Quality Assurance in Education

Transforming faculty development: key outcomes and strategies for achieving UKPSF accreditation excellence

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Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to explore outcomes and strategies associated with developing faculty competencies for accreditation in teaching management, guided by the United Kingdom Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF).

Design/methodology/approach – The study used a mixed methods explanatory design. We collected quantitative data from 356 faculty members and 400 students using a validated questionnaire. A one-way ANCOVA and a one-way ANOVA were used to compare teaching outcomes and strategies between UKPSF-certified and non-certified faculty members. In addition, qualitative interviews were used to explore the accreditation process and assessed its effectiveness.

Findings – UKPSF-certified faculty showed significantly more effective teaching practices and achieved stronger teaching outcomes than their non-certified peers. Students taught by certified faculty reported better learning experiences. Qualitative findings have identified three key dimensions in faculty development: policy

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and social relationships, meaning and thought and practical conditions. These dimensions emphasized leadership, attitudes and skills, which collectively support the growth of learners, faculty and institutions while enhancing academic credibility.

Research limitations/implications – Future research should investigate the long-term impacts of UKPSF certification on faculty career progression and institutional performance across diverse educational contexts.

Practical implications – The findings have highlighted the importance of structured faculty development programs in enhancing teaching quality and support accreditation efforts.

Originality/value – This study contributes to the literature by demonstrating how international accreditation frameworks like the UKPSF improve teaching practices and learning outcomes. It offers actionable insights for institutions seeking to align faculty competencies with global standards while responding to local educational needs.

Keywords Teaching management, UKPSF, Competency, Learning outcomes, Faculty development

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

Developing faculty competencies has become a global priority for higher education institutions, contributing to enhanced teaching quality, curriculum design and research productivity (van Dijk *et al.*, 2020). These competencies equipped students for lifelong learning and global challenges, aligning with national development goals (Bilal *et al.*, 2019). Institutions increasingly seek to balance teaching excellence, research and innovation (McKinley *et al.*, 2021), with faculty development initiatives supporting alignment between educational outcomes, economic policy and international standards (Bélisle *et al.*, 2024). In Thailand, the 13th National Economic and Social Development Plan (2023–2027) emphasizes workforce development, continuous learning and educational innovation (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council, 2022).

This study examines strategies for implementing the United Kingdom Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) in teaching management, using a logic model framework (Fernandez and Audétat, 2019). The model includes five dimensions—Resources/Inputs, Activities, Outputs, Outcomes and Impacts—enabling comprehensive evaluation of the UKPSF's long-term influence on faculty practices and student learning. It also offers insight into adapting international frameworks to national contexts to enhance educational quality.

While the study assesses UKPSF-based faculty development, it does not aim to revise the framework or generalize its applicability across diverse settings. The extent to which the UKPSF fosters teaching innovation or supports faculty in varied contexts remains unclear. To explore these complexities, the study employs a mixed methods explanatory design, integrating quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative phase evaluates the effects of certification on teaching and learning outcomes, whereas the qualitative phase explores faculty and student perspectives, challenges and effective strategies (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2018).

2. Literature review

Structured frameworks such as the UKPSF are increasingly adopted by higher education institutions to improve teaching and support faculty development (Hibbert and Semler, 2016). The UKPSF serves as a benchmark for teaching professionalism, aligning faculty competencies with national and international expectations (Matthews and Dobbins, 2021). Its adoption signals institutional commitment to teaching quality, internationalization and academic reputation (Spowart *et al.*, 2019).

The UKPSF's impact has been widely studied. Advance HE (2013) reported improvements in teaching practices and professional growth at both institutional and individual levels. Its certification at levels—Associate Fellow, Fellow, Senior Fellow and

Principal Fellow–offer a structured progression that promotes continuous development aligned with global standards (Advance HE, 2023). These frameworks also contribute to institutional transparency, accountability and outcome-oriented professional development (Spowart and Turner, 2022).

Globally, faculty development initiatives share a focus on improving teaching through structured learning. Light *et al.* (2009) found that sustained training promoted reflective practice and pedagogical innovation. Cotta *et al.* (2024) emphasized that frameworks grounded in institutional policy improve instructional quality and foster engagement with evidence-based approaches. In Asia, Kulal *et al.* (2024) observed that programs enhance teaching competencies and support national goals by promoting lifelong learning and technological literacy.

However, applying the UKPSF in non-Western or resource-limited contexts raised concerns. Its emphasis on standardized competencies may constrain pedagogical flexibility and limit innovation, particularly in institutions favoring localized or student-responsive teaching (Spowart *et al.*, 2019; Thornton, 2014). In Thailand, institutional autonomy, policy diversity and varying faculty preparedness levels affect implementation effectiveness (Ulla, 2022). Adaptive the UKPSF to local contexts requires flexible strategies sensitive to institutional cultures and systemic conditions.

