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**THE STATE OF CONTINUOUS
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAM IN ETHIOPIAN SECONDARY
SCHOOLS**



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Abstract

Abstract: Exploring the State n of Continuous Professional Development in the Wolaita Zone Administration is the objective of this study. A cross-sectional survey research design with a Concurrent strategy was instrumental. The total populations of this study were 150, of which 30 school leaders and 84 teachers were selected via a random sampling technique and properly filled out and returned questionnaires. Besides, 6 principals, 6 vice principals, 2 supervisors, and 10 CPD facilitators were interviewed. All of the 304 samples were taken by available sampling techniques. Questionnaires, interviews, and document analyses were instrumental. Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were used to analyze quantitative data. Concurrently, qualitative data was narrated to triangulate the result obtained. The finding shows that the overall state of CPD activities was not well articulated and implemented and it resulted in low achievement in the CPD program, In addition, the low commitment to continuously improve the CPD program resulted in low pupils' achievement and lack of education quality in the study area. It can infer that CPD was inadequately implemented in the Secondary schools of the Wolaita zone administration. Consequently, students' learning achievement and education quality in secondary schools were not effectively improved. Preparation of essential training, discussion forums, conferences, or workshops, assigning trained CPD facilitators, allocation of CPD program budgets, and providing adequate CPD manuals and guidelines were major recommendations.

Keywords: Continuing Professional Development (CPD); Education quality; academic achievement..

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Introduction

The knowledge of teachers in pedagogy and subject matter is the center of quality education and better achievement of students (1). Hence, developing the capacity of teachers through Continuous Professional Development (CPD) program has got great recognition from scholars (2). High-quality teaching-learning with accountability and high academic standards paves the way for effective professional development programs academic communities and policymakers. (3)

Consequently, governments and educational specialists are constantly searching for professional development activities that are meaningful and effective (4). Hence, the Ethiopian Government introduces a new major nationwide educational transformation to strengthen quality education for all and students' achievement (5). It is one of the most prominent reform areas is the professional development of teachers (5). So it is better to understand the concept, nature, and definition of CPD.

CPD is the process of tracking and documenting the skills, knowledge, and experience that we gain both formally and informally as we work, beyond any initial training (6). According to Bubb and Earley, (2004), the engagement of teachers in any professional development program improves the knowledge, ability, attitude, and skills of teachers that strengthen the quality of child education. In the same vein, as (7), CPD is one of the programs that help boosts the ability, skill, and knowledge of teachers in their future

careers and bring quality teaching-learning to the children.

As MoE (8), CPD is defined as professional procedures that are used to create qualified and competent teachers based on school situation and context; is an unceasing process of bringing individual development to strengthening professional capacity at school (7 & 8). CPD is of the most effective and cost-efficient ways to help teachers refresh their knowledge and pedagogical practice (7).

Statement of the Problem

According to (9), teaching is a novel and lively profession with continually altering and evolving knowledge and it needs logical and continuous development of education experts particularly teachers. In addition, the quality of teachers in academic institutions takes the frontline in any education policy which helps to increase student outcomes (10).

The (5) document shows CPD facing serious challenges because of proper standardized training and poor coordination and collaboration to implement the program. Despite the South, Regional Education Bureau exerting more efforts since 2007, as part of the realization of the CPD program, integrity, collaboration, and coordination of all stakeholders are not in place to implement the program in the region (11).

From my 20 years of professional experience and research work, the majority of school teachers invest their time in a very routine task in the classroom other

than the strategic implementation of CPD in their respective schools in Wolaita Zone administration. Besides, much scientific research conducted in a different area the situations need further attention in the Secondary Schools of Wolaita Zone Administration. Moreover, there is the scantiness of empirical research in the local context of the study area. Hence, the researcher attempted to explore the current state of the program in sampled study units. Thus, the research question was formulated below.

1. What is the current state of the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) program in the Wolaita Zone Administration?

2. Materials and Methods

Research Design and Method: A mixed method was employed because it qualifies the researcher to make investigations with forecasts, a narration of events, and relationships (12,13). Additionally, a blend of quantitative and qualitative approaches was instrumental in analyzing the data through a concurrent strategy. A mixed method is a way that combines quantitative and qualitative data to cross-check how one data support the other (14). As a result, the strength of one method could be used to overcome the inherent weaknesses of another method.

