# AN EXPLORATION OF THE SCHOOL-BASED SUPPORT PROGRAM (SBSP) AS PERCEIVED BY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SPECIALISTS AT THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (NCED)-QATAR UNIVERSITY

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**Abstract -** The purpose of this paper is to examine the development of a professional development PD) model for educator growth and learning that is embedded into the school context. Because the success of a PD program in practice cannot be judged against its theoretical underpinnings, the paper goes on to examine the perceptions of professional development specialists on the effectiveness of the PD model. Through the use of a qualitative, constant comparative approach, data were collected from nineteen professional development specialists through open-ended surveys followed by focus group interviews. The professional development specialists provided information about the strengths of the PD program, the challenges they faced in their day-to-day implementation of the program, and their suggestions for the improvement of the program's implementation and outcomes. The professional development specialists reported several strengths, which were compatible with the literature on effective PD. However, the challenges they faced were deeply rooted within the structure of the program, in addition to external factors operating at both the school and Ministry of Education levels. Thus, a general consensus on the way that the program should ultimately develop was reached.

**Keywords -** SBSP, NCED, professional learning, Qatar University.