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THE IMPLEMENTATION OF TEACHERS' CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND ITS IMPACT ON EDUCATIONAL QUALITY: PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN FAGITA LEKOMA WOREDA, AWI ZONE, AMHARA REGION, ETHIOPIA IN FOCUS

Abstract: This study examined the extent to which Primary Schools of Fagita Lekoma Woreda implement teachers' CPD and its impact to quality in education. Data were collected from teachers, school principals, and woreda education office supervisors. Questionnaire and interview were used as the data gathering tools of the study. The quantitative data was analyzed using percentage and one sample t-test. The qualitative data was analyzed via thematic description. The findings confirmed that the respondents' level of agreement regarding the implementation of teachers' CPD was found significantly greater than the expected mean (3) in some parameters of the implementation of CPD (e.g., teachers' access to new ideas (3.48), teachers' state of sharing experiences (3.44), and teachers' professional interaction (3.48)). But, there was no significant difference between the expected mean (3) and the calculated means of the other parameters (e.g., attention given for teachers true learning (3.15), focus on staff professional development (3.10), pursuit for improved teaching and learning (3.06), teachers' engagement into continuous professional development (3.31), the match between professional development provision and professional needs (3.08), conceptualization of professional development (2.92), being insensitive of matching of staff development opportunities to individual concerns (2.75), effort made to relate learning experiences to work place conditions (2.88), and teachers' engagement into professional development that promotes inquiry, creativity, and innovation (3.04)). The aggregate calculated mean value of extent of CPD implementation (3.14) also showed insignificant difference from the expected mean (3). Moreover, it was confirmed that there was no significant difference between the expected mean and the calculated means of all the parameters of the impact of CPD implementation on quality in education of primary schools of the woreda. Having considered the above major findings, relevant recommendations were forwarded in the recommendation section of this article.

Keywords: Implementation; Impact; Continuous Professional Development; Quality in Education.

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Background of the Study

For education to play the role of enhancing the capacity of citizens and informing important choices to their welfare, it has to meet minimum quality standards. Among other conditions, it is strongly argued that universal goals set for education in terms of access need to be accompanied with quality instruction. This in turn requires teachers to be qualified to do their job effectively. This is reflected in the Education and Training Policy (TGE, 1994) and Education Sector Development Programs charted out in Ethiopia.

Teachers in the present Ethiopia are expected to be reflective and change-oriented thereby to meet the government and public demand for quality education. They are expected to consider the dynamic nature of the learners and the society at large. This situation signifies the importance of continuous professional development (CPD), which aimed at improving the quality of the teaching learning process in particular, and improving quality of education in general. Teachers are expected to employ interactive methods of teaching to help each and every student learn to her/his maximum potentiality. The literature on quality education indicates a strong link between teacher professional development and quality in education especially in the areas of teachers' beliefs and practices, students' learning and on the implementation of educational reforms (UNESCO, 2006).

CPD is said to have been coined in the mid-1970's (Gray, 2005). Its notion is rooted in the constructivist philosophy which claims that a person's constructions and views of the world are not stable, but are in continuous change. Accordingly, it is presumed that teachers have to engage themselves in planning and executing their professional development on continuous basis to cope-up with the rapidly changing world. In this regard, Amare and Temechegn (2002) noted that teacher development is an essential element to bring meaningful changes in addressing equity, quality, relevance and efficiency.

According to Gray (2005), CPD embraces the idea that individuals aim for continuous improvement in their professional skills and knowledge, beyond the basic training initially required to carry out the job. In teaching, such development was used to be called 'in-service training', or INSET, with the emphasis on delivery rather than the outcome. Similarly, CPD is viewed as professional growth that a teacher achieves as a result of gaining increased experience and examining his or her teaching systematically (Reimers, 2003; Institute for Learning, 2009).

The teacher professional development program in the Ethiopian context is a national intervention program run by the Ministry of Education (MOE) and supported by six European countries with the intent of enhancing the quality and effectiveness of teachers' education through both pre-service and in-service teacher training programs including Teacher System Overhaul (TESO), Leadership and Management Program (LAMP), and English Language Improvement Program (ELIP). The national program involved eleven Regional Educational Bureaus (REBs), Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs), and nine universities as implementers (MOE, 2007; MOE, 2008a). The purpose of this national project was to improve the knowledge, skills, qualifications and attitudes of primary and secondary school teachers by setting objectively verifiable indicators and target outcomes for the aforementioned areas. The target outcome for the in-service CPD priority areas were pedagogical knowledge and improving the capacity of teachers (MOE, 2007).

