

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

The Interplay between Teachers' Professional Development and Job Performance with Particular Reference to Ilu Aba Bor Zone Preparatory Schools

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Abstract

A corelational research design was employed to examine if a relationship exists between professional development (PD) and teachers job performance in preparatory schools setting, and to investigate whether the various elements of PD have independent effects on teachers' job performance. A total of 5 preparatory schools, 80 teachers and 10 educational leaders were involved in the study. Mean, standard deviation, Pearson r correlation coefficient and multiple regression analysis were applied for the data analysis. The results indicate that PD has a significant and positive relationship with teachers' job performance in the preparatory schools, but nonetheless, a weak one. Group development is the most positive predictor of teachers' job performance in the preparatory schools. However action research and curriculum development showed very low prediction on the teachers' job performance. Lack of employer support, lack of incentives and certification, poor quality and irrelevant PD practices were reported as major implementation challenges of professional development. It is recommended that standards of teachers job performance evaluation that includes instructional planning and delivery, assessment of learning, learning environment, professional ethics, interpersonal relations and management skills should be introduced to school system so as to make the PD practices relevant to the schools job performance. The involvement of teachers in PD activities should be planned; and need-based and up-to-date programs (e.g. new learning technologies, innovative pedagogies) with the involvement of teachers need to be identified and initiated. These calls for necessary support and resources allocation form the relevant stakeholders.

Key terms: Professional development, knowledge sharing, job performance, group development, Teaching skill, professional ethics

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BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The world is in a constant state of change in every aspect: technologically, socially, politically, and economically. This demands a nation's school system to be responsive and continuously update the capacity of its staff. To this end, professional development programs for teachers are seen to play a vital role, as they provide opportunities for teachers to learn and grow within the profession. This in turn is expected to have an impact on student learning (Lowden, 2005).

Teachers' professional development is a never ending cycle of teacher learning that begins with initial teacher training and continues for as long as a teacher remains in the profession. Teachers' professional development is what a teacher attains as a result of obtaining experience and exploring his or her teaching systematically; it also includes opportunities offered to educators to develop knowledge, skills, approaches and dispositions to improve their effectiveness in their classrooms and organization (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). Literature indicates that there is a strong link between teachers professional development and quality, especially in the areas of teachers' beliefs and practices, students' learning, and on the implementation of educational reforms (UNESCO, 2007).

In the last two decades, the Ethiopian government has embarked on a massive expansion of the national education system with the intention to transform the country. The increasing access to education was also fueled by the government's promise to meet its official educational goals such as achieving universal primary education in 2015 and secondary education in 2020 (Gemeda, 2015). Though tremendous achievement has been made in terms of quantitative expansion, the quality of

education has been deteriorating and student achievement was declining (Fekede & Fiorucci, 2012; National Agency for Examinations (NAE), 2011; Oulai et al., 2011). The professional development of teachers is considered to be an essential component and strategy in efforts aimed at improving the quality of the schools (Guskey, 2000). The overall aim of the teachers' professional development program is to improve teacher effectiveness and raise the achievement levels of students in Ethiopian schools (MoE, 2003; 2009). It is expected that effective professional development opportunities for teachers will renew their capacity to improve classroom practices and will have a positive impact on student learning and achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Goldschmidt & Phelps, 2010).

Currently, schools are challenged to raise student achievement through the provision of PD. The Ethiopian Education and Training Policy (1994) set standards for teachers and described a new approach to education. The new approach promotes active learning, problem solving, and student-centered teaching methods. According to MoE (2005), all schools are required to produce school improvement plans in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning. There is an assumption that when teachers perform the professional development in an intended manner the performance of teachers enhanced and quality of education is assured.

The Ministry of Education has given priority for professional development (PD) believing that it is the mandate of teachers to significantly contribute for national development. Changes in the educational system of a nation and global requirements need staff development activities. The school staff should provide professional support to students to bring about changes

in the classroom. To effect this, at school level, professional development programs should include school principals, teachers and technical and administrative personnel (Barrow et al, 2006).

Teachers play an important role in teaching and learning process to improve students' outcomes, although many factors contribute to the intended success (Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2000; Sanders & Horn, 1994). The students learning achievement depends on the readiness of teachers to do learning activities which are supported by teacher's knowledge, skills, attitude and practice. Similarly, teacher's positive attitude towards teaching and higher aspiration level determines his positive perception of the environments. It is generally recognized that teachers' instructional performance plays a key role in students' learning and academic achievement.

Therefore teachers are required to possess good competences and performance, involve in professional development and sharing tacit knowledge actively, engage with knowledge in the current issues, conduct the tasks ethically, and show commitment or responsibility in teaching practice at school. These five dimensions had also been identified by Sockett (1993) and Tichenor & Tichenor (2005) to analyze the quality practice of teachers. In supporting their role, teachers also required to engage in professional learning opportunities such as workshop, mentoring and training. More over to carry out the demands of education reform, teachers should master the subjects they teach, and have the ability both to communicate basic knowledge and to develop advanced thinking and problem solving skills among their students (Loucks-Horsley et al., 1998).

