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Improving Teacher's Role in CPD: The Case of Debarik University

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Abstract

This study is entitled Teachers' Participation in CPD: the case of Debarik University. The study aimed to identify the roles of teachers in CPD work, indicate the factors that hinder them from doing CPD activities, and state the advantage and disadvantages of doing CPD for teachers. The data was collected using tools like interviews, questionnaires, and document analysis. And it was analyzed in both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. As the study's finding indicates, most teachers lack the motivation to participate in CPD activities. They are mainly involved in the teaching-learning process. A very smaller number (1/4) of teachers are participating in doing research and community service. Therefore, some recommendations are forwarded to the teachers, the University, and the administrative staff. As well, the researchers are going to take some measures for the improvement of the CPD work of the Debarik University teachers.

Keywords: Higher Diploma Program (HDP), Continuous Professional Development (CPD), Ministry of Education (MoE), Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE), Education and Training Policy (ETP)

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1. Introduction

Continuous professional development (CPD) is one aspect of a teacher's activity. It consists of all activities that take place in teaching and learning experiences that are intended to be of direct or indirect benefit to the teacher, students, parents, and organization in which all are expected to contribute to the quality of education inside and outside of the classroom.

"CPD is the process by which, alone and with others, teachers review, renew and extend their commitment as change agents to the moral purpose of teaching; and by which they acquire and develop critically the knowledge, skills and emotional intelligence essential to good professional thinking, planning, and practice with children, young people, and colleagues throughout each phase of their teaching lives" (Day, 1999).

Scholars define it differently but share a common concept that it has a strong relationship with the classroom. Professional development, in a broad sense, refers to the development of a person in his or her professional role; more specifically, Teacher development is the professional growth teacher achieves as a result of gaining increased experiences and examining his or her teaching systematically (Glatthorn, 1995); Professional includes formal experience (such as attending workshops and professional meetings, mentoring, etc.) and informal experiences (such as reading the professional publication, watching on television documentaries related to academic discipline, etc.) (Ganser, 2000).

Accordingly, The Ethiopian Ministry of Education has given priority to continuous professional development CPD believing that it is the right of teachers as well as of great value for national development (Barrow et al., 2006). The school

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staff must have the necessary subject professional support to bring about changes in the classroom. The new approach promotes active learning, problem-solving, and student-centered teaching methods. With the expansion of education and large class sizes teachers still rely on teacher-centered methods with limited opportunities for (CPD). In Ethiopia, CPD focuses on improving the teaching-learning process, with the priorities of introducing active learning, practicing Continuous assessment, and managing large classes.

According to the Ministry of Education (2009) National CPD framework, there were six major challenges identified; failure to synchronize the career structure and the CPD values and activities, CPD facilitators' high turnover, time constraints on teachers as well as their school leaders, CPD program's lagging behind its time and the tendency of rushing to cover the course, total absence or inadequacy of the minimum resources required to run CPD, and lack of systematic collaboration and coordination between Education Bureaus, and Educational institutions.

However, teachers have to invest efforts in CPD to meet the changing needs of their students; it is also required in the advancement of the quality and professionalism of a teacher. Teachers are not a finished product to go to the classroom, i.e., they need improvement for their continuous professional development. In other words, pre-service training does not equip teachers with all the necessary skills and knowledge they need to be effective and efficient in their classrooms. It is through experience, practice, and more training that novice teachers can learn and improve to become effective teachers. Debarik University requires effective teachers to achieve its objectives. As a result, all of the teachers are expected to involve well in their professional development.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

This paper is to explore the issue related to the role of teachers in Continuous Professional Development at Debarik University; take any possible action that will be forwarded from the study. Teachers are expected to invest their maximum effort in improving the work of the University in general and their professional careers specifically. In the same way, Continuous Professional Development aims to improve the performance of teachers in the classroom and raise student achievement. It is a career-long process of improving knowledge, skills, and attitudes centered on the local context and, particularly, classroom practice. According to the Ministry of Education (2009), all teachers must be actively engaged in (a) their learning process, (b) working with their colleagues, (c) identifying their roles, and (d) the wide professional development (CPD).