Source of Data: Directors, supervisors, and CPD facilitators were primary sources of data. These sources are directly or indirectly involved in the program and they are believed to have full information about school-based CPD. Journals, books, theses published and unpublished, policy documents, CPD documents, and

portfolios developed by teachers were also secondary sources of data.

Samples and Sampling Techniques: In Wolaita Administrative area more than 52 secondary schools in the Wolaita Zone administration and only 10 were taken by availability sampling techniques. The populations of this study were 150, of which 30 school leaders and 84 teachers were selected via a random sampling technique and properly filled out and returned questionnaires. Besides, 6 principals, 6 vice principals, 2 supervisors, and 10 CPD facilitators were interviewed. All of the 204 samples were taken by available sampling techniques.

Data Gathering Tools: Questionnaires, interviews, and documents were the data collection tools of this study. Survey tools were prepared first in English Language and have been translated into Amharic. The Likert scale was used to rate the responses (15).

Interview: The interview was prepared for interview informants in English and has been translated into Amharic, to express their understanding of the situation understudy with the director, vice directors, supervisors, and CPD facilitators to gather more information.

Document Analysis: As secondary sources document review was instrumental to support the finding. Journals, books, theses, CPD directives, programs, reports, guidelines, portfolios, and all CPD plan

documents were reviewed as secondary sources.

Data Collection Procedures: The researcher made actual contact in person with appropriate people in the organization with a view to consensus access. Then, by taking a cooperation letter from the office to the schools in which the sampled secondary schools were found, the researcher went to the schools. Finally, the researcher contacted sampled schools, made a brief orientation about him and his research to the principals, and adjusts the conditions for data collection. After getting permission and willingness from principals, distributed the questionnaires to sample participants.

Data Analysis Techniques: Descriptive and inferential analyses were instrumental in the study. A mixed technique was applied in the study through concurrent strategy (Kwakman, 2006). To this end, descriptive statistics mean and standard deviation and inferential statistics like t-test which was used for binary comparisons among the responses of the two groups (teachers and principals). The qualitative data which was collected from respondents through interviews and documents was narrated and analyzed to triangulate the reality of information which

was collected through the questionnaire. Mean scores were calculated from the responses (16).

Ethical Consideration: One of the expectations under scientific research is employing standardized academic research and to behave with honesty and integrity to realize the study. To maintain such ethical standards, the researcher was passed through the following procedures. First, the researcher was obtaining a letter of entry into the study site from the government to secure entry from gatekeepers. Then, voluntarily asked their permission to engage in the research work. Finally, the researcher also assures that the result obtained from the informants is confidential and not exposed to others. Fears related to harm to the school and informants as a result of the findings were being settled. Overall, the researcher secures informed consent and maintains privacy and confidentiality (14).

Validity and Reliability: A pilot test was conducted to cross-check the reliability and validity of the content in some schools. For pilot testing, 30 randomly selected teachers, and 10 school leaders from other schools were made to fill out the questionnaire.

Result and Discussion

No	Items	R	No	M	AVM	t-test	P-value
1	Introduction and orientation to Overall CPD activities	Teacher	150	2.52	2.40	1.342	0.81
		Principal	30	2.38			
2	CPD mentored by well experienced senior teachers	Teacher	150	2.55	2.40	4.101	0.06
		Principal	30	2.25			
3	Well-articulated and planned for CPD practices	Teacher	150	2.25	3.00	0.976	0.00
		Principal	30	3.75			
4	Well organized portfolios documentation practices	Teacher	150	2.33	2.30	2.151	0.61
		Principal	30	2.27			
5	Frequent Action research practices on the teaching learning problem	Teacher	150	2.75	2.50	3.201	0.07
		Principal	30	2.25			
6	Participation in Peer or Group discussion on CPD	Teacher	150	2.20	2.20	0.879	0.37
		Principal	30	2.20			
7	Evaluation of the effectiveness of CPD activities	Teacher	150	2.48	2.30	1.043	0.08
		Principal	30	2.12			
8	Monitoring the role of CPD practices on the classroom activities	Teacher	150	2.55	2.40	1.344	0.78
		Principal	30	2.25			
9	Continuous improvement on classroom practices based on the feedback given	Teacher	150	2.22	2.30	.9561	0.00
		Principal	30	2.38			
10	Preplanning for CPD activities focusing on feedback	Teacher	30	2.58	2.43	1.201	0.09
		Principal	150	2.29			

Source: Survey Data, 2022,

Overall 180 copies of survey tools were distributed, and all were filled and returned (100%). 24 participants were key informants interviewed. Finally, based on the data the following findings were obtained.