Professional development in the broader sense refers to the development of a person in his or her professional role. More specifically, teacher professional development is the professional growth a teacher achieves as result of gaining increased experiences and examining his or her teaching systematically (Glatthorn, 1995). Professional development includes formal experiences such as attending workshops and professional meetings, mentoring, etc, and informal experiences such as reading professional publications, watching on television documentaries related to academic discipline, etc. (Ganser, 2000).

This conception of professional development is, therefore, broader than career development which is defined as, the growth that occurs as the teacher move through the professional career cycle' (Glatthorn, 1995) and broader than staff development, which is, the provision organized in-service training programs designed to foster the growth of groups of teachers; it is only one of the systematic interventions that can be used for teacher development (Glatthorn, 1995). When looking at professional development, one must examine the content of experiences, the process by which the professional development will occur, and the context in which it will take place (Ganser, 2000; Fielding & Schallock, 1985).

Changes in the educational system of a nation and global requirements demand staff development activities. In a major initiative to address problems related to relevance, access, equity, and quality of educational provision, the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) introduced the Education and Training Policy in 1994. The ETP, supported by articles in the Ethiopian Constitution, sought to decentralize educational authority to the 11 states and called for new paradigms of education based on relevant, active, and student-centred teaching and learning.

The ETP established the foundation for all subsequent strategies, guidelines and programs. The education sector development programs were Education Sector Development Programs I, II and III which were developed in 1997, 2002, 2005 and 2009, respectively. In line with the goals of creating, trained and skilled human power at all levels who will be driving forces in the promotion of democracy and economic development in the country' (MoE, 2005, p. 5), the programs have focused on the expansion of the system, increased access for marginalized children and girls, and reduction of attrition. With rapid quantitative expansion, attention has increasingly been directed towards the issue of quality. Improving curricula, providing textbooks, increasing community participation, and augmenting financing for education are among the strategies pursued to address the perceived decline in the quality of education. Moreover, while all policy documents stress the importance of teachers for promoting learning, the emphasis on improving teacher quality is most prominent in the 2005 Education Sector Development Program (MoE, 2005).

The Ethiopian MoE (2004), therefore, disclosed that teachers are agents of change and in the front line of educational reforms. Realizing quality education, therefore, becomes a dream without having competent teachers. To enhance the quality of education, MoE (2008) has developed a 'General Education Quality Improvement Program' package (here after GEQIP) that pave the way to mitigate the existing problems of education. As quality in education is being affected by different factors, there arises the need to develop the package. One of the programs designed as part of the package is Continuous Professional Development (CPD).

Now days, there has been a rapid and dynamic changes in every walks of life. The real world where professionals practice is exhibiting dynamism. As a response to this rapid change, there

is a need for professionals to update themselves regularly. To this end, professionals demand new knowledge, skills and high commitment to lifelong learning (Craft, 2000).

McNeil (2004) on his part stated that the quality of teachers is the highest determinant factor of realizing quality in education. He further noted that the role of teachers in keeping quality of education is vital particularly in developing countries like Ethiopia where very few resources are available for students. This implies that improving teachers' competence is a key issue in assuring educational quality.

To ensure educational quality, countries are forced to carry out continuous school based in-service training programs as a major means of teachers' professional development. The in-service training programs have been implemented in schools with the objective of updating teachers with new knowledge and skills by performing different activities in group and individually. Moreover, the school based in-service training program will be cost effective, practical and easier to address teachers' immediate concerns (Solomon & Alemayehu, 2007).

With no question, schools are placed where actual teaching learning process would be practical. Therefore, in addition to designing, implementing and training at school level, attention has to be given by school principals and supervisors to promote experience sharing culture among teachers and thereby do problem solving activities at school level as professional growth is by and large a social product. However, there is a rumour among primary school teachers whom the researchers have met at different occasions that CPD has not been effectively implemented in a way that it can contribute for quality education among some of the primary schools in Ethiopia. This triggered the researchers to do an investigation into the status of primary school teachers' CPD implementation, and its impact for having quality teachers in primary schools of the woreda.

