

Research Article

The Influence of Professional Development of Teachers and Principals in the Implementation of Curriculum in Middle Education of Wolaita Zone, Ethiopia

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Abstract

This study was intended to explore the influence PD of teachers and principals influence in the curriculum implementation of middle education. The study employed a qualitative methodology guided by the interpretive paradigm. Participants of the study were purposely selected four teachers and one school principal from three different schools and the total number of research participants was fifteen. Interview, focus group discussion and document analysis were used as data gathering tools. Findings of the study indicated that there was a difference between schools in the case of implementation and teachers involvement due to some expositors of PD and commitments of teachers. Problems observed in three schools analyzed indicated that trying to think the only way for professional development is CPD launched 20 years ago. It was indicated that current practice of professional development is not sufficient to improve practice of curriculum implementation even if there are some strong sides in the case of some teachers' involvement. Some of the critical challenges which hindered the practice of PD were not applying strategies of PD that were planned in ESDP six and lack of curricular resources at school level in the case of new curriculum implementation. This has also led to problems of teachers' professional competence and issues of PD of educators influence the practice of curriculum implementation. Finally, based on findings the ways to improve professional development of teachers and principals was forwarded.

Keywords

Professional Development, Continuous Professional Development, Middle Education, Curriculum Implementation, Pedagogy

1. Background of the Study

Professional development of teachers, principals and educators are/were influencing the development and implementation curriculum in various directions. One of the dimensions to improve quality of curriculum implementation is the as-

pects of PD. Professional development can be pre-service training of teachers and school leaders, school based PD like CPD, online or virtual training and combinations of capacity buildings related with instructional activities of the school and

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pedagogical leadership of principals. PD represents here the ways how teachers and principals build their knowledge, skills, values and professional competence to implement curriculum by considering the context of instructional process and finally to impact/influence students' learning outcome positively.

According to [33], there are two kinds of basic understanding essential to implementation. The first is an understanding of organizational change and how information and ideas fit into a real-world context. The second is an understanding of the relationship between curricula and the social-institutional contexts into which they are to be introduced. Before two decay, the theoretical framework or models of curriculum implementation was developed by [37] and it was emphasized strengthening the bond between program profile; roles and profiles of teachers and educators; and support of upper and middle level educators in the case of centrally developed curriculum. Further, they stated that successful curriculum implementation results from careful planning, which focuses on three factors: people, programs, and processes.

To implement a curriculum change, educators must get people to change some of their habits and, possibly, views. Therefore, during implementation of curriculum, assessing both local level issues and policy related issues and with respect to these challenges and taking remedial action to improve curriculum materials or practice will make the process effective and relevant for communities' expectation. Practicality and effectiveness of all activities related to curriculum implementation school and classroom level requires PD of educators or implementers. [8] were explained how to empower teachers by using different mechanisms of capacity building beginning individual effort up cooperation and collaboration to promote professional competence. These all guides to think about the relevance of curriculum implementation PD have been influenced by various contributions.

Similarly, there are two kinds of basic understandings which are essential to curriculum implementation and corresponding PD strategies. The first one was an understanding of organizational change and how information and ideas fit into a real-world context. The second one was an understanding of the relationship between curricula and the social- institutional contexts into which they are to be introduced [33]. These all assumptions need to think about the PD of implementers.

First, one's view of the social-institutional context is influenced by whether one perceives the world of education as technical (modern) or nontechnical (postmodern). In the case of teacher education, technical focused more on pre-service training of teachers and postmodern or nontechnical process oriented or understanding context of curriculum implementation and strengthening CPD strategies by review frequently at school level. According to current Ethiopian teachers education policy/program both pre-service and CPD or in-service training and capacity building were recommended [26-31]. Researchers of this study believe that the most productive

stance regarding implementation is to view it as a combination of technical (modern) and nontechnical (postmodern) aspects of curriculum implementation with respect to pre-service and in-service training and PD of principals and teachers.

Factors that influence the effective professional development of teachers discussed in [7, 8]. To implement a curriculum change, educators must get people to change some of their habits and, possibly, views. Different literature reviews and imperial evidence implied that many schools failed to implement their programs because they ignored the people factor and spent time and money modifying only the program or process. However, focusing on the new program provides people with new ways to meet the objectives of the school's programs. In the case of Ethiopia, PD of teachers and school principals was one of programs intended to promote curriculum implementation at school level by taking context into consideration.