Eventhough teachers' professional development is very important and every

practitioners believe in that, many factors affect it from being implemented. Several research reports have identified the various factors that have contributed to the ineffectiveness of professional development programs. For example, Fullan (1991) states, the greatest problem faced by school districts and schools is not resistance to innovation, but the fragmentation, overload, and incoherence resulting from the uncritical acceptance of too many different innovations. Undermining the complexity of the teaching knowledge base, teachers' professional development is seen as something to be planned or managed without proper consideration being given to what is to be developed, beyond implementing a particular program or centrally developed initiative (Kleinhenz & Fleming, 2007). Kleinhenz and Fleming call such approaches short-sighted and self-defeating. Therefore stakeholders of education need to give due attention to improve the theory and practice of professional development in their context. The current study is initiated to help this general purpose.

Statement of the problem

The goal of professional development is ensuring the enhancement of teachers' performance in order to improve the learners' achievement. Teachers are the ones responsible to work creatively with their students, to translate and shape curricular goals and theoretical notions into effective classroom and school-wide practices, and to provide an environment for effective learning. Current literature also stresses that the act of teaching is becoming increasingly complex and that highly competent teachers continue to learn, are adaptive, build up a sophisticated pedagogical repertoire, and are able to apply a range of practices for varying purposes that incorporate and integrate different kinds of knowledge, used in

various combinations flexibly and fluently (Broad & Evans, 2006).

Different scholars explored benefit of professional development vis a vis teachers' job performance. Professional learning experiences that focus on the links between particular teaching activities and valued student outcomes are associated with positive impacts on those outcomes (Helen, 2008). This indicates that when teachers continuously engaged in professional development, it adds great value on students' achievement and then teachers are assumed performing well. If teachers in educational institutions collaborate and genuinely exchange ideas and information closely, the performance of the organization is enhanced. An effective performance and development process encourages and supports staff development at all career stages. It reinforces a culture of development that creates and sustains the conditions conducive to growth and improvement through open feedback sessions, professional learning, and opportunities for peer collaboration allowing teachers and principals to feel supported and engaged in their professional practice (Hay Group, 2012).

Considering all these benefits of professional development, the Ethiopian ministry of education has designed different kinds of professional development in order to improve teachers' professionalism such as, knowledge sharing (tacit and explicit knowledge), action research, Continuous Professional Development(CPD), educational quality circle, experience sharing program, induction courses for new beginner teachers, training and workshops (MoE, 2000). These programs are proposed to solve day to day problems that might occur in learning and teaching and to improve

teachers' innovation and creativity for the successful of performance.

There is an assumption that these benefits of PD are not tapped in the schools under investigations. In the Ilu Aba Bor zone preparatory schools, the achievement of students has been deteriorating from time to time. According to Zone Education Office's 2009 report, the numbers of students joined higher education institutions since the past three years only constitutes 84.5%. Besides, the Regional education supervision feedback (OEB, 2008) reported low teachers readiness, unplanned PD programs and lack of sharing of experiences and knowledge in professional development processes. The reason for such problem was flagged by Hubermanet (2002). He argued that alike practitioners in many other fields, teachers are reluctant to adopt new practices or procedures unless they feel sure they can make them work and willingly adopt the change. Despite the general acceptance of professional development as instrument for education practice improvement, literatures consistently point out the ineffectiveness inherited in most PD programs (Cohen & Hill, 2000). The majority of PD programs fail because they do not take into account two crucial factors: what motivates teachers to engage in professional development, and the process by which change in teachers typically occurs (Guskey, 1986).

This study not only aims at investigating the problems behind PD implementation but also evaluating the benefits of the programs to teachers' job performance by attempting to establish liner relationship between these two concepts. It targets at assessing wheatear there is some relationship between PD and teachers job performance (MoE initiated the PD programs with assumption that it improves job performance of teachers and it is

implemented for about ten years) by using the PD pillars identified by the MoE and major standards of teachers' job performance derived from the literature. To this end, the study attempted to address the following basic questions:

1. To what extent teachers participated in professional development programs in Ilu Aba Bor Zone preparatory schools?
2. What is the perceived level of teachers' job performance in the preparatory schools?
3. Is there any significant relationship between PD practices and teachers' job performance?
4. What are the factors that hindered/enabled teachers' involvement in professional development programs in the preparatory schools?

General Objective

The general objective of the study was to investigate the level of teachers' professional development and its relationship (if any) with job performance in Ilu Aba Bor Zone preparatory schools.

Specific Objectives

1. To examine the level of teachers' participation in professional development in Ilu Aba Bor Zone preparatory schools?
2. To assess the perceived level of teachers' job performance in Ilu Aba Bor zone preparatory schools.
3. To investigate the possible relationship between professional development and teachers' job performance in Ilu Aba Bor zone preparatory schools.
4. To assess problems those enabled/hindered teachers' involvement in professional development activities set by ministry of education.

Significance of the study

This study may provide empirical-based information to the relevant stakeholders regarding the contribution PD programs to teachers' job performance in the study context. This might further help the concerned stakeholders to revisit the current PD programs so as to match it to the teachers' job performance needs. The result of the study might also provide the Education Bureaus with some empirical evidences that could help to plan intervention mechanisms on the challenges of PD programs. The result of the study may also help the school administrators, supervisors and teachers to get clear insight about the current PD status and gear their effort towards the improvement of the program in order to enhance the performance of the teachers and students' achievement.