Statement of the Problem

Ethiopia has made extraordinary achievement in expanding education at all levels of the system. However, it seems that this achievement in terms of students' enrolment did not meet quality standards. Quality of education has become a serious concern among all stakeholders. The national assessment results of 2000, 2004, and 2008 (MOE, 2008a) indicated that, in many schools, children were not mastering basic skills. Despite the concerted effort by the government, improving quality of education while at the same time keeping the expansion of the education program has become a challenge.

A review of the performance reports of Teacher Professional Development program I and II showed tangible results and shortcomings both at policymaking and implementation levels. Evidences documented from researches conducted by universities, reports compiled from field visits and impact studies by the Ministry of Education showed that the TDP program has brought promising changes in terms of the targets set for the projects life span. Achievements registered and problems encountered are linked to organizational arrangements and readiness to implement the program by all stakeholders. In response to these problems, the MOE has worked out a new toolkit for effective implementation of school based Continuous Professional Development (CPD) at school level.

Even if access to basic education has relatively better achieved in Ethiopia, the quality of education needs more work. The quality of education as it was evaluated by different

professionals is below the desired standard level (e.g., MOE, 2008). In order to address problems related to quality of education, MOE has designed General Education Quality Improvement Package (GEQIP) which has six programs under it. CPD is one of the programs of this package with the purpose of improving teachers' competence and thereby enhance students' achievement. CPD as a new form of reaction in Ethiopia was intended to solve the problems of educational quality by continually updating teachers.

To this end, Fagita Lekoma education office has implemented the CPD program as a primary means of improving teachers' professional performance. The focus of CPD as a program is not only for teachers' simple involvement in training but also it includes the empowerment of teachers to take self-responsibility for continuous improvement and effectiveness as real professionals. Even though all the teachers have been involved in the CPD program, rumours from practitioners pointed out that the program could not bring a significant improvement on the academic achievement of students' and teachers' professional competence. The researchers' frequent interactions with primary school staffs, as we go for community service purposes, confirmed that there is still a gap between the intended professional competence and the actual competence of teachers. As a result, there is also a gap between the intended students' academic achievement and the actual academic achievement of the students.

The major objective of this research is, therefore, to investigate the status of teachers' CPD implementation and its impact on realizing quality education in primary schools of Fagita Lekoma woreda Education Office. On top of this, the researchers have participated in various meetings and workshops designed for evaluating how CPD activities were practiced at primary schools of Ethiopia. The experience gained from this exposure confirmed that CPD as a program is not well organized. Thus, it can be said that it is not uniformly practiced at schools and cluster centres.

As a result, the researchers designed to answer the following basic research questions:

- To what extent do Primary Schools of Fagita Lekoma Woreda implement teachers' CPD?
- How far does teachers' CPD implementation in the Primary Schools of Fagita Lekoma Woreda influence quality in education?

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were:

- To investigate the extent to which Primary Schools of Fagita Lekoma Woreda implement teachers' CPD, and
- To check the impact of teachers' CPD implementation in Primary Schools of Fagita Lekoma Woreda to quality in education.

Significance of the Study

This research was designed to bring the following significances:

- Enable stakeholders to identify factors that affect CPD implementation,
- Help stakeholders to see the impact of some factors on CPD implementation,
- Give information about the extent to which school principals, cluster supervisors and Fagita Lekoma woreda Education Office experts support classroom teachers while implementing teachers' CPD,

- Provide information for decision makers and teachers themselves about the extent to which they participate in teachers' CPD activities,
- Develop an insight for program decision makers on how to improve the positive impact of teachers' CPD program implementation on teachers' day to day practice,
- Used as a base line data for other researchers who want to do research with similar problems at a wider scale and in-depth.

Delimitation of the Study

The study focused on primary schools of Fagita Lekoma woreda which is found within the jurisdiction of Awi zone, Amhara Region, Ethiopia. The major concern of this study is to assess how far CPD is being implemented, and the impact of CPD implementation on quality in education.

Research Design

A descriptive survey method was employed in this study.

Population

The population of this study includes Fagita Lekoma woreda Education Office Experts, primary school principals, cluster supervisors of the primary schools and primary school teachers.