Challenges related to PD was interrupted whatever golden reform, program, and policy was developed at national and regional level. One of reforms in the Ethiopian educational system conducted after the post 1994 education and training policy has been an active learning method or student centered method of teaching. But, the empirical evidence of the existing research findings of local studies implied that there were challenges in applying it in the teaching learning process. According to these studies major challenges are categories as attitude and PD of teachers, other human and nonhuman resource and the alignment between policy/program and context of active learning method of teaching employed [11, 23, 25, 43, 45, 49].

Ethiopian educational development roadmap executive summary and ESDP six indicates that there were gaps and shortcomings with respect to key stakeholders like students, teachers and school leadership to achieve intended goals of primary education. The challenges were:

... serious challenges related with teachers include recruiting low achievers and less committed candidates, poor quality of the teaching force, low teachers' motivation and high teachers' turnover; the prevalence of poor school leadership in several schools; majority of the primary school students have little motivation, interest and commitment in their education; and language issues of students and teachers.

Based on challenges MoE has stated some strategies on how to promote professionalism of teachers and principals in Ethiopia in selection of candidates and CPD. The limitations of strategies were how much it considered different forms of diversity like urban versus rural, socio-economic status, language and other forms differences rather than centralizing PD. Moreover, theorization and conceptualization of CPD by itself needs critical examinations based local or schools and district human resource level of qualifications into considerations. Post-modern era needs transformational PD strategies which motivate to incorporate local and international affairs

into consideration continuously rather than rigidity in centrally prepared reforms over a long period.

The empirical evidence of the practice and influence PD of school principals and teachers were investigated by different studies. Some of these are involvement of teachers in the development of curriculum; teachers' lack of understanding of thematic curriculum [15] factors related with indigenous students and teachers in the curriculum contextualization or adaptation [39] instructional leadership and supervision role of school principals/leaders and supervisors [12, 34, 45, 46]; applying transformational and instructional leadership coexist in an integrated form of leadership [36]; and promoting constructive learning environment [24]. Findings of these were explored the ways how to promote PD and/or its influence in the implementation of curriculum specifically and educational process in general. This article was intended to investigate the credibility of PD of principals and teachers in primary schools in the implementation of curriculum and forward suggestions for improvement.

2. Statements of the Problem

Quality and relevance of educational curriculum implementation was influenced by the implementer of curriculum capacity and professional competence. Various studies were conducted in the case curricular aspects, professional practices of teachers but there were limitations in making alignment between curriculum reforms and teachers education reform in Ethiopia and study area. Previously conducted studies were not investigated the issues of two reforms practices broadly. Some of these were, the influence history curriculum in nation building [41]; practice of continuous assessment [40]; making curricular materials including textbooks and pedagogy appropriate in the case preparing learners for uncertain future [42]. Moreover, there were gaps in the case of Ethiopia in correlating initiatives of curriculum reform with respect to professional development of principals and their roles (pedagogical leadership, instructional supervision and making school climate suitable for professional development and reviewing the implementation of curriculum) and teacher professional progress in line with curricular activities at school level. Based on these this article was aimed to investigate actual practices of PD of educators and gaps related with PD to improve implementation of curriculum at middle education in selected schools and finally to imply directions how make balance between two reforms (PD of implementers and curriculum implementation).

Objectives of the research would be to:

- 1) Explore school based PD of teachers and principals which influence the practice of curriculum implementation in the case of middle education
- 2) Review strengths and limitations of PD influence and status in the case of middle education curriculum implementation
- 3) Provide suggestions to improve practice of PD of

teachers and principals in the case of curriculum implementation of middle education

Based on objectives of the research it was planned to answer the following basic research questions.

- 1) What are factors related with professional development of teachers and principals that influence the implementation of curriculum in the case of upper primary schools or middle education?
- 2) How did teachers and principals observe the contribution of PD in the curriculum implementation in the case of middle education?
- 3) How will PD activities be conducted to improve the effectiveness of curriculum implementation in the case of middle education?