Scope of the study

Only government Preparatory schools in Ilu Aba Bor Zone were included in the study since PD programs are mandatory in government schools in Ethiopian context. Four major PD programs assumed very relevant to teachers' job performance were selected for analysis: on the job trainings, action research and curriculum development, group development and knowledge sharing (MoE, 2003). In the literature, teacher's job performance can be measured in a variety of ways using different standards that contain different indicators. For the current study, teaching skill, management skill, interpersonal relation and professional ethic were used to measure teachers' job performance at school level.

Conceptual Framework: The Interplay between Teachers' Professional Development and Job Performance

Many authors defined professional development in different ways. Some expressed Professional development as

activities that develop an individual's skills, knowledge, expertise and characteristics of teachers (OECD, 2005). Professional development is also expressed as a comprehensive, sustained and intensive approach to improve teachers' and principals' effectiveness in raising student achievement. Others defined Professional development as "... the process of improving staff skills and competencies needed to produce outstanding educational results for students" (Reed, 2005).

Professional development consists of all natural learning experiences and those conscious and planned activities which are intended to be of direct or indirect benefit to the individual, group or school and thus to the quality of education in the classroom. It is the process by which, alone and with others, teachers review, renew and extend their commitment as change agents to the moral purposes 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 (Broad & Evans, 2006).

Professional development includes formal experiences (such as attending workshops and professional meetings, mentoring, etc.) and informal experiences (such as reading professional publications, watching television documentaries related to an academic discipline, etc.). This conception of professional development is, therefore, broader than career development, which is defined as "... the growth that occurs as the teacher moves through the professional career cycle" and broader than staff development, which is "... the provision of organized in-service programs designed to foster the growth of groups of teachers" (Villegas-Reimers, 2003).

In the Ethiopian context, among different school improvement programs (SIP), professional development (CPD) is an important aspect in which teachers develop their profession by sharing of tacit and explicit knowledge to the co-workers. Different authors defined PD as "... the process of improving staff skills and competencies needed to produce outstanding educational results for students" (Reed, 2005). The process of professional development can take many forms. It may be carried through knowledge sharing, collegial learning, peer-assisted learning, participation in a network of teachers, courses, workshops, teacher-researcher practitioner, education conferences or seminars, independent learning, CPD qualification program & mentoring, peer observation and coaching, experience sharing or observation visits and the like.

The aim of professional development (PD) is to change professionals' thinking, knowing, feeling and doing. The three major goals of professional development programs are change in the classroom practices of teachers, change in their attitudes and beliefs, and change in the learning outcomes of students (Evans, 2011).

Professionally developed teachers teach their students at high quality. A quality teacher is one who has a positive effect on student learning and development through a combination of content mastery, command of a broad set of pedagogic skills, and communications or interpersonal skills (Hightower et al., 2011). Quality teachers are life-long learners in their subject areas, teach with commitment, and are reflective upon their teaching practice. They transfer knowledge of their subject matter and the learning process through good communication, diagnostic skills, understanding of different learning styles

and cultural influences. They set high expectations and support students in achieving them. They establish an environment conducive to learning, and leverage available resources outside as well as inside the classroom.

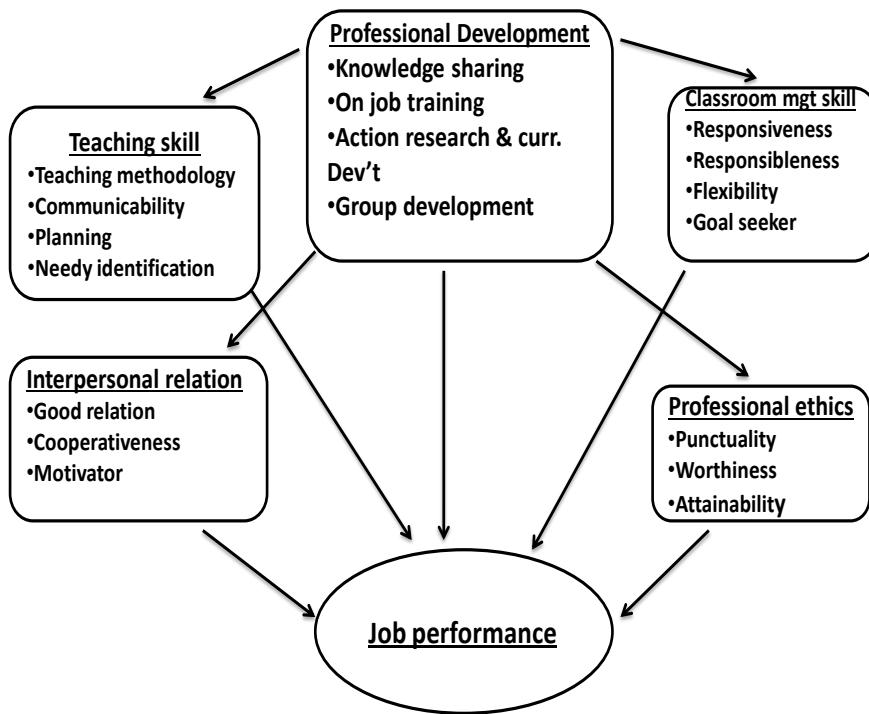


Figure 1: Conceptual framework of the study

Teacher job-performance is considered as teacher observable behaviors related to outcomes which are relevant to educational goals (Cook, 2008). Performance and development is a continuous process through which professionals articulate expectations for performance and identify and pursue areas where development, growth and support are needed and/or desired. It is a cyclical process with clearly delineated stages for performance planning, feedback, reflection and review.