Integrating learning and curriculum theories into faculty development enhances teaching effectiveness. Constructivist theory, for example, views learning as an active, contextual process where individuals construct meaning through experience (Fung, 2000). Constructivist learning environments emphasize student-centered, collaborative and problem-based approaches (Do *et al.*, 2023), which foster deeper engagement and reflective learning. Although constructivism has shaped educational reform, debates persist regarding its overall efficacy (Üredi, 2013). The integrating of curriculum theory (Brooks and Hughes, 2024) further strengthens development frameworks by promoting critical thinking, real-world application and adaptive teaching strategies aligned with evolving learner needs.

Research increasingly affirms that faculty development should be holistic, theory-driven and policy supported. In Bangladesh, Rahman (2023) found that faculty engaged in structured development reported improved teaching efficacy and student engagement. Gardner *et al.* (2024) argued that mapping development landscapes helps align institutional strategies with learner needs. Additional studies further highlight the importance of aligning faculty development with institutional missions and broader educational reforms. Kohan *et al.* (2023) highlighted the value of tailoring programs to faculty roles, whereas Droissart and Tuytens (2024) emphasized institutional collaboration and quality culture in sustaining development efforts.

Embedding frameworks like the UKPSF into higher education policy has cultivated a culture of teaching excellence vital for global readiness and sustainable development (Hibbert and Semler, 2016). In both Thailand and the UK, policies support lifelong learning, innovative pedagogy and technology integration (Shaw, 2018; Siritarungsri, 2020). When well-structured faculty development frameworks ensures an evidence-based approach to improving teaching and institutional outcomes.

3. Material and methods

3.1 Research design

This study used a mixed methods explanatory design to evaluate outcomes and strategies for developing faculty competencies under the UKPSF framework. It comprised of two phases: a quantitative phase assessing the impact of certification on teaching practices and student outcomes, followed by a qualitative phase that contextualized the findings through faculty and student experiences, challenges and perceived benefits. The ethical approval for this study was obtained from the Human Research Ethics Committee, Strategic Wisdom and Research Institute of Srinakharinwirot University (certificate number SWUEC-662064), and

all participants provided informed consent outlining the voluntary nature of participation, the right to withdraw and assurances of confidentiality and data protection.

3.2 Quantitative phase

3.2.1 Participants. The study included 1,804 faculty members and 27,726 students at a public university. The faculty sample comprised both UKPSF-certified and non-certified faculty, whereas the student sample included those taught by either group. Cluster random sampling ensured representative selection across disciplines. The population was divided into faculty and student groups, and then stratified by certification status for comparisons. The faculty sample included 151 certified and 206 non-certified faculties, with the latter also including participants from faculty development training. The student sample comprised 400 students, equally split between those taught by certified and non-certified faculty. Faculty and students on leave or not actively teaching were excluded.

3.2.2 Research instrument. The questionnaire was structured using a 5-point Likert scale, covering five key dimensions:

(1) *Inputs*: resources and support mechanisms (e.g., funding, infrastructure, training programs);

(2) *Activities*: faculty participation in professional development activities like certification programs and workshops;

(3) *Outputs*: immediate results from faculty development, such as improvements in teaching methods;

(4) *Outcomes*: broader effects on faculty competencies and student learning, including engagement and academic performance; and

(5) *Impacts*: long-term effects on the institution, graduate employability and alignment with national goals.

The questionnaire was developed based on UKPSF guidelines (Advance HE, 2023) to align with faculty competency standards. It used a 5-point rating scale (1 = least favorable, 5 = most favorable) to measure agreement or satisfaction. A panel of five experts in faculty development, accreditation and assessment reviewed the initial draft for clarity, relevance and potential biases, leading to minor revisions for improved validity. A pilot study (n = 50) with faculty and students outside the main sample confirmed reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.95, indicating high internal consistency. The final version was then printed and distributed for data collection.

3.2.3 Data collection. We used a structured questionnaire to collect data from faculty and students at a public university, aiming to assess inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts of faculty development programs.

Faculty: The university's internal communication system distributed questionnaires to both UKPSF-certified and non-certified faculty. Follow-up reminders maintained engagement throughout the four-week data collection period. Faculty responded based on their experiences with faculty development, teaching management and program impact.

Student: Electronic distribution of the questionnaires allowed students to evaluate their experiences in courses taught by certified and non-certified faculty. Instructions specified that responses should reflect only completed courses.

All responses remained anonymous to promote honest feedback. We reviewed and verified the completeness of the data before conducting analysis.

3.2.4 Data analysis. This study applied a one-way ANCOVA to compare teaching management processes and teaching outcomes between faculty members certified in

teaching management competencies according to the UKPSF and those without certification, controlling for teaching and training experience. A one-way ANOVA compared students' satisfaction across the two groups.

