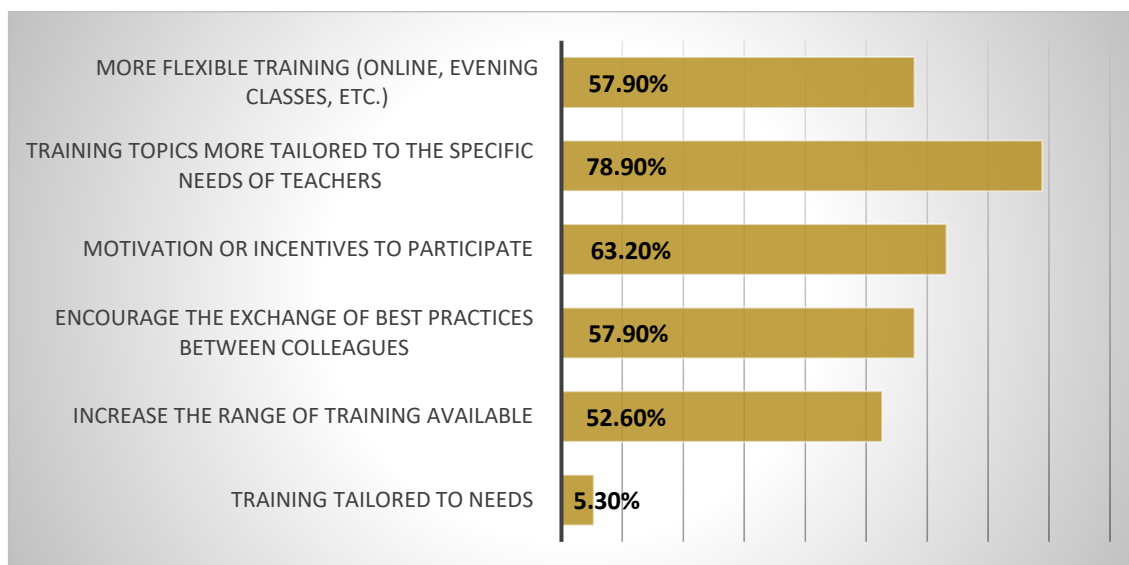


Figure 13. Suggestions for making continuing education more accessible and appealing to teachers.

At the same time, **interviews** with continuing education managers at ISPITSO reveal a clear structure to the programs offered, based on needs assessments and geared toward updating skills, particularly in relation to healthcare system reforms. One of them explains that “*continuing education is designed to follow national priorities and strengthen teaching practices.*”

Teacher participation appears to vary, positively influenced by content but hampered by time constraints, workload, and the lack of formal incentives. Generally, it remains low and severely limited in relation to the offering, which one manager describes as “*mediocre.*” Another official notes, for example: “*Teachers are often overwhelmed with classes, internships, and theses... this probably limits their availability.*”

The implementation of the program faces logistical, financial, and organizational obstacles, with little recognition of training efforts. Managers highlight a lack of rigorous monitoring to assess the real impact of training on teaching. Despite the existence of occasional feedback, the effects remain difficult to measure in a structured way.

Budgetary constraints, lack of institutional recognition, and the absence of formal evaluation mechanisms are also pointed out as major obstacles. Most feedback is provided informally, without any real value: “*There are exchanges, but nothing is systematized to measure the real impact.*” says one of the interviewees. Another adds: “*We are faced with a funding problem, with no budget allocated specially to continuing education.*”

Finally, areas for improvement are proposed: strengthening dialogue with teachers and involving them in planning, creating concrete monitoring tools and indicators, as well as developing academic partnerships and embracing digital technology. One manager sums it up as follows: “*We need to move towards official recognition and more structured support to make these training courses truly effective.*”

IV. Discussion

The results reveal that the teaching staff at ISPITSO has significant seniority, with more than half having more than ten years of experience. This experienced profile is often associated with greater pedagogical stability, but it can also raise the question of renewing practices, particularly in light of evolving educational approaches (Vescio et al., 2008).

Widespread participation in continuing education is a strong point. Almost all teachers have participated in training sessions, and more than half have done so more than five times in three years, which demonstrates a dynamic approach to professional development. These results are in line with European Commission's recommendations (2013), which emphasize the importance of regular access to training to ensure the quality of teaching. However, although participation is widespread, the frequency is very low and this rate remains very modest in terms of the standards of effective continuous professional development and regular and sustained training, particularly in rapidly changing educational contexts.

The predominantly positive perception of the relevance of training suggests that the content is generally suited to professional needs. However, there is still room for improvement, particularly for the 10.5% who consider the training to be moderately relevant. This is in line with the findings of Opfer and Pedder (2011), who emphasize the need to design training programs that are directly linked to the realities on the ground.