There are two components of performance and development: ‘performance’, which relates to an agreed understanding of what constitutes effective professional practice, often taking the form of explicitly articulated standards; and ‘development’, which informs and guides the improvement of performance through ongoing professional learning and feedback.

An effective performance and development process encourages and supports staff development at all career stages (Hay, 2012). It reinforces a culture of development that creates and sustains the conditions conducive to growth and improvement through open feedback sessions, professional learning, and opportunities for peer collaboration allowing teachers and principals to feel supported and engaged in their professional practice. Performance and development enables the identification of areas for improvement informed by student learning needs and the pursuit of these to improve professional practice (Development, 2014).

Effective performance and development is beneficial to both the school and the individual staff members. This is because the objective of high quality performance and development is to prepare and support educators to help every student achieve high standards of learning and development. Effective performance and

development processes promote collaboration, establish collective efficacy and reinforce professional trust and accountability (Dufour and Eaker, 1998).

Research design

A non-experimental correlational design was selected for this study. Correlational design was selected because of its quantitative nature in examining the relationship between professional development and teachers’ job performance at schools level. Correlational research can provide information that allows predictability based on associations. In this study, there was an interest in the variables of PD and teachers job performance. Thus, a correlational study was employed to determine if any relationship exists between the two. Correlational research allows for the analysis of multiple variables in one study, and it also indicates the degree of relationship among variables. This is, therefore, a very practical design for this study as various factors of PD were looked at and the degree of relationship was an area of interest. The current study was to determine if a relationship exists between PD and job performance but not to investigate if one was caused by the other. It should be noted that corelational research does not provide for causality. McMillan (2004) stated that the most important principle in evaluating correlation research is not to infer causation.

SAMPLE AND SAMPLING METHODS

In Ilu Aba Bor Zone, there are ten Preparatory schools. Out of these, five (50%) schools were selected using simple random sampling. Five principals and five woreda Education experts were randomly selected and included in the study. Proportional simple random sampling method was employed to select 80 (50%) sample teachers. In general, a total of 90

respondents were selected from the Zones and questionnaires were distributed for sample respondents. Out of these, about 76 (84.44 %) questionnaires were filled and returned for analysis.

Instruments

A set of questionnaire was used as data gathering instrument for this study. The same questionnaires, which consist of both closed and open ended items was developed and distributed for all respondents to gather data for the study. A questionnaire which consists of Likert type items was prepared and pilot tested in one of non-sampled secondary school in Ilu Aba Bor Zone. The reliability and validity of the instruments was checked and corrected before administered to the respondents. The results showed that the reliability coefficient (Cronbach Alpha) for the questionnaire ranges from 0.810 – 0.876 which is considered good for the purpose of this study. Developing the questionnaire involved some stages. The first stage involved the use of literature reviews to develop the items of the questionnaire. The second stage was where colleagues constructively criticized the questionnaire. This process was used to establish the face validity of the questionnaire, eliminating linguistic ambiguities, reducing the ambiguity of questions and analyzing the adequacy of the questionnaire to ensure that it would be suitable for capturing the data required for the study.

One set of questionnaire, consists of 73 items that assessed four dimensions of PD practices and four dimensions of teachers' job performance were designed and employed. Besides, six to twelve items corresponded to each scale dimension were designed and used. Using a five-point Likert-type response scale, ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree,

the level of teachers involvement in professional development, job performance and possible challenges to PD practices was evaluated. The value 3 or "neutral" is considered as a hypothesized mean against which the mean rating of respondents are checked for their significance using the one sample t-test. This means that if the mean ratings of the respondents are significantly higher than the hypothesized mean (the neutral), then it can be assumed that the level of practice is high with the particular issue and vice versa.

Data Analysis

In this study, the school was considered as the unit of analysis. A professional development practice is a description of the school and not of the individuals in the school. Likewise, teachers' job performance was calculated at the school level and not at the individual teacher level. The data gathered through closed ended questionnaire was analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 20 computer software. Both descriptive statistics and inferential statistics such as mean scores, standard deviation, one-sample t-test, Pearson *r* correlation coefficient and multiple regression technique were used for data analysis. One sample t-test was computed for mean ratings of academic staff to assess the perceived level of teachers' involvement in PD activities and job performance. Thus, it made easy the correlation and regression analysis for professional development and teachers' job performance at the school level. Pearson *r* correlation coefficient was computed using the two sets of data gathered on level teachers' involvement in PD and the perceived degree of job performance in the schools. Multiple regression analysis was then conducted to find out the independent effects of each subscale of PD practices on job performance. These analyses assisted

the researcher in examining the inter-correlations of the four dimensions of PD in this study, as well as the relationship of each to teachers' job performance. Multiple regression technique gave a more detailed analysis as it enabled the examination of the influence of each PD dimension on job performance, controlling for all other PD variables. It also allowed the researcher to determine the combined effect of the variables (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2006). Certain assumptions must be tested and met in order for the results of multiple regression analysis to be useful. It assumes that variables have normal distributions and that the relation between the dependent and the independent variable is linear when all other independent variables are held constant. Observations of the visual representations of the histogram, scattered plot, and partial plots revealed that the assumptions of normality and linearity were met. A common problem that arises in multiple regression analysis is that of multi-collinearity. This basically means that two or more of the independent variables being used are highly correlated with each other and in effect measure the same thing. This makes it difficult to identify the unique relation between each predictor variable and the dependent variable (Urdan, 2005). The collinearity statistics for this study revealed that none of the Variance Inflation Factors were above 10. In research this is said to be an acceptable number to test for multicollinearity as any number above 10 would be cause for concern.