3.3 Qualitative phase

3.3.1 Key informants. The qualitative phase involved six key participant groups, selected purposively to provide diverse insights into the UKPSF certification process and its impact. These included five university and faculty administrators offering institutional perspectives on certification alignment with strategic goals, and five mentors who guided faculty through skill development and certification readiness. In addition, five certified faculty members representing three academic clusters–health sciences, science and technology and social sciences and humanities–shared their experiences. Another five certified faculty, recognized with awards for excellence in teaching alongside five non-certified faculty, both with and without training. Finally, 12 students who had learned from award-certified faculty shared varied perspectives on teaching effectiveness.

3.3.2 Research instrument. The qualitative phase used two primary instruments to gather data. We developed a semi-structured interview guide with open-ended questions to delve into faculty experiences with the UKPSF certification process, examine its benefits, challenges and influence on teaching practices. It also explored student satisfaction and learning experiences under certified and non-certified faculty. In addition, we designed a focus group protocol to facilitate discussions among mentors and students, eliciting detailed feedback on how certification impacted teaching quality and learning outcomes. Together, these tools ensured a comprehensive understanding of the certification's effects.

3.3.3 Data collection. Data collection involved conducting interviews and focus group discussions, either in person or via video conferencing. Audio recordings were made with the consent of participants, and all sessions were transcribed *verbatim* to ensure accuracy in analysis. In addition, the process included taking observational notes during discussions to capture contextual nuances and enrich the data.

3.3.4 Data analysis. Content analysis identified and categorized key themes, focusing on faculty experiences with the certification process, the perceived benefits and challenges for teaching and professional growth, institutional impacts of certification initiatives and student perceptions of teaching effectiveness and learning outcomes under certified faculty. The logical model framework structured the analysis, and triangulation validated the findings and addressed issues identified in the quantitative phase.

3.4 Integration of findings

Integrating quantitative (QUAN) and qualitative (QUAL) findings offered a more comprehensive understanding of the faculty certification process and its impact on teaching and learning. The QUAN phase, centered on student satisfaction, informed the QUAL phase, where student narratives elaborated on differences in satisfaction, including perceptions of teaching style, engagement and learning outcomes. Faculty perspectives have further contextualized the quantitative results, highlighting the roles of institutional support, professional development and teaching philosophy in shaping certification outcomes.

Given the link between certification and institutional recognition, the potential for social desirability bias in faculty responses warrants consideration. To address this, the study used qualitative interviews and triangulated data from multiple sources, including faculty and student input. This approach had enhanced the validity of the findings by capturing diverse perspectives and mitigating bias. The integration of QUAN and QUAL data enabled a more

nuanced interpretation of the certification process and strengthened the reliability of the conclusions.

4. Results

4.1 Results of quantitative analysis

4.1.1 Faculty member. The study obtained data from 356 faculty members at a public university, comprising 202 non-certified and 154 certified in teaching management competencies (Supplementary material S1, https://osf.io/nw9jy). Most participants were female (64.6%), held doctoral degrees (83.7%) and were aged 41–50 years (46.6%). Nearly half were lecturer (47.2%) from humanities and social sciences (42.4%), with an average of 13 years of experience. The majority (65.4%) had completed active learning training, whereas 80.1% had not received any teaching management awards.

The analysis using ANCOVA identified significant differences in teaching management practices between certified and non-certified faculty, $F(1, 352) = 11.47$, $p < 0.05$. Certified faculty reported significantly higher scores ($M = 4.25$, $SD = 0.54$) compared to their non-certified counterparts ($M = 4.01$, $SD = 0.71$). The analysis also revealed significant differences in resources/inputs (Certified: $M = 4.18$, $SD = 0.63$; Non-Certified: $M = 3.97$, $SD = 0.76$, $F(1, 352) = 7.35$, $p < 0.05$) and activities (Certified: $M = 4.32$, $SD = 0.53$; Non-Certified: $M = 4.07$, $SD = 0.73$, $F(1, 352) = 14.03$, $p < 0.05$). Certified faculty demonstrated greater engagement in mentoring, continuous professional development and training participation. The result indicated no significant differences in institutional budget allocations or active learning management policies (Supplementary material S2, https://osf.io/7j2rs).

ANCOVA results indicated a significant effect of certification on teaching outcomes, $F(1, 352) = 12.50$, $p < 0.05$. Certified faculty achieved higher scores ($M = 4.41$, $SD = 0.42$) than their non-certified counterparts ($M = 4.22$, $SD = 0.53$). The analysis also revealed significant differences in output (Certified: $M = 4.42$, $SD = 0.53$; Non-Certified: $M = 4.22$, $SD = 0.60$, $F(1, 352) = 11.26$, $p < 0.05$), outcomes (Certified: $M = 4.36$, $SD = 0.46$; Non-Certified: $M = 4.21$, $SD = 0.61$, $F(1, 352) = 6.08$, $p < 0.05$) and impact (Certified: $M = 4.44$, $SD = 0.52$; Non-Certified: $M = 4.24$, $SD = 0.58$, $F(1, 352) = 11.69$, $p < 0.05$). Certified faculty exhibited stronger competencies in selecting teaching materials, adapting instructional strategies based on training, designing assessments, enjoying teaching and promoting student communication. However, the analysis found no significant differences between the two groups in students achieving specified learning outcomes or submitting reports aligned with ethical standards (Supplementary material S3, https://osf.io/xgpce).