Sampling Technique

To select the required sample size, the researchers employed snow ball sampling technique for the Fagita Lekoma woreda Education Office Experts. As a result, it was hoped that those officers who had been better involved in the program implementation would be selected. School principals and cluster supervisors of the sample primary schools were selected using comprehensive sampling technique. Also the sample schools were selected using simple random sampling technique. Teachers in these schools were selected using systematic random sampling technique. That is, teachers in the sample schools were arranged in ascending order on the basis of their teaching experiences and selection was made thereof at intervals.

Sample Size

Out of 22 full cycle primary schools of the woreda, the researcher took only eight schools. The principals and supervisors of these sample schools were also taken. Sample schools were Addis Kidam, Sharata, Ashewa, Gezehara, Ayjasta, Nechela, and Finzit. The schools were taken out of eight clusters so that the researchers have eight cluster supervisors and eight school principals as a sample. Out of twenty two Fagita Lekoma education office experts, the researchers took eight of them as a sample using snow balling. And out of 443 male and 339 female (a total of 782) teachers of the selected schools, the researchers took 100 teachers as samples. The total sample size of the study is, therefore, 116.

Data Gathering Tools

The researchers used questionnaire and interview as data gathering tools. Questionnaire and interview were employed to see the status of CPD implementation and its impact on quality education at primary schools in the woreda. The reliability and validity levels of the instruments were checked via different procedures. The validity of the instruments was improved through the comments of two professors of Measurement and Evaluation at BDU. To check reliability, Cronbach alpha was employed in the data received from the pilot study. Using Cronbach alpha value, reliability level of the questionnaire was found 0.84.

Data Analysis

The researchers analyzed and interpreted the quantitative data collected from different data sources by using one sample t-test, and percentage. The qualitative data was thematically analyzed using description.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The Status of Teachers' CPD Implementation in primary schools of Fagita Lekoma woreda

Table1: CPD Implementation, test value=3

| Areas of implementation | N | Actual Mean | Std. | df | t | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|--|-----|-------------|-------|-----|-------|-----------------|
| Teachers' access to new ideas | 116 | 3.48 | 1.306 | 115 | 2.655 | .011 |
| Teachers' state of sharing experience | 116 | 3.44 | 1.227 | 115 | 2.599 | .012 |
| Attention for teacher learning | 116 | 3.15 | 1.211 | 115 | .916 | .364 |
| Teachers' professional interaction | 116 | 3.48 | 1.129 | 115 | 3.071 | .003 |
| Focus on staff development | 116 | 3.10 | 1.225 | 115 | .566 | .574 |
| Pursuit for improved teaching and learning | 116 | 3.06 | 1.074 | 115 | .387 | .700 |
| Teachers' engagement into CPD | 116 | 3.31 | 1.112 | 115 | 1.995 | .051 |
| Match between professional development provision and professional needs | 116 | 3.08 | 1.118 | 115 | .496 | .622 |
| Conceptualization of professional development | 116 | 2.92 | 1.234 | 115 | -.449 | .655 |
| Staff development opportunities are insensitive to individual concerns | 116 | 2.75 | 1.135 | 115 | - | 1.588 |
| Staff development opportunities make little effort to relate learning experiences to work place conditions | 116 | 2.88 | 1.215 | 115 | -.685 | .497 |
| Teachers engage in professional development that promotes inquiry, creativity, and innovation | 116 | 3.04 | 1.283 | 115 | .216 | .830 |

An attempt was made to check how far continuous professional development is being practiced in primary schools of Fagita Lekoma woreda. Table 1 specifically summarizes data related to how far continuous professional development program was practiced in the primary schools of the woreda. The results indicated that the respondents' level of agreement to the implementation of teachers' CPD was significantly greater than the expected mean (3) in measures of the implementation of CPD such as teachers' access to new ideas (3.48), teachers' state of sharing experiences (3.44), and teachers' professional interaction (3.48).

The difference between the expected mean and the calculated means of the above measures of CPD implementation was found significant at a value of 0.05.