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

On the other hand, the Framework put the responsibilities of the different stakeholders; Educational Bureaus and offices, and the Ministry of Education. But some researches indicate that these stakeholders are not playing their responsibilities and as a result, the program is not being implemented as expected. For instance, in the study conducted by Amhara Region Education Bureau (2009), the major challenges of teachers' CPD include; lack of motivation of teachers, lack of trained facilitators, lack of training, lack of clear guidelines, and lack of budgets which are too low and are the main constraints of the cluster system in the region.

- Here at Debarik University teachers' participation in CPD is very less although the University has launched Higher Diploma Program (HDP) which works to increase teachers' participation in CPD. Therefore, the study is mainly focused on identifying teachers' participation in CPD at Debarik University.

2. Results and Discussion

2.1. The Definition of CPD

CPD stands for Continuing Professional Development. It refers to the process of tracking and documenting the skills, knowledge, and experience that you gain both formally and informally as you work, beyond any initial training. It's a record of what you experience, learn, and then apply.

It is surprisingly difficult to find a single definition of teacher CPD, though it is difficult to disagree with the high-level definition offered by the General Teaching Council for Scotland:

CPD is what teachers do to keep their professional practice fresh, up-to-date, and stimulating. We believe that by undertaking a wide range of CPD experiences, teachers are more likely to inspire pupils and teach more effectively, enabling pupils to achieve their best.

The term continuing professional development (CPD) has been widely used to refer to ongoing education and training for professions (Earley and Bubb, 2004). The CPD process helps you manage your development on an ongoing basis. Its function is to help you record, review and reflect on what you learn. It's not a tick-box document recording the training you have completed. It's broader than that.

2.2. *Prioritizing the CPD Needs of Teachers*

CPD concerns placing more responsibility on teachers as professionals, for undertaking the professional development they require.

This is noteworthy given that we are in the middle of a particularly energetic period of education reform, which has seen major changes to what is taught (national curriculum reform and reform of approved vocational courses), how it is taught (the focus on methods of delivery), how it is examined (the system of assessment), how schools are inspected (the monitoring system), how the effectiveness of schools is judged and the reform of teachers pay and conditions (James, 2013).

It takes a very granular approach to effective teacher professional development and learning which must:

- be a documented process
- be self-directed: driven by you, not your employer
- focus on learning from experience, reflective learning, and review
- help you set development goals and objectives
- include both formal and informal learning.
- maintain a tight focus on pupil learning needs with ongoing rigorous evaluation of outcomes
- be applicable and relevant to the teacher's current classes, and contribute toward whole-school development
- be collaborative and teacher-driven
- be sustained over a period of at least two terms (and ideally more)
- involve regular external expert input and build on the best existing practices and understanding.

2.3. *The Purpose of CPD*

The overall purpose of every human resource manager in any organization is to ensure that the organization can achieve success through people. Organizations that fail to pursue active policies of continuous development for their employees often stagnate, decline, and eventually die. Professional development is the cornerstone of teacher professionalism and quality. In different parts of the world, such as the USA, Australia, and Hong Kong, there has been a significant investment of effort in continuing professional development (CPD) programs to help improve teacher quality, not only to fulfill society's expectations of the teaching profession but also to meet the changing needs of students. Whether individual teachers' participation in CPD activities arises from an interest in lifelong learning, a sense of moral obligation, a felt need to enhance professional competence and to keep abreast of recent developments in their field of work, the need to comply with mandatory government requirements, or for career advancement (Golding and Gray, 2006; Jasper, 2006), CPD is seen to be a foundational element in teachers' development (Luke and McArdle, 2009).

This concept of teacher's continuous professional development (CPD) focuses on preparing teachers in pedagogical content as well as academic content. Teacher's work is undergoing rapid change: political, educational, and social changes and this means that teachers need more and better CPD to keep up with the changes and remain relevant in the teaching profession. The quality of teachers is of great importance, as changing needs place greater pressures on teachers such as having to deal with the challenge of large classes and learners of different characteristics. This raises the need for teachers to be supported more than ever before, hence the need to step up the CPD of teachers, which is an often-neglected aspect in Sub-Saharan Africa (Nakabugo *et al.*, 2010).

As a result, the goal of CPD in any profession is about doing your job better, so it is right to be explicit that the ultimate purpose of teacher CPD is to enable pupils to achieve their best. The Teacher Development Trust has been collating evidence about the effectiveness of professional development as a means of improving student outcomes and reducing inequality.