4.1.2 Students. The study gathered data from 400 students, evenly divided between those taught by certified and non-certified faculty. Most were female (75.5%) and undergraduates (92.7%), with an average age of 21 years.

Student satisfaction did not differ significantly between the two groups (Certified: $M = 4.58$, $SD = 0.48$; Non-Certified faculty: $M = 4.51$, $SD = 0.51$). However, students who learned from certified faculty reported higher satisfaction regarding communication of learning outcomes, clarity of content, assessment explanations and quality of feedback. The analysis found no significant differences in perceptions of active learning, media utilization, or engagement activities (Supplementary material S4, https://osf.io/ybd6g).

Students taught by certified faculty also reported significantly higher learning outcomes ($M = 4.57$, $SD = 0.47$) compared to their peers taught by non-certified faculty ($M = 4.45$, $SD = 0.55$). These students demonstrated greater improvements in completing course contents, enjoying the learning process and applying acquired knowledge to future work contexts. Nonetheless, no significant differences emerged in the development of knowledge,

skills, ethical understanding, or the application of course content in practical settings (Supplementary material S5, https://osf.io/cqzvw).

4.2 Results of qualitative analysis

4.2.1 Conditions related to faculty competency certification in teaching according to the United Kingdom Professional Standards Framework. The analysis identifies three key conditions influencing faculty competency certification based on the UKPSF (Figure 1):

(1) Policy area, regulations and social relationships:

- Support from university and faculty administrators

  Support from both faculty and university administrators is essential for faculty certification. This includes promoting continuous self-development and using the UKPSF standards as guidelines for faculty development each year. Administrators set clear expectations for faculty to pursue certification annually, as stated in the interviews:

  > We use the UKPSF framework to require each faculty member to continuously improve their teaching methods every year. Even if they have already been certified, they should continue to develop. This will help the faculty learn and develop continuously, which benefits the curriculum and students. (Administrator 1)

- Curriculum quality assurance criteria

  Curriculum evaluation criteria help faculty recognize the importance of meeting UKPSF competency standards. The focus is on achieving Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) through active learning methods that encourage student problem-solving and knowledge application. As stated in the interview:

  > Part of this is the curriculum quality assurance criteria, which help faculty recognize the importance of teaching to achieve the learning outcomes defined in the PLO. They need to think about how to teach to ensure that students learn, understand, and apply the knowledge, solve problems, and be able to use it in real-life situations. (Administrator 1)

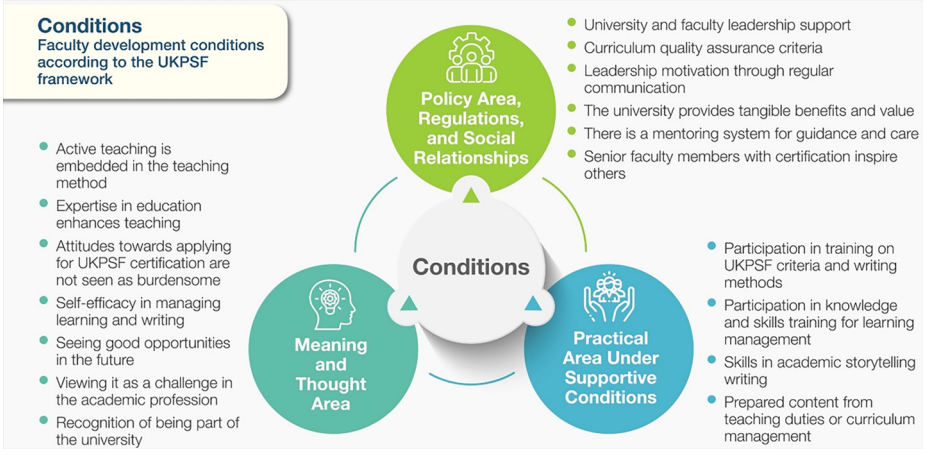

Figure 1. Conditions for faculty development under the UKPSF framework
Source: Authors' own work

- Ongoing communication from administrators

  Regular communication and motivation from administrators about the importance of UKPSF standards are key to faculty certification. This includes explaining the process, offering support and linking certification to unit KPIs. As described in the interview:

  > The administrators and those involved should have empathy for faculty seeking certification, considering potential limitations in motivation, mental capacity, physical health, or time. It's important to listen to the feedback from those applying for certification, as this will help them stay motivated and succeed in completing the documentation for certification. (Certified Faculty 1)