However, there is no significant difference between the expected mean and the calculated means of the other measures of CPD implementation in primary schools of the woreda. That is, attention given for teachers true learning (3.15), focus on staff professional development (3.10), pursuit for improved teaching and learning (3.06), teachers' engagement into continuous professional development (3.31), the match between professional development provision and professional needs (3.08), conceptualization of professional development (2.92), being insensitive of matching of staff development opportunities to individual concerns (2.75), effort made to relate learning experiences to work place conditions (2.88), and teachers' engagement into professional development that promotes inquiry, creativity, and innovation (3.04) were moderately practiced in primary schools of Fagita Lekoma woreda. As it can be seen from both the presentation and Table 1, some of the measures of CPD implementation were slightly below and some others were above the expected mean. Generally, the result implies that CPD implementation in the primary schools of Fagita Lekoma woreda is moderate.

Similar findings have been observed from the interview data analysis. All the interviewees agreed that CPD had been implemented in their respective schools. But, its implementation was at a moderate level. They suggest that its implementation was facilitated with people who were not well versed with pedagogical models, principles, and theories. The researchers felt that it could be a good reason for having a moderate CPD implementation in primary schools of Fagita Lekoma Woreda.

The Impact of Teachers' CPD Implementation in primary schools of Fagita Lekoma woreda

Table 2: Impact of Teachers' CPD Implementation to Quality Education, test value=3

| Areas of Educational Impact of CPD Implementation | N | Cal. Mean | Std. | df | t | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|--|-----|-----------|-------|-----|--------|-----------------|
| Investment in staff CPD | 116 | 2.90 | 1.257 | 115 | -.552 | .583 |
| Creating much more opportunity on teacher collaboration | 116 | 2.83 | 1.309 | 115 | -.953 | .345 |
| Opportunities for teachers to share best practices | 116 | 2.88 | 1.464 | 115 | -.568 | .572 |
| Improvements in student learning and achievement | 116 | 2.87 | 1.415 | 115 | -.686 | .496 |
| Teachers show improvements in their own teaching repertoires | 116 | 2.88 | 1.395 | 115 | -.596 | .554 |
| Teachers show improvements of understanding their purposes | 116 | 2.88 | 1.381 | 115 | -.602 | .550 |
| Teachers are more likely provide an increased range of learning opportunities for students | 116 | 2.81 | 1.269 | 115 | -1.093 | .279 |
| Teachers' sense of commitment become more positive than before | 116 | 2.67 | 1.424 | 115 | -1.655 | .104 |
| Teachers' relationship with students become more positive than before | 116 | 2.73 | 1.388 | 115 | -1.399 | .168 |
| Improved sense of teacher professionalism | 116 | 2.81 | 1.314 | 115 | -1.055 | .296 |
| Increased motivation to stay within the profession | 116 | 2.75 | 1.312 | 115 | -1.374 | .175 |
| Teachers renew, review and extend their commitment as change agents to the moral purpose of teaching | 116 | 2.83 | 1.309 | 115 | -.953 | .345 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|-----|------|-------|-----|-------|------|
| Teachers acquire and develop critically all the inputs for good planning and practice with beneficiaries | 116 | 3.04 | 1.441 | 115 | .192 | .848 |
| There is teacher improvement in knowledge and skill | 116 | 3.13 | 1.495 | 115 | .649 | .519 |
| Teachers show high commitment and moral purposes to their teaching | 116 | 2.87 | 1.372 | 115 | -.707 | .483 |
| There is an improvement in teachers' thinking and planning | 116 | 3.08 | 1.266 | 115 | .438 | .663 |
| There is improvement in teachers' actions of taking account of their life and career phases and the contexts in which they work | 116 | 2.90 | 1.317 | 115 | -.526 | .601 |

An attempt was made to check the impact continuous professional development implementation has brought into the educational practices of primary schools of Fagita Lekoma woreda. Table 2 specifically summarizes data related to the impacts of the implementation of continuous professional development program on quality of educational practices of primary schools of the woreda. The results indicated that there was no significant difference between the expected mean and the calculated means of all the measures of the impact of CPD implementation on quality of educational practices of primary schools of the woreda. That is, the respondents' level of agreement to all measures of CPD implementation impact on quality of primary school educational practices of the woreda was found moderate. As it can be seen from Table 2, some of the measures of CPD implementation impact on educational practices were slightly below and some others were above the expected mean.