Table 1: Responses Participants on the State and Practices of CPD implementation

The table above describes the variables and the respective mean; t-test and, standard deviation scores obtained from survey data. Hence, the items were interpreted accordingly. The first item deals with the introduction and proper orientation of CPD in particular schools. Accordingly, the participants have rated

the levels of response on item one CPD activities. Both teachers and school leaders rated CPD practice state with the mean value $M=2.52$ and 2.38 respectively. The averages mean score of 2.40 shows that both groups have indicated inadequate introduction and orientation given to the proper implementation of the overall CPD to achieve the objective of CPD. The corresponding t-test (1.342) and P-value (0.081) were > 0.05 . Consequently, it can reveal the non-significant difference between the two groups. Thus, the finding can show that at the school level, there is no adequate and well-organized introduction and orientation on the CPD program given to the teachers to improve their future careers. Regarding this issue, literature revealed that teachers' achievement was inadequate and got little attention as cited in (16).

To cross-check the quantitative finding, a qualitative analysis was also made. Accordingly, the interviewed school principals confirmed that:

"The overall introduction and orientation on CPD activities are very poor and teachers even misunderstand the role of CPD. But all teachers engaged in planning their CPD and portfolio.

Convergence of the findings: Both quantitative and qualitative results confirmed the finding of (16) that inadequate and little attention was given to the CPD programs at sample schools in Wolaita Zone Administration Secondary schools.

On the same table nominating well-qualified and experienced mentors to teachers and the participants ranked their levels of responses with the mean value $M=2.55$ and $M=2.25$ respectively. The average mean of 2.40 shows that both groups have indicated still the mentoring process nomination was not considered well-qualified and experienced senior teachers to the newly joined teachers. The corresponding t-test (4.101) and the P-value of 0.06 is > 0.05 . Therefore, it reveals a non-significant difference between the groups. Thus, the teachers were not mentored by well-experienced senior professionals.

Moreover, the responses obtained from the interviewed CPD facilitator' shows that

"The CDP program in sampled schools not monitored by qualified and well experienced senior teachers, rather simply assigning teachers, even sometimes and the school assigns very young teachers without sufficient knowledge and experience."

Convergence: Both quantitative and qualitative findings were telling the same facts and one can comprehend the other. This is also paradoxical with the empirical findings of Habte, (2014) strongly highlight the importance of a mentor in supporting the CPD process at the school level.

Participants tried to rate their ranks of response on whether they have a well-articulated and organized plan for each CPD practice in their respective

schools under item 3 above. Accordingly, the participants rated scores of $M=2.25$ and 3.75 respectively. The average mean of 3.00 shows both groups rated medium implementation about the issue. The responses of school leaders are slightly different from teachers. The corresponding t-test score (0.976) and the P-value of 0.00 is < 0.05 . Therefore, it can indicate a significant difference between the opinions of the two groups.

Results obtained from Document analysis confirmed that:

"Despite it is not well articulated and organized, both groups have a plan for each CPD practice. In addition, even though they have a plan for each CPD practice, they did not implement all CPD practices according to their plan and as expected. Both results of quantitative and qualitative confirmed the same fact with the MoE report of 2009 on CPD practices which indicated that all CPD practices were not taking place as a result of a planned program as part of the CPD cycle (8).

The response on well-organized portfolios documentation practices in their particular schools confirmed that the score of $M=2.33$ and $M=2.27$ respectively. The average mean value (2.30) obtained from both groups shows poor and inadequate practices on the portfolio documentation in their respective schools. The corresponding t-test (2.151) and P-value (0.61) are > 0.05 . Hence it shows a non-significant difference between the two groups regarding portfolios by recording

the well-organized documentation of all CPD documents. This implies that participants have a lack of awareness to articulate portfolios based on CPD evidence.