Ethical considerations

Approval was granted from Zonal education offices before contacting the schools. Permission was sought from principals before any contact was made with the teachers. Consent was secured from each teacher before they filled out the surveys questionnaire and the researcher also explained how anonymity would be

maintained throughout the study. Respondents were reminded not to write their name on the questionnaire and informed of the purpose, methods and time frame of the study. Likewise the results were reported collectively so there was anonymity for participants involved.

Limitations

The study involved the perceptions of teachers and school leaders only. The supportive staff, parents and students were not included in the study. The responses of these groups might have provided a valuable counterpoint to the responses of the teachers. Teachers' job performance can be examined from different perspectives using several different tools. This study focused fully on the use of the four dimensions (instructional skills, classroom management skills, interpersonal skills and professional ethics) thus, its findings are limited to the factors measured by this scales. All other possible definitions of teachers' job performance were excluded when this instrument was selected. PD is a concept that can be measured in various ways. For the purposes of this study, PD was measured exclusively by knowledge sharing, on the job training, action research and group development since these are the major components of current PD program in Ethiopian context.

RESULTS

This section deals with results and discussion of the data gathered from sample respondents. Ten educational leaders and 80 teachers were participated in the study. In order to gather adequate data for the study, a total of 90 questionnaires were distributed to sample respondents. Out of these, 76 (84.44%) sample respondents filled and returned the questionnaire from the preparatory schools under study.

Level of teachers Involvement in Professional Development Activities

The following Tables (Table 1 to 4), indicate how often school teachers involved in different professional development activities in the schools. To this end, four dimensions of PD were analyzed: knowledge sharing, on-the-job training, curriculum development and action research and group development.

Each of these PD practices is analyzed in the following Tables (see Table 1 to 4).

Table 1 attempted to assess the level teachers' involvement in knowledge sharing as a component of PD activities. To this end, five items (such as observation, knowledge and skills sharing experience within and out of schools) related to knowledge sharing activities were aggregated.

Table 1: One-sample t-test on teachers' Involvement in Knowledge sharing Activities

| | N | Mean | SD | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|--|----------|-------------|-----------|----------|-----------|------------------------|
| Teachers' Involvement in knowledge sharing | 75 | 2.01 | .754 | -11.36 | 74 | .000 |

The results revealed that teachers involvement in knowledge sharing activities were below the average mean ($M= 2.01$, $SD = .754$). Majority of the teachers were not participated in educational experiences sharing programs. Different authors found that teachers learn more when they share knowledge with colleagues. It has been argued that the level of trust in the organisation is an important factor affecting the willingness to share knowledge (Sveiby and Simons 2002).

The Level of Involvement of Teachers in on-the- Job Training Activities

In the Table 2 (below), an attempt was made to assess the degree to which teachers participated in variety of on-the-job trainings activities. To affect this, on-the-job training activities (such as short term training courses, workshops, and educational qualification programs and in up-to-dated technologies) were evaluated.

Table 2: One sample t-test on the Level of teachers' Involvement in on-the- Job Training

| Variable | N | Mean | SD | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|--|----------|-------------|-----------|----------|-----------|------------------------|
| Involvement of Teachers in on-the- Job Training Activities | 75 | 2.49 | .811 | -5.43 | 74 | .000 |

It was identified that teachers' involvement in on-the-job training activities was generally low ($M=2.49$, $SD = .811$); $t (75) = -5.43$, $p < .05$. Furthermore, the study revealed that short term trainings focusing on courses or subject matters, workshops given on new methodologies and the opportunity to have trainings on up-to-dated technologies was relatively low. In the Table 3, the degree of teachers' involvement in action research and

curriculum development was evaluated. Accordingly, their level of participation in individual or collaborative researches, educational conferences or seminars, methodology of student assessment and effective instructional strategies are generally considered. The result showed that teachers' participation in action researches and curriculum development practices was very low ($M=2.22$, $SD = .843$); $t (75) = -7.94$, $p < .05$.

Table 3: One sample t-test on teachers' involvement in action research and curriculum development activities

| Variable | N | Mean | SD | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|---|----|------|------|-------|----|-----------------|
| Teachers' participation in Action research and curriculum development | 75 | 2.22 | .843 | -7.94 | 74 | .000 |
| Majority of the respondents did not participate in conducting individual or collaborative action research activities during their stay in the school. | | | | | | |

Table 4: One sample t-test on the Involvement of Teachers in Group Development

| Variable | N | Mean | SD | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|---|----|------|------|--------|----|-----------------|
| Teachers' Participation in group development | 75 | 2.84 | .792 | -1.651 | 74 | .103 |
| Majority of the respondents did not participate in conducting individual or collaborative action research activities during their stay in the school. | | | | | | |

As can be seen from the above Table (Table 4), the level of teachers' involvement in group development was minimal ($M=2.84$, $SD = .792$); $t (75) = -1.651$, $p > .05$). This implies that teachers in the study area did not formally participate in the teachers' network established at the school level and informal dialogue to improve their teaching methodology.