3. Review of Related Literature

School teachers have various roles in curriculum adaptation because they are implementers of curriculum. There are activities like planning lessons, selecting relevant methods of teaching, assessment and evaluation of students' learning, using instructional resources and other school and classroom level activities which facilitate curriculum contextualization for national or regional level prepared curriculum. Furthermore, understanding and analyzing the educational context of a country and socio-cultural aspects of the school environment are very important to achieve the goals of education. Therefore, it requires commitment and professional competence of teachers to make curriculum context based and apply pedagogical adaptation. In both contextualization of curriculum and pedagogical adaptation instructional differentiation pedagogical leadership roles of school principals influence very great roles. These all require PD effectiveness of principals and teachers.

PLCs (Professional Learning Community) are fundamentally about professional and collective teacher learning; with a specific focus on problematizing the learning needs and outcomes of the students they teach [14]. PLCs provide a unique, flexible, and adaptable organizational form that enables schools to respond to the particular needs of their school context.

Teachers can become skilled agents of pedagogical adaptation, and that this process is best helped as a form of habitus engagement within a cooperative and dialogical PLC process. What the PLC sought to leverage was the understanding of ways in which the teachers could create a teaching and learning platform that engaged the life world or socially generated knowledge of students, supporting this knowledge into the school facts code to capacitate a richer notion of teaching and learning within the current educational implementation field.

Teachers can have an active role in educational change by assuming their part as curriculum makers, namely by designing curriculum processes that are more in line with the characteristics of the contexts in which they teach and of the

students being taught. However, numerous factors influence, enable or hinder these processes. Applying the principles of good teaching stated on CPD guide line for primary and secondary school teachers in Ethiopia [26] have merits to contextualize curricular activities and promote students' learning outcome. It was accepted as positive contribution of PD for curricular practices.

Before going to discuss pedagogical adaptation, identifying the term pedagogy has advantageous to conceptualize it easily. [48], explained it as follows:

Pedagogy is the art and science of teaching, as a professional practice and as a field of academic study. It encompasses not only the practical application of teaching but also curriculum issues and the body of theory relating to how and why learning takes place.

Here in the case of PD for school principals more focus on pedagogical leadership or pedagogical supervision of school. On the other hand PD teachers emphasize on activities related with school pedagogy and application of principles of effective pedagogy. To achieve the goals set internationally and nationally, like quality primary education for all, pedagogical adaptation will have its own contribution. The "education for all" motto and the concerns with equality and justice, revealed the need to provide the same opportunities of knowledge acquisition for all students, which argued the need for adaptation to the national curriculum, by teachers.

Many studies argue that school education is better achieved and gains quality when school content is adapted and teachers become curricular developers [21, 22, 36]. When teachers are able to adapt the national curriculum with students' different learning and cultural experiences, school success increases. These initiatives take time, demanding a thorough preparation from teachers, competing with the extent of curricula to teach [26]. Furthermore, intentionally or in habitual ways to run curricular processes, PD of school level implementers will facilitate by connecting context with content of instruction in the case of supervision and direct implementation. Therefore searching various kinds of PD and selecting relevant to the existing context is very important.

There are different kinds of PD exist in Ethiopia and globally which were emphasized to improve educators/teachers capacity. Since 2004 School based Continuous Professional Development (CPD) has been implemented in Ethiopian schools with the aim of improving the classroom practices of teachers and consequently improving the achievement of students.

However, different study reports have revealed that CPD in these schools is not achieving its intended purposes [10, 44, 47]. They were provided suggestions on how to improve CPD activities by applying intensive capacity development, conducive school context, partnership with institutions, and teacher ownership which improves the implementation of curricular activities. Moreover to achieve sustainable goals related with education like 'equity and inclusive quality education for all', PD development of implementers play a very

great role because the knowledge and skills teachers gained in special needs and inclusive education in teacher training programs were not adequate enough to practice inclusive education [44]. Accordingly, to make inclusive education useful for all students including students with special needs. This implies searching effectiveness of PD for curriculum implementation of mainstream curricula for learners with various forms of diversity.

Extensive review of researchers concerning PD of teachers and school principals in Ethiopia is trying to make most of the time inclined on formal school based CPD with limited conceptualization of PD and CPD. It is one of narrow conceptualization of PD and CPD like curriculum implementation emphasizing paper and pencil test predation of learners or taking curriculum as a plan to teach. Broadly, PD or teacher education can be conceptualized as above traditional ways of teacher training and capacity building which focus on pre-service training of teachers, summer program in-service teacher education, formal school CPD, short term training at school and surrounding in the case of subject matter, pedagogy, curriculum development and implementation, subject content pedagogy, etc. Currently, PD is in addition to listed modern/post-modern technology supported or ICT based training and combination of virtual and all kinds of face to face PD activities at local and international level. It is a means to empower school level curriculum implementers and finally to improve learning outcomes of each level.