A CPD may be a requirement for membership in a professional body. It can help you to reflect, review and document your learning and to develop and update your professional knowledge and skills. It is also very useful to:

- provides an overview of your professional development up-to-date
- reminds you of your achievements and how far you've progressed
- directs your career and helps you keep your eye on your goals
- uncovers gaps in your skills and capabilities
- Opens up further development needs
- provides examples and scenarios for a CV or interview
- demonstrates your professional standing to clients and employers
- helps you with your career development or a possible career change.

2.4. Teachers' Involvement in CPD

Teachers are an important resource in the teaching and learning process and their training and utilization therefore requires critical consideration. This is due to changing demands on the new roles of teachers in the 21st Century. The new roles of teachers are mainly connected with the implementation of active learning in the classroom and facilitating students in their learning.

According to Borko (2004), individual teachers' involvement in CPD activities can arise from an interest in lifelong learning, a sense of moral obligation, a felt need to enhance professional competence and to keep abreast of recent developments in their field of work, the need to comply with mandatory government requirements, or for career advancement. Teacher's continuous professional development takes place when favorable learning environments are provided in which teachers are responsible for their learning whereas staff developers play an important role in creating favorable learning environments for teacher learning (Putnam and Borko, 2004).

On the other hand, CPD is realized in several different modes, including short courses of training, degree upgrading courses, participation in CPD seminars/workshops, conference attendance, school/classroom-based research, and partnerships with universities or external consultants. Timperley *et al.* (2007) delineate the different types of learning made possible by the various modes of CPD, such as listening/watching, being observed/receiving feedback, engaging with academic/professional readings, discussing teaching with critical friends/experts, and discussing own theories of teaching.

Involving teachers as active participants in CPD seminars can facilitate the process of teacher learning, which does not result from merely having teacher educators impose new ideas, new theories, or new methods on teachers since learning is a constructive process during which teachers reshape their knowledge, beliefs, and practices (Johnson and Golombek, 2002).

2.5. Factors Hinders Teachers' Involvement in CPD

Some factors contribute to and those that hinder teachers' active involvement in professional development.

Few studies were conducted to examine factors affecting teachers' participation in CPD activities over the decade in different countries. Kwakman (2003) conducted an empirical study about several factors affecting teachers' participation in CPD in the Netherlands. In her study, three factors, personal factors (i.e., professional attitudes, appraisals of feasibility, appraisals of meaningfulness, emotional exhaustion, loss of personal accomplishment), task factors (i.e., the pressure of work, emotional demands, job variety, autonomy, participation), and work environment factors (i.e., management support, college support, intentional learning support) were used to examine the effects on teachers' participation in CPD. As a result, of these three factors, personal factors seemed to be more significant in predicting teachers' participation in CPD activities than task and work environment factors.

3. The Roles of Teachers in CPD

At Debarq University, there are 93 teachers currently on duty. They are from different departments and colleges: Ethiopian Language and Literature, English language and Literature, Civics and Ethical Studies, Geography, History, Social Anthropology, Journalism and Communication, and Sociology.

Teachers are expected to contribute a lot to Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for their professional progress in different ways. For example, they are expected to participate in doing research, contribute to community service, use active learning methods in the classroom, assess students' status before and after activities, and giving timely feedback, make peer classroom observations, plan for CPD activities based on priorities, make self-assessment, participate in module preparation, preparing training for newly employed teachers or staff workers, and participating in team teaching, workshops, discussing on meeting Agendas.

Therefore, when teachers participate in CPD, it has an undeniable contribution to the professional life of every teacher. But the way teachers were and are reacting towards improving their professional development might be affected due to different factors that can be inflicted internally and externally. As a matter of discovery someone cannot easily just notice the roles of a teacher because the kind of roles that the teacher plays to improve his CPD may not always be explicit therefore, someone should understand from Emic [his (the teacher) perspective.]