- Tangible benefits from the university

  Tangible benefits, such as academic promotion, rewards and recognition, motivate faculty to pursue certification. These incentives benefit curriculum development and student quality, as stated in the interview:

  > The university's policy regarding faculty certification requirements and the tangible benefits provided to those who gain certification, such as financial rewards, performance evaluation scores, and recognition, motivate faculty members. (Certified Faculty 2)

- Mentorship system for guidance

  A mentorship system provides essential support for faculty seeking UKPSF certification. Experienced mentors offer guidance on the certification process, helping faculty clarify their concerns, as stated in the interview:

  > At the beginning, when I didn't understand, I was worried about how to start and whether my writing was correct. Having a mentor to talk with helped clarify everything and provided a good experience. (Faculty certified and awarded 1)

- Inspiration from certified seniors

  Inspiration from senior faculty who have achieved certification encourages others to pursue it. Sharing experiences helps motivate new faculty members to improve teaching methods and reflect on student feedback. As stated in the interview:

  > There should be a sharing session where certified faculty explain how adjusting teaching methods improved their outcomes and how they received better feedback from students. (Faculty certified and awarded 1)

(2) Practical area under support systems

- Participation in training on UKPSF criteria and writing methods

  Training on UKPSF criteria and writing methods is essential for faculty to align their teaching with the UKPSF standards. This helps faculty understand how to design learning activities and document their teaching practices, as stated in the interview:

  > I started by searching for information on UKPSF, attending training to understand the criteria, and preparing relevant teaching theories and research for the application. (Faculty certified and awarded 1)

- Active learning training for teaching skills and knowledge

  Active learning training equips faculty with tools to enhance teaching competency, aligning their practices with the UKPSF framework. The training focuses on defining learning outcomes, planning teaching methods and assessing student performance, as stated in the interview:

> Faculty develop themselves by understanding the teaching process through active learning training, starting with defining learning outcomes, planning the teaching process, and assessing student learning. (Administrator 1)

Figure 1 presents the conditions for faculty development based on the UKPSF, organized into three key areas: Policy Area, Regulations, and Social Relationships; Meaning and Thought Area and Practical Area Under Supportive Conditions. The first area emphasizes university and faculty leadership support, curriculum quality assurance, leadership motivation and mentorship. The second area focuses on faculty attitudes toward UKPSF certification, self-efficacy in learning management and the recognition of being part of the university. The third area highlights participation in UKPSF training, skills for learning management and academic writing. The central "Conditions" section is surrounded by these areas, underscoring their interconnectedness in fostering faculty development.

4.2.2 Outcomes of faculty accreditation in teaching management competency based on the United Kingdom Professional Standards Framework. The outcomes of faculty accreditation in teaching management competency based on the UKPSF are presented in three parts: learners, faculty and the curriculum/faculty/university as follows:

(1) Learners

- Promotes self-directed learning

UKPSF-based teaching encourages learners to take initiative, set goals and engage in self-directed learning through various activities, as supported by interviews:

> Learners gain knowledge through diverse learning activities rather than traditional lecturing alone. The process enhances skills, awareness and appreciation of what they are learning through hands-on activities systematically planned and evaluated. (Faculty certified and awarded 3)

- Becomes proactive learners capable of knowledge creation

Learners become proactive and capable of creating knowledge independently, engaging in tasks that foster individual or group learning, as expressed in interviews:

> We had lively discussions on social issues and continued working on personal and social factors, which inspired us to solve the problems. (Student taught by certified faculty 1)

- Enhances problem-solving and practical learning skills

Active learning and real-world case studies help learners develop problem-solving skills and deepen their understanding, as illustrated by interviews:

> Using the UKPSF framework helps learners understand objectives, solve problems, and develop practical solutions through active learning activities. (Administrator 2)

- Increases learning satisfaction

The activity-based approach under UKPSF leads to greater learner satisfaction and engagement, reducing stress, as indicated by interviews:

> Interactive learning activities make learning enjoyable and reduce stress. (Student taught by certified faculty 2)

- Enhances trust in faculty

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UKPSF teaching strategies increase learners' trust in faculty, as they see their development in knowledge, skills and attributes, as highlighted in interviews:

> Using the UKPSF framework fosters trust in faculty because learners see comprehensive development in their knowledge, skills, and attributes. (Certified Faculty 1)

(2) Faculty

- Builds confidence in teaching

The UKPSF framework builds faculty confidence by aligning teaching approaches with international standards, as described in interviews:

> It allows faculty to organize systematic learning activities based on theories and international standards. (Certified Faculty 1)

- Fosters continuous teaching expertise

Faculty continuously improve their teaching methods, staying current and reflecting on effectiveness, as noted in interviews:

> Faculty must continually update teaching methods to align with advancements and trends. (Administrator 1)

- Opens opportunities as teaching experts or guest lecturers

Certified faculty gain opportunities to share their expertise as guest lecturers or specialists, as described in interviews:

> Certified faculty are invited as guest lecturers or experts in higher education teaching. (Certified Faculty 1)

- Increases recognition and pride

Certification brings recognition and pride, motivating faculty to improve further, as stated in interviews:

> Being certified brings pride and motivates continuous teaching improvement beyond traditional lecturing. (Administrator 2)

- Increases opportunities for teaching awards

UKPSF certification enhances faculty readiness for teaching awards, as stated in interviews:

> Preparing for certification helps align teaching practices with standards, which supports participation in teaching award competitions. (Faculty certified and awarded 1)

- Facilitates academic promotion

Certification simplifies academic promotion applications by reducing documentation requirements, as noted in interviews:

> Certification reduces the requirement for teaching documentation from 45 hours to 15 hours, encouraging academic promotion applications. (Faculty certified and awarded 1)

(3) Curriculum/faculty/university

- Programs/faculties/university gain recognition for faculty quality

Faculty certification under UKPSF enhances recognition at the program, faculty and university levels. As reflected in the interviews:

> It reflects the faculty's efforts to develop their teaching attributes to professional standards, demonstrating reliability. It also highlights the quality of the program and the maximum benefits to learners, ensuring they receive knowledge that meets standards and can be applied internationally. This enhances the credibility of the program and attracts external interest, ensuring its sustainability. (Non-certified Faculty 3)

- Clearer direction for learning management using UKPSF standards

Implementing UKPSF guidelines brings clarity to learning management and improves curriculum development. Interview excerpts highlight this:

> The UKPSF framework provides clarity on how to ensure students meet the learning outcomes. It improves teaching management planning, emphasizes active learning, and enhances focused and accurate assessment. This creates greater awareness of learning outcomes. (Certified Faculty 3)

- Enhancing the university's image in learning management

Faculty certification enhances the university's image and attracts prospective students. As described in the interviews:

> We should continuously communicate this and emphasize the benefits of standard-based teaching. Eventually, this will attract more students to the university. (Faculty certified and awarded 1)

- Reinforcing the university's reputation as an institution with professional educators

The certification reinforces the university's reputation for producing professional educators, strengthening trust in the institution. Interview excerpts include:

> It further strengthens confidence in the university's existing reputation for producing teachers. Faculty certification under UKPSF enhances trust and credibility in the university as a teacher-producing institution. (Faculty certified and awarded 1)

- Reducing the burden of monitoring learning quality

UKPSF certification reduces the burden of monitoring teaching quality by providing standardized guidelines. As stated in the interviews:

> It provides a clearer direction for teaching management in programs/faculties by using UKPSF as a guiding practice for instructors. (Certified Faculty 1)

The outcomes of faculty accreditation in teaching management based on the UKPSF framework benefit learners, faculty and the institution. Learners gain self-directed learning, problem-solving and knowledge creation skills, while increasing satisfaction and trust in faculty. Faculty experience enhanced confidence, continuous development, recognition and greater opportunities for career advancement. At the institutional level, UKPSF certification boosts credibility, clarifies learning management practices and strengthens the university's reputation, all while reducing the burden of monitoring teaching quality.

4.2.3 The integrative findings. The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings has highlighted the broad impacts of UKPSF-based teaching management competency. Quantitative results indicate significant improvements in students' self-directed learning, problem-solving skills and satisfaction, whereas qualitative insights reinforce these

outcomes, highlighting the role of active learning and real-world applications in enhancing engagement and independent knowledge creation.

For faculty, quantitative data show higher rates of teaching awards and promotions, complemented by qualitative findings on the role of mentorship, peer collaboration and institutional support in boosting confidence, motivation and professional pride. The qualitative narratives add depth, illustrating how UKPSF certification fosters systematic teaching improvements and career growth.

At the institutional level, quantitative metrics reveal gains in program rankings and enrollment, whereas qualitative perspectives highlight how UKPSF certification strengthens curriculum development, teaching clarity and alignment with institutional priorities. Stakeholders view certification as a driver of professional development and institutional reputation. The combined evidence demonstrates UKPSF certification's transformative impact on faculty, students and institutional excellence.

5. Discussion

Faculty competency development has been a key priority in higher education, particularly in Thailand. This study provides empirical evidence on the impact of UKPSF certification on faculty teaching and student learning outcomes.

The study highlights the critical role of UKPSF certification in enhancing teaching quality and faculty development. Certified faculty exhibited stronger teaching practices than their non-certified peers, aligning with broader higher education trends that emphasize continuous professional growth as essential for teaching effectiveness and student success. Qualitative insights reveal that mentorship and peer collaboration during certification boosted faculty confidence. Students taught by certified faculty consistently reported clearer communication, more engaging learning activities and better feedback—contributing to deeper learning and higher satisfaction. Administrators also highlighted the value of standardized teaching practices for aligning with institutional goals and strengthening the university's academic reputation. These findings align with Keshmiri *et al.* (2023), who emphasized the importance of adhering to professional standards for continuous improvement in teaching. Certified faculty demonstrate superior teaching practices, enhancing student learning outcomes and promoting professional excellence.