4. Methods and Materials

It is obvious that each research design has philosophical assumptions and critics based on their positions whether it may be quantitative, qualitative and mixed research designs from one to the other paradigm of research. This was provided directions to search the ways how to reduce weaknesses and enhance strengths of the study was expected from researcher/s by using different strategies with respect purpose of research, his/her background, nature of problems, instruments intended to use, procedures of data collection, data analysis and finally report of research findings [3-6, 17, 18, 20]. Accordingly, this article adopted qualitative research design and specifically qualitative case study design. According to [50, 51] cases are bounded by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time.

The study employed qualitative methods guided by the interpretive paradigm. Participants of the study were purposely selected four teachers and one school principal from three different schools and the total number of research participants was fifteen. Interview, focus group discussion (FDG) and document analysis were used as data gathering tools. Data were analyzed thematically and discussed based on basic research questions stated.

5. Result and Discussions

Findings of the study concerning the perception practice and challenges of PD were presented with respect to each school. Finally, discussion was conducted by triangulating and narrating three schools and qualitative document review with respect to basic research questions.

5.1. Professional Development and Corresponding effects on Curricular Practices in School A

There are different types of professional development strategies. Some of these are short term training at school and outside school, experience sharing, CPD and individually reading professionally recommended materials. School teachers and principals' involvement in these and other PD activities will have its own contribution in the implementation of curricula.

Theme one: Upgrading

One of senior teacher was reported the professional development of teachers as follows:

Since the beginning of 1994 ETP we have got chances to upgrade our profession. Major parts of teachers teaching primary and secondary schools have been promoted from either teacher training one year certificate or college diploma up to master's degree. But there are different constraints which inhibit teachers to support educational/curricular activities. Some of these are delay of monthly salary, absence of incentives except salary, imbalance between monthly revenue and expense due to inflation rate (teacher 25).

The interview respondent has explained the PD of teachers in the case of upgrading. According to his evaluation activities related with PD have been in good position but other socio-economic factors are interrupting the implementation of curricula. Others interviewees observed in their own direction some similarity and different ways. According to TM1, the motivational level of teachers is very low because there is no short term training for teachers beginning from the 2019/20 academic year. The remaining has also perceived it as the practice of CPD.

Theme two: CPD

Factors related with practice of CPD were presented and analyzed in four respondents' reports. To apply CPD as intended there are awareness and skill gaps.

According to TS1, Teachers have not received training to be competent in the practice of formal CPD. There are skill gaps to engage in CPD activities to run effectively. But currently for reporting purposes I do it even if there is confusion on it (teacher 17). Teachers were planning to conduct CPD but some of them did not report the implementation status. On the other hand there is still confusion in the planning and report writing style of CPD. The cause for factors related with involvement of school based professional development is ab-

sence of updating or lack of short term training. There was a limitation in facilitating induction and formal CPD in my school. We have not got enough support in the case of CPD and induction. But for the sake of reporting we are on the way to planning and practicing formal CPD by personal effort or reading materials (teachers 11, 12, &17).

It is possible to conclude that CPD has not implemented as planned at program level in the school. The critical case identified from above four interviewees was absence of short term training to update.

Theme three: Relating PD with school improvement programs

One of the senior teachers explained the importance of textbooks in practice by stating that "I have reserved around three books for me from currently teaching. Whatever the new book is published, the basic points will continue. He has stated some of challenges and good practices:

One of the critical challenges in policy currently practiced in my school is shortage of textbooks and teacher's guide and as good practice I have perceived that the implementation of CPD was supported by a budget allocated from school grantee. This motivated an inclination of learning one teacher from the other (Major challenges in teachers' development: 1) conceptions and conceptual issues related to teaching, professional development and mentoring, 2) management and leadership, and 3) teachers' work conditions [13]. Similarly, [16] were investigated that CPD practice was not that effective and all the stakeholders were hesitant about its effectiveness. Teachers engaged in CPD were not making the most effective use of it. They associated it with other issues often unrelated to the purposes of CPD.