Debark University teachers played different roles in developing their own CPD. The roles they are expected to play include:

- Being a reflective teacher
- Engaging in community service
- Conducting research
- Actively participating in different Committees
- Participating in ELIC
- peer observation and feedback
- Assessment of students’ work before and after work and giving feedback
- participating in team teaching, workshops, and discussion meeting
- Improving his/her academic status through scholarship or in domestic national universities

3.1. The Level of Teachers Participation in CPD

The data from the interview reveals that the level of teachers’ participation in CPD differs from teacher to teacher. Some teachers contributed more to CPD while others think they are perfect and don’t need any improvement; once they have learned and are effective enough in their field of specialization. As far as investigated and interpreted data most of the teachers in Debark University are young and eager to improve their CPD. Besides their interest in improvisation support and positive feedback from students, academic staff and officials is also mandatory.

For the improvement of their CPD, teachers participate in HDP training given by the University. They also plan for the courses they teach. Some again participate in module preparation. But they don’t prepare CPD portfolios, don’t participate in classroom observation of their peers, and don’t have a checklist of active learning methods. The data achieved from the interview indicates that teachers can improve their profession mainly by reading, having training, teaching, doing research, and participating in community services.

Numbers of teachers participate in research as their professional enlargement is discussed below.

The Table 1 indicates teachers’ participation in doing research since the 2021/2022 academic year. As the above table reveals, the number of teachers doing research is extremely less. Especially in the year 2021/22, there was no research approved at all. This can be interpreted as more than half of the teachers are not engaging in conducting research. But the university needs all of the teachers involved in research work since research is expected to solve problems from different angles in the university.

| Table 1: The Number of Teachers Participating in Research Work in 2021/2022-2022/23 | | | | | |
|--|---|-----------------------------|-----------|---|-----------|
| S.No. | List of Colleges in Debark University | Number of Approved Research | | No. of Teachers Participating in Research | |
| | | 2021/2022 | 2022/2023 | 2021/2022 | 2022/2023 |
| 1. | College of Social Science and Humanities | 0 | 1 | 0 | 5 |
| 2. | College of Natural and Computational Sciences | 0 | 1 | 0 | 5 |
| 3. | College of Business and Economics | 0 | 2 | 0 | 7 |
| 4. | College of Agricultural Studies | 0 | 6 | 0 | 19 |
| 5. | School of Law | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Total | 0 | 10 | 0 | 36 |

3.2. Teachers’ Involvement in Technology Transfer and Community Service

Also, teachers are expected to participate in the work of community service as it is the prominent objective of the university to give service to the local community. More participation of the teachers in serving the community is taken as the success of the university to achieve its objective. It is also taken as the promotion for the teachers themselves because they develop their experience through the activities they engage in training, teaching, advising, and any activities that take place with the community.

The data from interviews conducted with the community service coordinators and directors of the university and document analysis revealed that some numbers of teachers are participating in this academic year (2022/2023). As the file was referred some teachers have planned for training as on-going community service. The number of teachers who participated in community service during the year 2022/23 is summarized in the following table.

| S.No. | List of Colleges in Debark University | Number of Community Services | | No. of Teachers Participating in the Community Service | |
|-------|---|------------------------------|-----------|--|-----------|
| | | 2021/2022 | 2022/2023 | 2021/2022 | 2022/2023 |
| 1. | College of Social Science and Humanities | N/A | 1 | N/A | 3 |
| 2. | College of Natural and Computational Sciences | N/A | 1 | N/A | 4 |
| 3. | College of Business and Economics | N/A | 4 | N/A | 11 |
| 4. | College of Agricultural Studies | N/A | 9 | N/A | 31 |
| 5. | School of Law | N/A | 0 | N/A | 0 |
| | Total | N/A | 15 | N/A | 49 |

The Table 2 reveals that only forty-nine (49) teachers are currently participating in community service from the total number of more than 350 teachers. When compared to the total number of teachers in the university, less than ¼ of them are active in community service. More than 75% of the teachers are not participating in giving community service.

An interview with teachers shows that they have an interest to participate in community service though they have some challenges. Teachers replied that they are not encouraged by the coordinators of the community service, the university has noticed this year only once but they used to announce twice yearly. Even the majority of the teachers submitted their proposals to the community service and industry linkage directorate director office but haven’t finished yet because the university delayed and sometimes reject proposals for an unknown reason.

Also, the department heads were interviewed to identify the reason why teachers didn’t participate in giving community service and doing research. 80% of the department head confirmed that some teachers lack the motivation of doing research as well as participating in community service. Only a few of the teachers are energized to work actively in line with the objectives of the university.