Further analysis was carried out to examine the level of teachers' involvement in professional development as a construct. To this end four major variables (their involvement in knowledge sharing, in on-the-job training activities, participation in action research and curriculum development and in group development) were aggregated (as measuring the same thing) based on the results of inter-item correlation and factor analysis of the data.

Table 5: Teachers involvement in professional development

| Variable | N | Mean | SD | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|---|----|------|------|-------|----|-----------------|
| Teachers' Involvement in professional Development | 75 | 2.35 | .698 | -8.05 | 74 | .000 |

In general, the aggregated mean value of teachers' involvement in professional development activities indicated low mean score ($M=2.35$, $SD = .698$); $t (75) = -8.05$, $p < .05$). This implies that the involvement of teachers in professional development activities was nearly nonexistent.

Knowledge Acquired From Involvement in the Professional Development Activities

The Table 6 below assessed the kind of knowledge acquired by the teachers through participation in the profession development activities in the schools.

Though the level of teachers' participation in professional development activity was generally low, teachers believe that the acquired some knowledge and skills from the practices of PD programs currently available in the schools. Accordingly, areas like rules and regulations ($M= 4. 00$, $SD = 1.182$), classroom management ($M= 3.79$, $SD = 3.53$) and interpersonal communication ($M= 3.56$, $SD = 1.16$) are rated as high. Whereas, skills and knowledge acquired on conducting action research ($M= 2.92$, $SD = 1.22$) individually or collaboratively was rated the least by the teachers.

Table 6: Knowledge acquired from involvement in professional development activities

| Type of knowledge acquired from involvement at PD activities | N | Mean | SD | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|--|----|------|-------|-------|----|-----------------|
| Active learning methods | 75 | 3.25 | 1.274 | 1.722 | 74 | .089 |
| Additional knowledge on subject matter | 75 | 3.17 | 1.359 | 1.104 | 74 | .273 |
| Assessment skills | 75 | 3.37 | 1.323 | 2.444 | 74 | .017 |
| Classroom management skill | 75 | 3.79 | 3.539 | 1.925 | 74 | .058 |
| Effective instructional strategies | 75 | 3.27 | 1.455 | 1.587 | 74 | .117 |
| Skill of conducting action research | 75 | 2.92 | 1.228 | -.564 | 74 | .574 |
| Attitudinal change in teaching profession | 75 | 3.12 | 1.219 | .853 | 74 | .397 |
| Developed collaborative skill | 75 | 3.28 | 1.169 | 2.074 | 74 | .042 |
| Communication skill with colleagues | 75 | 3.56 | 1.165 | 4.162 | 74 | .000 |
| Respect rules and regulation of the school | 74 | 4.00 | 1.182 | 7.277 | 73 | .000 |

Challenges to Teacher's Participation in Professional Development

Table 7 illustrated factors that are expected to hamper teachers' participation in professional development activities. These possible challenges were derived from literature. Accordingly, the degree of PD challenges was rated by the respondents as follows:

Table 7: Factors that affected teachers' participation in PD programs

| Items | N | Mean | SD | t | Df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|--|----|------|-------|--------|----|-----------------|
| Lack of basics qualifications, experience, etc. | 75 | 2.29 | 1.260 | -4.856 | 74 | .000 |
| Too expensive/unaffordable program | 75 | 2.52 | 1.277 | -3.255 | 74 | .002 |
| Lack of employer support | 75 | 2.27 | 1.212 | 1.906 | 74 | .061 |
| Conflicts with formal work schedule | 75 | 2.45 | 1.131 | -4.187 | 74 | .000 |
| Lack of time because of family responsibilities | 75 | 2.21 | 1.094 | -6.227 | 74 | .000 |
| No relevant PD programs | 74 | 2.99 | 1.340 | -.087 | 73 | .931 |
| Lack of incentives | 75 | 2.48 | 1.379 | 3.014 | 74 | .004 |
| Poor quality PD program | 74 | 2.46 | 1.357 | 2.913 | 73 | .005 |
| The program is not readily accessible | 75 | 2.95 | 1.304 | -.354 | 74 | .724 |

Lack of time because of other social responsibilities ($M= 2.21$, $SD = 1.09$), lack of incentives attached to the program ($M= 2.48$, $SD = 1.37$), poor quality and irrelevant PD programs ($M= 2.46$, $SD = 1.35$) were rated as the major challenges of PD at the school level. Similarly, lack of support to PD activities, feedback and certification were reported to have high negative impact on teachers' participation in professional development activities.

Teachers' Job Performance

In the literature, teacher's job performance can be measured in a variety of ways using different standards that contain different indicators. For the current study, teaching skill (measured with 12 sub-scales) management skill (as measured with 8 indicators), the interpersonal relation standard (with 10 indicators) and professional ethics (measured with 6 sub-scales) were used to measure teachers' job performance at school level.

Table 8: Teachers job performance variables

| Items | N | Mean | SD | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|---------------------------------------|----|------|------|-------|----|-----------------|
| Teaching skills | 74 | 2.90 | .469 | 16.63 | 73 | .000 |
| Classroom management skills | 73 | 2.97 | .613 | 13.56 | 72 | .000 |
| Interpersonal Relation skills | 74 | 3.01 | .633 | 8.563 | 73 | .000 |
| Professional Ethics | 75 | 3.12 | .567 | 17.11 | 74 | .000 |
| Teachers Job performance (TJP) | 71 | 2.90 | .476 | 16.00 | 70 | .000 |

The aggregated mean for the construct teaching skill was found to below the average mean (Mean = 2.90 and SD = 0.46, $t(75) = 16.63$, $p < .05$, showing that the practice of using different methods of teaching, considering differences in ability or disabilities, engaging students in active learning, and using relevant teaching materials to help students were found inadequate in the schools under study. Others activities like coming to class with well prepared for teaching, ability to tackle difficult lessons, responding to students' question to satisfy him/her at every level, fairness in marking the exam papers, teaching up-to-date information, present the learning content in a logical sequential order, and being very knowledgeable about the subject matter were rated as moderate.