However, analysis of the topics considered most useful reveals a priority given to academic research, digital tools, and innovative teaching methods. This orientation corresponds to current trends in higher education, where digital competence and the ability to integrate innovation have become central (Poellhuber & Boulanger, 2020).

Nevertheless, several barriers to participation remain. Lack of availability, cited by nearly 90% of respondents, is a major obstacle. Other constraints, such as insufficient practical workshops, lack of information, and insufficient personal interest, reflect both organizational and motivational challenges. These observations are consistent with the work of Durand and Charlier (2014), which highlights the importance of a flexible framework and concrete recognition of training.

The challenges mentioned; funding, motivation, lack of resources; show that the limitations lie not only in the willingness of teachers but also in the conditions of access and institutional support. This corroborates the findings of Avalos (2011), who call for a sustained, adapted, and continuous professional development policy.

Finally, the perception of the impact of training on teaching is generally positive but remains nuanced. While a majority mention an improvement "to a certain extent," few consider this impact to be "considerable." The overall level of satisfaction, which is moderate, suggests that training is appreciated, but that it would benefit from being more targeted, more interactive, and more rooted in concrete practices.

The suggestions made by teachers; adaptation to needs, motivation, flexible formats; reflect a clear demand for more appropriate, participatory, and contextualized programs. This is in line with current continuing education models that emphasize co-construction, collaborative learning, and direct transfer to the workplace (Day & Sachs, 2004).

The results of the interview confirm that, despite its solid structure, the continuing education program at ISPITSO suffers from practical limitations. Teachers are partially motivated, but this is hampered

by unavailability due to workload and a lack of formal recognition. The effects of training on teaching practices remain largely invisible in the absence of rigorous monitoring. In addition, a significant lack of funding hinders the process. This highlights the need to increase support for continuing education, strengthen coordination, further promote participation, ensure flexibility, and implement concrete tools to measure impact.

V. Conclusion

This study has provided a clear overview of the current state of continuing education at ISPITSO. While the program is based on a coherent organization and well-defined objectives, its effectiveness remains hampered by several persistent obstacles and challenges: low participation, excessive workload, lack of recognition, and absence of formal follow-up. The results also highlight the limited use of what has been learned in the classroom, which limits the real impact of the training.

Nevertheless, despite these obstacles, there are promising levers and concrete opportunities: better consultation with teachers, the implementation of monitoring indicators, the digitization of content, and the strengthening of national and international partnerships. To enhance the effectiveness of the system, it is essential to better align teachers' needs with the training offered and to ensure a motivating and rewarding environment.

These avenues open up concrete prospects for professionalizing continuing education and anchoring it in a process of continuous improvement. A broader reflection on its integration into sustainable professional development is needed.

Références

- Anderson, T., & Dron, J. (2011). Three generations of distance education pedagogy. *The International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*, 12(3), 80–97. <https://doi.org/10.19173/irrodl.v12i3.890>
- Avalos, B. (2011). Teacher professional development in Teaching and Teacher Education over ten years. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 27(1), 10–20. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2010.08.007>
- Borko, H. (2004). Professional development and teacher learning: Mapping the terrain. *Educational Researcher*, 33(8), 3–15. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X033008003>
- Darling-Hammond, L., Hyler, M. E., & Gardner, M. (2017). *Effective teacher professional development*. Learning Policy Institute. <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/effective-teacher-professional-development-report>
- Day, C., & Sachs, J. (2004). *International handbook on the continuing professional development of teachers*. Open University Press.
- Delors, J., Al Mufti, I., Amagi, I., Carneiro, R., Chung, F., Geremek, B., ... & Nanzhao, Z. (1996). *Learning: The treasure within. Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century*. UNESCO.
- Durand, M., & Charlier, É. (2014). Former les enseignants au sein des établissements : entre développement professionnel et apprentissage organisationnel. *Revue française de pédagogie*, (186), 29–40. <https://doi.org/10.4000/rfp.4564>

- European Commission. (2013). *Supporting teacher competence development for better learning outcomes*. Brussels : European Commission. <https://education.ec.europa.eu/document/supporting-teacher-competence-development>
- Guskey, T. R. (2002). Professional development and teacher change. *Teachers and Teaching*, 8(3), 381–391. <https://doi.org/10.1080/135406002100000512>
- Opfer, V. D., & Pedder, D. (2011). Conceptualizing teacher professional learning. *Review of Educational Research*, 81(3), 376–407. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654311413609>
- Poellhuber, B., & Boulanger, D. (2020). Digital competence and professional development for teachers. *Éducation et francophonie*, 48(2), 100–118. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1072933ar>
- Vescio, V., Ross, D., & Adams, A. (2008). A review of research on the impact of professional learning communities on teaching practice and student learning. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 24(1), 80–91. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2007.01.004>