Generally, the result implies that the impact of teachers' CPD implementation on the educational practices of the primary schools of Fagita Lekoma woreda was moderate. This finding was slightly different from the interview result. All the interviewees shared that the implementation of teachers' CPD program in the schools for years had created greater opportunity to share ideas freely with other colleagues, share best practices done by others, increased student achievement, increased their skill of interactively using different active learning methods, increased their skill of planning lessons, help them to be more committed to their job than before, etc. For example, one of the interviewees disclosed that,

CPD implementation has contributed a lot for me. It created an opportunity to share best practices with other teachers of the same level, teachers interaction with students become more and more emotional and become more and more like a father or mother-child relationship, have also improved their skill of managing diversity in the classroom, increased their skill of planning a lesson, and see a refined purpose of teaching as a profession and love it. But, the interviewee disclosed that more should be done on properly implementing CPD to bring deep-rooted and lasting effect on the professional life of teachers.

Generally, the researchers felt that the interview finding regarding the impact of CPD implementation at primary schools fits to the findings of the status of CPD implementation in the woreda. As a result, the researchers support the interview finding at the cost of the quantitative finding.

Discussion of the Findings

The Status of Teachers' Continuous Professional Development Implementation in the Primary Schools of Fagita Lekoma Woreda

An attempt was made to check how far teachers' continuous professional development was being practiced in the primary schools of Fagita Lekoma woreda. Table 1 specifically summarized data related to how far teachers' continuous professional development program was practiced in the primary schools of the woreda.

The results indicated that the respondents' level of agreement about the status of teachers' CPD implementation was significantly greater than the expected mean (3) in measures of the implementation of CPD such as teachers' access to new ideas (3.48), teachers' state of sharing experiences (3.44), and teachers' professional interaction (3.48). The difference between the expected mean and the calculated means of the above measures of CPD implementation was found significant at a value of 0.05 (Refer to Table 1).

Professional development was acknowledged to be centrally important in maintaining and enhancing the quality of teaching and learning in schools (Craft, 2000; Harland & Kinder 1997; Harris, 2002). The international literature (e.g., Day 1999b; Hargreaves, 1994) has consistently shown that professional development is an essential component of successful school level change and development. It confirmed that where teachers are able to access new ideas and to share experiences more readily, there is greater potential for school and classroom improvement. Evidence also suggests that attention to teacher learning can impact directly upon improvements in student learning and achievement. Where teachers expand and develop their own teaching repertoires and are clear in their purposes, it is more likely that they will provide an increased range of learning opportunities for students (Joyce, et. al, 1999). The literature (e.g., Talbert & McLaughlin, 1994) demonstrates that professional development can have a positive impact on curriculum, pedagogy, as well as teachers' sense of commitment and their relationships with students.

Recent research (e.g., Gray, 2000; Harris, 2002; Maden & Hillman, 1996; OFSTED, 2000) has reiterated that quality of professional interaction, the focus on staff development and the relentless pursuit of improved teaching and learning are key characteristics of successful school improvement.

However, there is no significant difference between the expected mean and the calculated means of the other measures of teachers' CPD implementation in the primary schools of the woreda. That is, attention given for teachers true learning (3.15), focus on staff professional development (3.10), pursuit for improved teaching and learning (3.06), teachers' engagement into continuous professional development (3.31), the match between professional development provision and professional needs (3.08), conceptualization of professional development (2.92), insensitive to matching staff development opportunities to individual concerns (2.75), effort made to relate learning experiences to work place conditions (2.88), and teachers' engagement into professional development that promotes inquiry, creativity, and innovation (3.04) are moderately practiced in the primary schools of Fagita Lekoma woreda. As it can be seen from both the presentation and Table 1, some of the measures of CPD implementation were slightly below and some others were above the expected mean.

Generally, the result implies that teachers' CPD implementation in the primary schools of Fagita Lekoma woreda was moderate.

Similar findings have been observed from the interview data analysis. All the interviewees agreed that teachers' CPD had been implemented in their respective schools. But, its implementation was at a moderate level. They suggest that its implementation was facilitated with professionals who had low exposure with pedagogical models, principles, and theories.