The respondents were also required to evaluate teachers' general skills on classroom management. The mean of teachers classroom management skills was found to be low (Mean = 2.95, SD = 0.61). The findings revealed that, the value attached to co-curricular activities, arranging the classroom for effective teaching learning, and adjusting one-self with circumstances were rated as minimal. This might indicate that teachers in the schools did not openly exercise management skills as required. However other activities like managing discipline problems in accordance with administrative regulations, school board policies, and legal requirements, giving immediate feedback to students on their activities, regularly planning to improve own performance, and discussing with students on lesson delivered to them were relatively well performed.

The interpersonal relation of teachers is one of the key indicators among the standards of teachers' job performance. The aggregated mean of the perceived interpersonal relation skills of teachers was

found to average ($M = 3.01$, $SD = 0.63$; $t(74) = 8.56$, $p < .05$).

Horizontal relationship and cooperation among teachers, good rapport and communication with students and the administration and other educational personnel on professional issues were high as perceived by the teachers. However practices like sharing of ideas and work methods with other teachers, teacher-parent communication in the best interest of the students, leadership support, motivating students to take part in co-curricular activities, encouraging community to involve in the school affairs were performed below aggregated mean of the issue under study.

As can be seen in the Table 8 (above), teachers rated the overall discipline and professional ethics culture of the school relatively as high ($M = 3.12$, $SD = 0.56$). Respondents perceived that school teachers adherence to school policies, following appropriate channels of communication for resolving conflicts were moderately practiced in the schools. In general, the findings indicted that the overall level of teachers' job performance in schools was found below the average mean (($M = 2.90$ and $SD = 0.476$, $t(71) = 16.00$, $p < .05$.

Table 9: Correlation Results for the Variables in the Study

| | Knowledge sharing | On job training | Action research & curriculum development | Group development | Job performance |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|--|-------------------|-----------------|
| Professional Development | .882** | .908** | .904** | .762** | .311** |
| Knowledge sharing | | .656** | .738** | .649** | .167* |
| On job training | | | .827** | .612** | .352** |
| Action research | | | | .512** | .197* |
| Group development | | | | | .407** |

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The results indicate that there is a significant and positive correlation between overall PD practices and teachers' job performance ($r = .311$, $P < 0.05$). It is important to note that although there is a significant relationship between the two variables, the correlation coefficient is weak.

Further examination at the correlation analysis presented in the above Table shows important results regarding factors

of PD *vis a vis* teachers job performance scores. It depicted that on-the-job training sub scale ($r = 0.352$, $P < 0.05$) and group development ($r = .407$, $P < 0.05$) were significantly and moderately correlated to teachers job performance. On the other hand, the knowledge sharing ($r = 0.167$ $P < 0.05$) and action research and curriculum development ($r = 0.197$, $P < 0.05$) sub scales showed weak positive correlation with teachers job performance.

Table 10: Multiple Regression Analysis for PD Variables

| | Unstandardized B | Standardized β |
|---|------------------|----------------------|
| (Constant) | 3.170 | |
| knowledge sharing | .149 | .237* |
| On job training | .229 | .398** |
| Action research & curriculum development | .091 | .163* |
| Group development | .235 | .401* |

$$\begin{aligned} R^2 & .232 \\ \Delta R^2 & .185 \\ F & 4.974 \\ P & <.001 \end{aligned}$$

Using the entry method it was found that the four PD variables had an overall positive effect on explaining the variance in teachers job performance $F ((4, 66) = 4.974, p < 0.001, R^2 = 0.232)$. The result shows that 23% of the variation in teacher performance can be explained by the four sub scales of the professional development indexes combined. When adjusted R^2 is used the model predicts about 18% of the variation in teachers' performance (this statistic adjusts for sample size and number of independent variables in the model, Urdan, 2005). A close look at the sub scales of PD (Table 10) shows that knowledge sharing ($B = .149, \beta = .237, P < 0.05$), on job training ($B = .229, \beta = .398, P < 0.05$) and group development ($B = .235, \beta = .401, P < 0.05$) had significant independent effects on teachers job performance as measured by teachers participation in PD activities. However, action research & curriculum development ($B = 2.35, \beta = .401, p < 0.05$) showed very low prediction on the teachers' job performance.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study has examined the relationship between teachers' involvement in professional development and teachers' job performance using variables that might determine teachers' job performance (e.g. teaching skill, management skill, interpersonal relation skills and professional ethics). Besides, an attempt also made to study the overall trends and major barriers to the implementation of the PD program in the preparatory schools context.