Major challenges in teachers' development: 1) conceptions and conceptual issues related to teaching, professional development and mentoring, 2) management and leadership, and 3) teachers' work conditions ([13]. Similarly, [16] were investigated that CPD practice was not that effective and all the stakeholders were hesitant about its effectiveness. Teachers engaged in CPD were not making the most effective use of it. They associated it with other issues often unrelated to the purposes of CPD (teacher 11).

The challenges of factors related with text books are common or other teachers have shared it as a problem. But appreciating the planning process of school CPD has contradicted with what others responded.

Suggestion related with educational policy and curricular materials was discussed in FGD. The most frequently discussed issues by major FGD participants were:

- 1) Supervision activities of cluster supervisors and other educators are low.
- 2) They were stated that implementation of new curricula should be bottom up. One of the causes for currently practicing curricula was making it top to down.
- 3) The issues of CPD and curriculum development are similar. Still now teachers have not got sufficient training regarding these two key areas of educational pro-

grams.

- 4) Continuous assessment is good at policy level but it has died at grass root due to wrong conceptualization and practices.

Theme four: Curriculum Reform and PD

The FGD and in-depth interview of informants indicated that there are constraints on each stakeholder to implement new curriculum due to material, capacity building and other socio-economic issues. According to them, the quality of the new curriculum deteriorates more than the former curriculum implementation. One evidence all informants agreed the reason for decline of relevance and quality of curricular process was shortage and in major part absence of teacher's guide, textbooks for major parts of subjects and delay of some textbook distributions. Moreover, orientations/training provided for school leaders and teachers confused teachers how to implement curriculum reform and leaders how to supervise. This shows additional professional development strategies needed both for teachers, educators and school leaders.

Previously conducted study stated similar issues regarding reform. There are external contextual influences during times of curriculum reform for teachers regarding curriculum use. Curriculum reform is often described as being dependent on teachers' advancement of reform principles. There are four distinct influences on their curriculum use: the provision of professional development; curriculum and leadership roles; use of alternative or additional materials; and schools' prioritization of particular learning areas [1]. One of the school teachers stated that in our training trainer it was stated that "do not use any other teaching materials except the things included in textbook". This is one of the implications of the gaps of training provided concerning new curriculum implementation. According to researchers' evaluation it is very difficult to improve the learning outcome of students' highly rigid ways of using only nationally developed curricular materials like textbooks.

The findings demonstrate that the consistent use of these curriculum materials, as intended by designers, was appreciably influenced by factors external to the teachers. Findings of the study will have implications for curriculum designers to include the need for greater consideration of external contextual influences, such as: opportunities for teachers to access professional development, consideration of curriculum roles within schools, the thoughtful provision of additional or alternate curriculum materials, and recognition of the prioritization of particular learning areas by schools.

Theme five: The alignment between curriculum reform and professional development

The alignment between curriculum reform and teachers professional development was extensively discussed with four selected school teachers at individual level and in FGD. Accordingly key points identified were summarized as follows:

- 1) most of teachers have shortage of knowledge and skills in the subject/s assigned to teach out of certi-

fied/qualified;

- 2) shortage of teachers for each subjects and assigning out of qualification
- 3) Grade 7 and 8 General science (combination of Biology, Chemistry and Physics) teacher assignment and difficulty of finding teachers professionally qualified in three subjects.
- 4) Low level of preparation for implementation of new curriculum in the case of government to motivate teachers based on continuous capacity building strategies;
- 5) shortage of qualified teachers and absence of relevant short term training for new subjects (example ICT and technical and career development);
- 6) Former training of teacher is not matched with curriculum reform
- 7) Attentions provided for teachers preparation and curricular materials development or preparation have inconsistencies; and
- 8) Medium of instruction of grade 5 and 6 has not considered the existing teachers background in the case of language ability.

One of the school principals accepted making three subjects (biology, chemistry and physics) one subject or general science as a good opportunity because it has made teachers empower themselves by reading three areas of learning. But four interview participant teachers did not agree on the combination of subjects by explaining the current PD condition of teachers.

Theme six: Inclusiveness of instructional practices

Instructional process of the classroom should be evaluated as a method of teaching (the case of student-centered or teacher-centered); inclusive or appropriate for all learners with respect to different forms of diversity; contextualized; relating day to day activities of society based on topics of a lesson. Research participants were provided the following suggestions:

Educational process in general and curriculum implementation in particular was focused on equity aspects. There is no minority and majority class in our school. Our instructional process is inclusive (teacher 19).