The Impact of Teachers' Continuous Professional Development Implementation in the Primary Schools of Fagita Lekoma Woreda

An attempt was made to check the impact teachers' continuous professional development implementation has brought into the quality of education practiced at primary schools of Fagita Lekoma woreda. Table 2 specifically summarizes data related to the impacts of the implementation of teachers' continuous professional development program on quality of education practiced at the primary schools of the woreda. The results indicated that there was no significant difference between the expected mean and the calculated means of all the measures of the impact of teachers' CPD implementation on quality of education practiced at the primary schools of the woreda. That is, the respondents' level of agreement to all measures of teachers' CPD implementation impact on the quality of educational practices of the woreda was found moderate (Refer to Table 2). As it can be seen from Table 2, some of the measures of teachers' CPD implementation impact on quality educational practices were slightly below and some others were above the expected mean. But the difference was not significant. Thus, the result implies that the impact of teachers' CPD implementation on the quality of education practiced in the general primary schools of Fagita Lekoma woreda was moderate.

This finding was slightly disconfirmed by the interview result. All the interviewees share that the implementation of teachers' CPD program in the primary schools has created an opportunity to share ideas freely with other colleagues, share best practices done by others, increased student achievement, increased their skill of interactively using different active learning methods, increased their skill of planning lessons, help them to be more committed to their job than before. These list of CPD implementation, as to the researchers, enhance quality in education.

The current interview finding is consistent with the suggestions made by early researchers. In this line, evidences pointed out from the related literature suggest that attention to teacher learning can impact directly upon improvements in student learning and achievement. Where teachers expand and develop their own teaching repertoires and are clear in their purposes, it is more likely that they will provide an increased range of learning opportunities for students (Joyce, et. al, 1999). The research literature demonstrates that professional development can have a positive impact on curriculum, pedagogy, as well as teachers' sense of commitment and their relationships with students (Talbert & McLaughlin, 1994).

Recent research has reiterated that quality of professional interaction, the focus on staff development and the relentless pursuit of improved teaching and learning are key characteristics of successful school improvement (Gray, 2000; Harris, 2002; Maden & Hillman, 1996; OFSTED, 2000). However, it also acknowledges the importance of teachers engaging in continuing career long development that meet their own personal and professional needs.

These needs vary according to circumstance, personal and professional histories and current dispositions. Yet, matching appropriate professional development provision to particular professional needs is essential if effective learning is to take place (Solomon & Alemayehu, 2007). This 'fit' between the developmental needs of the teachers and the selected activity is critically important in ensuring that there is a positive impact at the school and classroom level. Where staff development opportunities are poorly conceptualized, insensitive to matching with the concerns of individual participants and, make little effort to relate learning experiences to workplace conditions, they make little impact upon teachers or their pupils (Day, 1999a). Research has shown that in order to achieve improvements in teaching and better learning outcomes for students, teachers need to be engaged in professional development that promotes inquiry, creativity and innovation. Using peer coaching, mentoring, sabbaticals and other forms of sustained professional learning has been shown to have positively affected teaching and learning outcomes (Joyce, Calhoun et al., 1998; Little, 1993).

Conclusions

From the findings of this study, one can conclude that the implementation of teachers' CPD such as teachers' access to new ideas, teachers' state of sharing experiences, and teachers' professional interaction opportunity were significant. However, attention given for teachers true learning, focus on staff professional development, pursuit for improved teaching and learning, teachers' engagement into continuous professional development, the match between professional development provision and professional needs, conceptualization of professional development, insensitive of staff development opportunities to individual concerns, effort made to relate learning experiences to work place conditions, and teachers' engagement into professional development that promotes inquiry, creativity, and innovation are moderately practiced in the primary schools of Fagita Lekoma woreda. The impact of the above focal points implementation on instruction was also found moderate.

Recommendation

On the basis of the major findings and conclusions made thereof, the researchers have suggested the following recommendations:

- School principals and woreda supervisors could work more than ever before so that the status of the attention given for teachers true learning, focus on staff professional development, pursuit for improved teaching and learning, teachers' engagement into continuous professional development, the match between professional development provision and professional needs, conceptualization of professional development, insensitiveness in matching staff development opportunities to individual concerns, effort made to relate learning experiences to work place conditions, and teachers' engagement into professional development that promotes inquiry, creativity, and innovation could be enhanced among primary school teachers' of the woreda.
- School principals and woreda supervisors shall create a tripartite (teachers, principals and supervisors) and true collaborative system at the schools so that the implementation of the above CPD focal points could bring the highest impact on the educational practices of the primary schools of Fagita Lekoma woreda.

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