Different literatures support participation in professional development activities help teachers to change professional thinking, knowing, feeling and doing. The three major goals of professional development programs are changes in the classroom practices of teachers, in their attitudes and beliefs, and in the students' learning outcomes (Evans, 2011). However, the finding of study revealed that teachers' involvement in different professional development activities was very low. This was because of poor quality and irrelevances of PD activities in the schools. Similar studies found that what teachers hope to gain through professional development programs are need to be specific, concrete and practical that directly related to the day-to-day operation of their classroom practices. Development programs that fail to address these needs are unlikely to succeed (Guskey, 2002).

Sveiby and Simons (2002) argued that individual teachers learn more when they share knowledge and this leads to improved teaching performance. For knowledge sharing to occur, a key criterion is the extent to which people are willing to share their knowledge. It has been argued that the level of trust in the organisation is an important factor affecting the willingness to share knowledge. In the schools under study, the practice of knowledge sharing as PD component was inadequate. Similarly, the availability of on job training opportunity for teachers was very minimal ($M = 2.49, SD = 0.81$). On-the-job trainings help teachers to develop confidence in their skills (Killion, 2002). When teachers develop confidence in their skills, they are able to improve their teaching practices, which in turn, should impact students' achievement. It is argued that if teachers do not attend workshops, educational conferences, and other short term training programs, it was unlikely that they use up-to-date teaching methodologies and

approach that might significantly contribute to quality learning. .

The teachers' level of engagement in action research and curriculum development was not sufficient (Mean = 2.22, SD = 0.84). Few teachers those attempted conducting action research and curriculum development in the schools reported major challenges encountered at work place. Lack of support and incentives were reported as serious challenge in this regard. Teachers are successful in implementing new instructional strategies and techniques when they received ongoing technical assistance and support after receiving professional development (USDE, 2000).

Teachers get an opportunity to develop collaborative practices when they learn in groups in the school settings. However, in the study area, the activities of group developments were not practiced to the expected level. Studies show that the most effective professional development sessions are those that give teachers time to collaborate with one another and to discuss their professional development experience. When teachers collaborate with their colleagues, there is a positive impact on instructional practices and, therefore, on students' achievement (Cohen & Hill, 1998; USDE, 2000).

In this study, lack of employer support, lack of incentives and certification, poor quality and irrelevant PD practices were reported as major implementation challenges of professional development activities in the schools context. This finding is consistent with the study conducted by Bayar, (2014). He argued that professional development activities should be conducted according to the individual school-classroom needs, since needs may vary from school to school.

The study found that the opportunity available for teachers to participate in educational workshops and attending educational conferences were very narrow as compared with the number of teachers found in the schools. Similarly, school teachers reported that they had very limited knowledge and skill in doing action research individually or collaboratively. Many studies indicated that professional development that was grounded in teaching specific content helped teachers become more deeply immersed in subject matter and teaching methods (Killion, 2002b; Santa, 2004). It was identified that the teachers' classroom management and interpersonal relation skills was below the required standard. In general the overall teachers' job performance in the study area was rated as low ($M= 3.90$, $SD = 0.47$)

Finally, to investigate the possible relationship between PD and job performance an attempt was made to conduct correlation and multiple regressions analysis on the two constructs. The study found a positive and moderate relationship between overall professional development and job performance of teachers ($r = .311$, $P < 0.05$). Among the four components of professional development, group development showed greater positive relationship with that of teachers' job performance ($r = 0.407$, $p < 0.05$). This implies that as engagement at this component of professional development increases, the teachers' job performance also increases. The finding is consistent with the study conducted under the heading of Project Legal (2004) that underscored effective professional development is job embedded. Job-embedded professional development appears to improve teacher practice by promoting practical learning.

Multiple regressions analysis conducted to determine the effect size of the professional

development variables on teachers' job performance. From components of professional development variables, on job training was found to be the strongest predictor in explaining the teachers' job performance ($B=.229$, $\beta=.398$, $P < 0.05$). The finding was consistent with the study conducted by Lubna & Sajid (2015) that revealed similar result regarding the relationship of training with job performance. From this it can be concluded that on job training is the bargaining issue for updating preparatory teachers in developing teaching methodologies that can enhance the learners' achievement. The group development variable remains second in explaining teachers' job performance whereas action research and curriculum development showed very low prediction on the teachers' job performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Even though the Ethiopian Ministry of Education designed PD as an important program, the study identified irrelevant and poor quality PD programs as major implementation challenges at the schools context. In order to make relevant and efficient, need-based and up-to -date PD programs (e.g. new learning technologies, innovative pedagogies) with the involvement of teachers should be identified and included in professional development activities. This call for necessary support and resources allocation form the relevant stakeholders.
- One of the important essences of professional development was providing continued follow-up, support, and feedback. The region has a highly decentralized system of government with the local

administrators having much of the authority for education. However the woreda educational experts and the school leaders were not in a position to provide feedback, support, and recognition for PD practices. It is important that the REB should establish structure with experts ranging from the regional education bureau up to the local education offices for the support and follows up of PD activities. Good communication and close working relationships on PD matters should be established between the schools and Woreda education offices.

- Stanley (2010) identified standards that help to evaluate teachers job performance as instructional planning, instructional delivery, assessment of learning, learning environment, professional ethics, and student progress. Nevertheless, the study found that teachers were evaluated depending on random criteria set in the work place using the good performance as bench mark without a pre-set standard to serve such purpose. The zonal and woreda education offices should focus on standardized measurements of professional development issues (teaching skill, management skill, interpersonal relations, and professional ethics) to measure teachers' job performance in order to motivate and recognize teachers' performance.

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