Active learning strategies are in focus of faculty development. Certified faculty also demonstrated greater proficiency in active learning strategies, leading to improved student engagement. Students reported increased participation in hands-on activities, discussions and real-world problem-solving, which enhanced critical thinking and application of knowledge. Certified faculty have shown a stronger ability to adapt teaching to diverse learning needs, making instruction more inclusive. This supports previous research (Alhawiti, 2023; Wekerle *et al.*, 2022) on the importance of active learning for academic performance and engagement. The university's investment in platforms like active learning training is crucial for providing faculty with the tools and training needed to implement active learning and achieve UKPSF certification.

Mentorship has emerged as another key factor in faculty development. Certified faculty benefited from guidance in preparing for certification and improving their teaching practices. Interviews revealed that mentorship had boosted confidence and encouraged reflection on teaching styles, which led to improvements in classroom effectiveness. Faculty also found mentorship helpful for addressing challenges related to student engagement and curriculum design. Developing a more structured mentoring system could further enhance faculty certification efforts, improving teaching quality across the university. This recommendation

aligns with best practices in higher education, where mentorship is increasingly valued for professional growth (Zhang *et al.*, 2024).

The study also underscores the importance of peer learning and knowledge management. Faculty members who interacted with UKPSF-certified colleagues were motivated to pursue certification, demonstrating the value of fostering a collaborative culture. Many faculty members felt inspired by the example set by certified colleagues who shared experiences and provided practical advice on navigating the certification process. Faculty exchanges and structured knowledge-sharing sessions could create a supportive environment where faculty can learn from one another. This is consistent with research (Droissart and Tuytens, 2024; Galgotia and Lakshmi, 2022) emphasizing collaboration's role in professional development. By facilitating such exchanges, the university can cultivate a culture of continuous professional development, encouraging faculty to pursue certification and excellence, benefiting both individual competencies and institutional educational goals.

A key motivator for faculty certification is the recognition and rewards associated with it. Certified faculty were often recognized through awards or had certification factored into promotion criteria. This reward system has played a vital role in encouraging professional development and excellence. Many faculty members reported that recognition validated their efforts and boosted their confidence. One faculty member noted that receiving recognition for certification motivated them to innovate further, knowing their efforts were valued. These findings align with studies highlighting the importance of professional recognition in enhancing teaching practices and fostering innovation (Shaw, 2018; van der Sluis *et al.*, 2017). To further support faculty development, the university should strengthen its reward mechanisms for certified faculty.

Despite the widespread use of active learning techniques by both certified and non-certified faculty, the study suggests that efforts should focus on demystifying the UKPSF certification process and clarifying its benefits. Some faculty members expressed confusion about the certification process and its impact on teaching practices. Many participants were unsure how certification could formally validate or enhance their skills. Faculty development programs, such as workshops and knowledge-sharing platforms, could help clarify the certification process and its connection to teaching quality improvement. One faculty member mentioned that attending an informational session about the UKPSF motivated them to pursue certification, seeing it as an opportunity to enhance their teaching expertise. This aligns with Spowart *et al.* (2016), who emphasized the importance of institutional leadership in advancing accreditation efforts.

Certified faculty demonstrated stronger performance across various teaching process components, including input factors, instructional activities and student learning outcomes. The qualitative findings have indicated that these faculty members possessed greater confidence in applying pedagogical strategies acquired through the UKPSF certification process. Many participants attributed improvements in lesson design and instructional delivery to their training in effective teaching principles. This preparation has enabled them to create more engaging, student-centered learning environments and to better accommodate diverse learning styles. The data also suggest that certified faculty exhibited a deeper understanding of teaching principles and learning theories, allowing for more deliberate and adaptive instructional strategies. Institutional support—particularly through training programs, mentoring and resource provision—emerged as a critical factor in sustaining these improvements. These findings are consistent with previous studies (Kohan *et al.*, 2023; Rahman, 2023), which emphasize the importance of ongoing investment in faculty development for achieving long-term gains in teaching quality and professional growth.

While the UKPSF has been recognized for its role in professionalizing teaching, some researchers argue that its structure approach might be rigid and may limit pedagogical creativity (van der Sluis *et al.*, 2017). The emphasis on structured accreditation ensures consistency in faculty development but may not fully support innovation in rapidly changing educational environments. In addition, the UKPSF's structured framework may not align with institutional autonomy or the specific needs of non-Western higher education systems. Alternative models, such as the reflective practice approach (Efu, 2023) and personalized adaptive learning (Du Plooy *et al.*, 2024), provide more flexible, self-directed learning opportunities for faculty. These approaches foster continuous professional growth beyond predefined competencies, encouraging teaching innovation, context-sensitive pedagogy and individualized faculty development.