The results of qualitative data from document analysis indicated that:

"Teachers were not well-understand the documentation process of CPD activities in their respective schools. Besides, there was no prepared portfolio recording all CPD activities even though they have a plan. The findings were told the same fact but paradoxical to the empirical studies of (17). Habtamu's finding stated that proper portfolio development is crucial to teacher career development and better knowledge of CPD practices.

Action research is a scientific procedure in which experts investigate the solution to the problem on immediate bases in the school (18). Concerning the involvement of teachers in action research, respondents confirmed the mean score of $M=2.75$ and 2.25 respectively. The average score of 2.50 in both groups shows that inadequate rate of conducting action research in particular schools. The corresponding t-test score was (3.201) and the P-value (0.07) was > 0.05 . Therefore, it shows a non-significant difference between the opinions of the two groups. Despite the participation of teachers in action research is paramount importance in searching solutions for to the problem; the level of teacher participation in conducting action research is so limited and inadequate in their respective schools.

Interview results obtained from the School leader stated that:

"There is no environment that encourages conducting action research in secondary schools because of resource constraints like finance. In this regard, the teacher rate of participation in conducting action research is very low. In the same vein, very few staff individually conducted action researches in few schools." As indicated in the above quantitative and qualitative findings, the results tell the same fact and one can comprehend the other.

CPD primarily assures the skillfulness and knowledge of teachers in their profession and also equips teachers with essential skills and abilities that help their professional progress with the support of strong discussion with groups and experienced peers in CPD activities at school level (19). Consequently, their levels of response on the involvement of teachers in the group or peer discussion rated with the mean score of $M=2.20$ and $M=2.20$ respectively. The average means 2.20 which shows the inadequate engagement of teachers in the group discussion in CPD activities in their respective schools. The corresponding t -test score was (0,879), P -value (0.37) was > 0.05 . Therefore, there was a non-significant difference between the two groups in their respective school. It shows that both groups have low a level of participation in group discussions in program activities.

The result obtained from the CPD facilitator confirmed that:

"Even Though group discussion on CPD practices makes fruit full and productive which enhance their skills for realizing quality education in their respective schools, such culture is not well articulated and practices in the respective schools." To sum up, the findings were telling the same reality and fact and one can comprehend the other. Thus, facilitating the participation of scholars in the discussion of CPD practices need to get particular attention to strengthen their professional competencies and skill in their respective schools.

Operative CPD refers to "organized proficient learning that brings changes in professional competencies and enhancements in student learning outcomes" (Darling-Hammond, Hyler & Gardner, 2017, p. 2). Evaluation is an integral component of the CPD planning cycle and ties the session to the original need assessment and learning outcome objectives. (Archibald, Coggshall, Croft & Goe, 2011). Consequently their levels of response about whether they evaluate their success in realizing CPD activities and revising the plans rated with the scores of ($M=2.48$) and ($M=2.12$) respectively. The average mean of 2.30 shows the very limited practices of the issues under their respective schools. In addition to the descriptive analysis, the corresponding t -test score (1.043) and P -value (0.08) were > 0.05 . It infers that non-significant difference between the opinions of the two groups. Consequently, it reveals that there are poor trends in evaluating the effectiveness of CPD outcomes like student achievement

In the same vein, during the interview, the CPD facilitator said:

"There is no culture of evaluating the effectiveness of CPD in their respective schools. The finding is similar to Kelly's empirical result claims that "impact assessment under CPD is the most neglected task in school (Kelly, 2006). Nevertheless, King, (2013) underscored the importance of monitoring and evaluating CPD to know its impact. The empirical finding confirmed that an evaluation is of paramount importance to ensure whether the training program effectively achieves the target (20). Thus, there should be a regular program to evaluate the effectiveness of CPD practices.