3.3. Factors Affecting Teacher’s Participation in CPD

We have identified internal and external factors in teachers’ CPD improvisation. The internal factors include all the personal characters, life background, social relationships, religious life, cosmology, cult, and perception of the teacher about himself and his professional life. Therefore, attitude plays a very big role not only in CPD and the teacher’s self-improvisation plan but also in every aspect of life and for everybody else.

Doing lots of investigation we have discovered as attitude has a greater impact so far. It is obvious that the interaction of the teacher is more with the academic community, with students, and with other scholars whether through online technology, telephonic means of communication, or direct personal interaction which will influence his attitude toward what to do or undo to improve their career.

Here, attitude can be seen from four directions the attitude of the teacher towards improving himself, the attitude of the others towards the teacher about his professional life through feedback, the attitude of students towards the teachers’ professional performance through comments, and the attitude of the community towards the teacher about his professional contribution. So, the role as well as his deep engagement does have its base in attitude.

The other factor is the external factor. Any hindrances which have been posed by any outsiders like friends, students, coworkers, officials, and community about the teacher and which inflict the teacher's professional life. The collected data indicated that there a lot of external factors hinder teachers in their CPD work including lack of awareness of CPD, Lack of motivation, lack of time for implementation because of a heavy workload, lack of incentives/allocated budget from the university, lack of adequate resources to implement, having a negative attitude of doing CPD.

3.4. The Outcomes of CPD

CPD has always had positive outcomes but the way teachers use their profession and professional skill might have negative impacts. Mainly the outcome is for the teachers' professional progress because when they participate in CPD they improve their experience, get detailed awareness on active learning methods, and help the organization in achieving their plan or greater good.

Indirectly the teacher gets a lot of advantages from participating in CPD because there is the active participation of students in the lessons, improvements to lesson planning, effective continuous assessment strategies, punctuality on own profession, cooperation with peers, and increase commitment to the work.

4. Conclusion

The study focused on Debarik University teachers' participation in CPD for their professional improvement. As a result, the analyzed data reveals that teachers' participation is less than the requirement. Less than ¼ of the total number of the teachers of the University have participated in community service activities through the University requires all teachers' participation. Less than half of the total number of teachers are participating in doing research which means more than half the teachers are only participating in teaching their assigned courses. But the University needs all of the teachers should involve more in research and community work besides qualifying students in their academy; as the University has to work in all three dimensions (qualifying students, Researching, and serving the community)

Teachers' involvement in CPD has more advantages even for themselves. Their contribution to Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is for their professional progress in different ways. For example, they are expected to participate in doing action research, contribute to community service, use active learning methods in the classroom, implement continuous assessment of students' work before and after work, give feedback by making peer classroom observations, plan for CPD activities based on priorities for the students, make self-assessment, participate in module preparation, preparing training for newly employed teachers or staff workers, and participate in team teaching, workshops, discussion, and meeting.

We also conclude the administration staff is not supported well in promoting and appreciating teachers' involvement in different scenarios of Academics like community service, short-term and long-term training, organizing and participating in different national and international symposiums, and research.

5. Recommendations

Based on the finding of the research, we finally forwarded the following proposed actions that shall be better implemented shortly due to the necessity of the CPD to meet the mission of the University of Debarik, "Our Success Mounts on Educational Quality!"

- The University should work to involve all of the teachers in research and community service work in line with teaching courses, by giving training, encouraging, and allocating budget.
- Also, the University should give attention to the HDP training as it needs more time to accomplish all of the activities and to conduct peer observation and discussion.
- All Debarik University teachers ought to know the importance of CPD work for their professional progress.
- All of the teachers should have the motivation to work and know as they are changing forces of the development of the country.
- Higher Administration Staff of the university shall motivate, support and evaluate the engagement of teachers in community service and research

As well, the researchers are going to put into action the following recommended actions:

Training shall be delivered for all Debarik University teachers especially for those who are not participating in CPD to add further understanding and implementation,

- Motivate teachers to involve in research and community service works,

- Give training for the Debarq University teachers on making portfolios for their CPD work, especially for non-participatory in CPD,
- Assess the outcome of Higher Diploma Program (HDP) training being given to the teachers,
- And give awareness for department heads to follow up on teachers' participation in CPD

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