The way informants conceptualize the majority and minority is its own problem. Researcher was assessed around three weeks on the school surroundings and found various forms of diversity which hinder instructional process. Teacher's understanding about diversity is very important to make the teaching learning process inclusive and effective.

Inclusiveness of teaching learning process:- In our school there were disabled students. We took short term training on how to teach or support these students. There are no other forms of diversity because students have the same language and ethnic backgrounds (teacher 16).

Method of teaching and corresponding factors was presented as follows:

The involvement of students is low during the teaching

learning process. At the policy level and most of the time in our school meeting, the school principal and teachers were talking about student-centered methods of teaching. Practically more than half, we have applied a teacher-centered method of teaching. One of the reasons for the teacher-centered method of instruction is insufficiency of textbooks for students. The Causes for textbook shortage is the transition period to change textbooks from old to new curricular materials based on educational development road map (teacher 11).

The next informant added that the nature subject is pushed to use an active learning method.

Reforms like the student centered method and continuous assessment have been practiced in social studies in a good way. The nature of subject matter motivates students to participate actively in classroom and out of classroom instructional activities (teacher 15).

Inclusiveness of instruction has not been conceptualized in a broad sense. They conceptualized it as only the issues of few type disabilities like visual and hearing. Practically there are so many types of diversity that exist at school level. One of interviewee was stated that:

There are three students in our school with issues related to disability. We support them in different ways (teacher 12).

This was indicated that there gaps in conception and practice of PD of teachers and principals in the case considering diversity of learners with respect academic achievement, gifted and talented learners, diverse needs of learners related with disabilities. These imply school level PD of educators (teachers and principals) should be considered to take into consideration curriculum contextualization and instructional adaptation.

5.2. Professional Development and Corresponding Effects on Curricular Practices in School B

Theme one: Updating/CPD

Teachers expressed their views towards PD. One of the factors related with PD of teachers is absence of recognition for teachers who have got professional license.

An educator of woreda and zonal supervision and supporting mechanisms was very limited. There is a constraint in identifying teachers who work licensed and professional competency. I was one of a few licensed teachers in our woreda in the subject (passed in teachers' license criteria and examination) four years ago but I did not get any additional incentive and called to prepare for the woreda level examination. There are teachers who are blaming him/her for getting a certificate in the teaching profession. (teacher 22).

At school level there are good practices concerning CPD. All teachers have participated in the CPD program. Training was provided at the beginning of the first semester to improve the knowledge and skill gap of teachers con-

cerning professional development in general and CPD in particular. In my evaluation this impacts academic performance of learners, behavioral change of students, reduces dropout rate and absenteeism (teacher 25).

Currently, all teachers are working with CPD in good ways in our school. The school provided training by making cooperation with NGO to empower teachers and eliminate confusion on CPD. I have also planned and on the way of implementing it practically after a short term training provided by experienced professionals at school level (teacher 22).

In our school NGO was supported to train a CPD program to build teachers' capacity for instructional activities. It has supported us to fill the knowledge gap of professional development strategies and influence positively to use active learning methods (teacher 24).

Three of the interview participant teachers explained the process and practices related with CPD in similar and existence of strong side.

CPD in our school is conceptualized as teacher empowerment. But there is no culture of discussion among teachers concerning the implementation and effect of it. Each teacher did CPD for him/herself only (teacher 22).

The main thing from responses of above teachers researcher extracted was experience sharing about the implementation of CPD. When teachers share experience from one other it will strengthen as additional PD and empower more. It impacts in a good way the practice of curriculum or related activities because without professionally empowered teachers thinking about improvement of instructional process is very difficult.

Theme two: short term training (Co-curricular or extracurricular program)

One of the school teachers stated that the co-curricular program supported the implementation of formal curriculum. It was explained as

A Co-curricular and extra-curricular activity has initiated the members of the club and others attitude towards learning. I am an eye health club head. I was provided training concerning sight problems by using manuals developed by health professionals. This has supported both students and teachers to differentiate students based on level of sight (long sight and short sight) to arrange appropriate desks. Directly, this contributes positively to the instructional process (teacher 25).

The teachers and students participation in clubs or co-curricular programs contributed positively for instructional activities. In similar way English teacher was reported about club influence as follows:

There is a language club in our school and we celebrate language day by speaking English on this day. It also helps students to develop speaking and writing skills in English (teacher 2).