CPD has a key role in improving teachers' teaching competencies and their student's learning and achievement and planning and designing for teaching and learning; communication, teaching, and learning (21). Hence, on a regular base monitoring the contribution and role of CPD in the classroom need to be in place. Accordingly, as observed from item 8, participants' responses on continuous follow-up of the contribution of CPD practices in student achievement were confirmed (M=2.55 and M=2.25 respectively). The average mean of 2.40 shows that both groups indicated the absence of monitoring the contribution and role of CPD activities in the classroom. The corresponding t-test score (1.344) and P-value (0.78) is > 0.05 . Therefore, it

shows is non-significant difference between the opinions of the two groups.

Contrary to this finding, the result of the document review shows that:

"Notwithstanding CPD coordinators and facilitators assigned at the school level, education offices are suffering in checking the effect of CPD practices on the quality of education and student academic achievement. As the result indicated above both the quantitative and qualitative findings tell the same fact and one can support the other. (22) found that the majority of teachers face challenges in transferring what they learned to actual practice. Well-organized training has a significant impact on mastering the skills required at the school level. Hence, a strong monitoring strategy needs to be in place to identify the contribution of CPD at the classroom level.

The definitive aim of CPDs is to enhance students' success; positive and constructive feedback benefits teachers to improve and grow in professional ways and strengthen the teaching-learning process(23). Thus, it's important to value the views of others and understand their experiences in your practice to strengthen CPD activities. In this regard, respondents were confirmed with the score of (M=2.22 and 2.38) respectively. The average mean is 2.30. The corresponding t-test and the significance value (p-value) of 0.00 is less than 0.05. Therefore, it reveals a significant difference between the opinions of the two groups. Therefore, this significant difference is may come due to their perception of their feedback.

The interview participant from the school leader said:

Despite the feedback will help teachers to grow and improve in a way that informs their practice and helps them to identify areas for future learning, in most cases the supervisors were not provided positive feedback rather they are fault finder and that also discourage teacher to follow their supervisors. Therefore, from this finding, we can understand that both results obtained from quantitative and qualitative data confirmed a similar fact and one can support the other. The finding confirmed the empirical result of (24, 25 indicates limited attention to controlling the effect of CPD at the school level.

Preplanning of the CPD program helps academic communities keep their skills and knowledge up to date and prepare for greater responsibilities, increase their self-assurance, and reinforce teachers' professional credibility (Guskey, 2003). Accordingly, in item 10, the participants were rated their levels of response to preplanning for CPD activities confirmed with the mean value $M=2.58$ and $M=2.29$ respectively. The average mean is 2.43. The corresponding t-test score (1.201) and the P-value of 0.09 is > 0.05 . Therefore, it reveals a non-significant difference between the opinions of the two groups. Therefore, the result depicted that there is no culture of preplanning for CPD practices based on the feedback given to advance the student outcomes and future careers of teachers in respected schools.

The interviewed supervisors on the same issue stated:

The commitment of teachers and school leaders is very limited in the preplanning of CPD activities based on the evaluation and feedback in their respective schools. Besides, still, there is a misunderstanding of the continuous professional development on both sides (teachers and principals). Even though the purpose of a Continuing Professional Development Plan is to identify and record the learning and development plan to undertake to be effective in teachers' careers, both quantitative and qualitative data results depicted a very limited trend in the planning of CPD activities which are both findings telling the same fact.

Conclusion

To put it in a nutshell, as indicated in the overall variables designed to assess the current state of CPD confirmed the poor implementation with the average Mean score of 2.43 in their respective schools. In addition, fewer mentoring initiatives, lack of awareness to prepare a portfolio, awareness of school leaders and teachers on CPD, provision of positive feedback, and planning of CPD need further attention to strengthen the program at the school level. One can conclude that the overall implementation of CPD in sampled schools is below the minimum standard and needs to look strategically to improve the program.

Recommendations

As per the above conclusion, the following recommendation was forwarded.

Principals should give awareness training on the importance of CPD for teachers, school leaders, mentors, and CPD facilitators. Supervisors should follow up on the delivery of instruction on the bases of pedagogical principles. The concerned education experts, stakeholders, and officials should take strategic action and monitor the practices and arrange further well-designed training for teachers, and experience sharing with the nearby cluster schools to advance the quality of teacher competencies, and students' achievement. In addition, the Woreda education office needs to allocate sufficient funds to guarantee the proper implementation of the program.

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