The significant differences in student learning outcomes between those taught by certified versus non-certified faculty highlight the impact of UKPSF certification on student success. Certified faculty not only demonstrated stronger teaching management competencies but also has contributed to greater student satisfaction. Previous studies, such as Wong and Chapman (2023), emphasized the critical role of teaching quality in shaping student satisfaction, and this study's findings align with that assertion. Feedback from students indicated that certified faculty fostered more engaging and supportive learning environments, particularly through clearer communication of learning objectives, improved content delivery and more effective assessment and feedback practices. However, the analysis also revealed that not all dimensions of student experience differed significantly, particularly in areas such as active learning participation. These results suggest that while certification improves certain aspects of instructional effectiveness, other elements—such as pedagogical style, course design and institutional support—also significantly influence student learning experiences. Moreover, faculty development frameworks like the UKPSF impact not only teaching methods but also how students engage with, process, and apply knowledge. Although the certification contributes to enhanced student engagement and satisfaction, its effects on higher-order cognitive skills and real-world knowledge application warrant further investigation. These findings reinforce the value of UKPSF certification while highlighting the need for continued research into its broader educational impact across varied contexts.

These findings have highlighted key policy implications for faculty development in Thailand. Institutions should prioritize faculty certification by providing sustained financial support for training, workshops and mentoring. Formalized mentorship programs pairing certified faculty with candidates can offer personalized guidance. Recognition and reward policies, such as awards, promotions, or financial incentives, can further encourage certification. Regular workshops and knowledge-sharing platforms should clarify the UKPSF certification process and its benefits. Integrating active learning strategies into faculty development can enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. Fostering faculty collaboration can improve teaching practices and support institutional excellence. Ongoing training programs should equip faculty with skills to adapt to evolving educational needs. Finally, aligning faculty development with internationally recognized standards, such as the UKPSF, will reinforce institutional leadership in teaching excellence and innovation.

This study has several limitations. While it has identified factors influencing UKPSF certification and provides a snapshot of student outcomes, it lacks longitudinal data to assess sustained impacts on faculty and student development. Future research should employ longitudinal designs and include a broader range of stakeholders—such as employers, colleagues and parents—to evaluate students' long-term success, career readiness and societal contributions. As the study was conducted at a single public university, the findings

may not be generalizable to other institutional contexts, particularly private universities or those operating under different policy frameworks. Although faculty and student perspectives were included, these may not fully represent broader trends. Expanding the sample across diverse institutions would enhance external validity. Institutional policies such as mentorship, incentives and support systems play a vital role in faculty development, yet their effectiveness across faculty subgroups and institutional settings warrants further examination. Additional research should investigate how non-certified faculty perceive and engage with these supports, particularly those facing obstacles to certification. The study primarily relies on self-reported measures of student satisfaction and engagement, which may introduce bias; future studies should incorporate objective indicators such as academic performance and retention rates. The comparison between certified and non-certified faculty may also present bias, as some non-certified individuals may not pursue certification due to personal goals, institutional constraints or differing pedagogical philosophies. Understanding faculty motivations and barriers to certification could offer deeper insights into professional development needs. The qualitative sample, though purposively selected, was limited in size, and perspectives from non-certified faculty—especially those encountering certification challenges—were underrepresented. Broader sampling would provide a more comprehensive understanding of these issues. In addition, the study does not differentiate between UKPSF certification levels (e.g., AFHEA, FHEA, SFHEA, PFHEA), leaving the relative impact of each level unclear. Future research should explore how different certification levels influence teaching practices and professional development. Finally, this study does not establish causality between certification and teaching effectiveness. Longitudinal or experimental designs—such as randomized controlled trials or propensity score matching—are recommended to assess causal relationships. Qualitative methods could also be used to further explore faculty experiences, motivations and perceived outcomes of certification.

6. Conclusion

This study has highlighted the significance of UKPSF certification in advancing faculty development, teaching quality and student learning. Sustained investment in certification programs, mentoring and incentives is essential to maintaining these gains and cultivating a culture of professional excellence. However, the applicability of the UKPSF varies across institutional, cultural and policy contexts. While the framework promotes consistency in faculty development, its standardized competencies may constrain pedagogical flexibility and creativity in diverse educational environments. Originally developed within a Western context, the UKPSF are required adaptation for non-Western settings such as Southeast Asia, where institutional policies, faculty engagement and resource availability shape implementation. As Owusu-Agyeman (2024) emphasized effective faculty development frameworks must be comprehensive and supported by robust institutional policies and resources. Future research should examine adaptations or integrations with alternative models—such as reflective practice or personalized adaptive learning—to strike a balance between standardization and innovation. By prioritizing flexible, context-sensitive approaches to certification and professional development, universities can foster teaching excellence and contribute meaningfully to global discourse on faculty competency.

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Supplementary material

The supplementary material for this article can be found online.

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