5.3. Professional Development and Corresponding Effects on Curricular Practices in School C

Theme one: CPD/ updating profession

Professional development mechanisms are many in number but all respondents were explained the importance and drawback of CPD. It is hard to address all issues related with professional development of teachers only by one means. The ideas collected concerning PD of teachers and principals were presented in this section. Some of the relatively good practices and weaknesses were presented in the following manner: one of the informants said that according to my school CPD has strengths and weaknesses. One of strengths is taking it as like research to fill capacity and weakness is some teachers observe it only as a reporting purpose. The objective of CPD is to improve professionalism of teachers and positively impact on students' academic performance and solve disciplinary challenges.

Conceptualization and practice gap of it was explained by teacher:

It is one thing written on the paper. When it is applied in the right ways, it has mechanisms to empower teachers or makes a better teacher. Major parts of teachers do not understand or know the definition of CPD. Thus, they take and use it like a club plan and use it for reporting purposes only. Moreover, they did not clearly understand the purpose of it. One of ways to improve the teaching profession is CPD but there is confusion on the importance and benefits of this reform (teacher 31).

There is a good reporting system in this school. The informant teacher was discussed that:

We plan and report the implementation of CPD on time. In our school there is a format prepared to report progress reports of CPD. I believe that it has positively contributed to the teaching learning process and to build my ability. On the opposing side, there are gaps for teachers who join this school after a few years. As a good trend I have observed that allocating 10% from the school grantee budget for CPD training. This will make those who lately begin the CPD activities provide a chance to improve skill and conceptual gaps of it (teacher 32).

Gaps related with CPD report was explained by deputy principal:

Generally, there are skill gaps in the case of CPD. Some teachers bring previous year reports for the new academic year. In analyzing the importance of CPD report writing, there is a very big gap among teachers. When we do it as designed at national and regional level it has so many advantages to empower teachers and finally improve the practice of teachers (principal).

Teacher of the school added limitations of CPD implementation:

In the case of professional development there are two things most of the time discussed in our school regarding

CPD. There are teachers who have exhaustively tried to work CPD based on their plan and submit reports frequently to the coordinator. But some teachers copy the previous year or other teacher reports and report to school carelessly. In similar ways the support of fresh teachers varies from between senior teachers assigned to mentor and mentee or novice teachers. This all has directly or indirectly as the efficiency of teachers influence instructional activities (teacher 34).

Factors influencing of PD of teachers

Senior teachers have tried to empower their profession by applying CPD and other mechanisms. Absence of additional incentives for teachers has demotivated teachers to improve their professional status and in a good way to practice instructional duties. Moreover, these newly joined novice teachers criticize how experienced teachers stay in this profession for many years. This indicates that there are constraints in changing a teacher's life or socio-economic level. Finally, students' disciplinary and attitude also demoralize teachers to do activities related with reforms of education as planned. (teacher 32).

Senior teacher and interview participant of this study discussed recruitment of teachers. Accordingly, one of the causes for teaching profession or instructional activities effectiveness was recruiting applied science graduates to reduce the rate of unemployment. These new graduates were joined without sufficient training to teach students. Moreover, these newly employed have no interest to improve by making cooperation with senior teachers to share experience about teaching learning process.

Theme two: Inclusiveness of curriculum or curriculum contextualization

Some issues related with educational policy and program explained by interview participants are presented needs to provide PD for school curriculum implementers. Inclusiveness of curriculum in the case of rural and urban societies presented as follows:

Policy makers, curriculum and instructional materials developers were not considered in various contexts of Ethiopian diversity. The curriculum is urban-oriented. It was a guiding principle for teachers but did not give appropriate freedom for school teachers to teach or prepare materials by taking into account local context. (teacher 39).

Experience sharing of other country educational policy and its impact:

Our education policy was/is not incremental, it is a copy past. There were restrictions in contextualization issues. Those who were sending to share experience from others should not bring the context of that country rather than copying reforms. Our educational policy emphasized producing officials. It has not considered various forms of diversity and socio-economic and cultural elements of Ethiopia (teacher 32).

Impact of educational policy was stated by the deputy principal of the school concerning PD gaps of school teach-

ers.

Educational policy is not free from criticism because there has been buying and selling certificates including college diplomas up to master's degree by money without effort. This has also demotivated learners and teachers to do their activities in a better way. There are teachers in our school who have challenged to write permission applications/letters to school and left school for this reason (principal 3).

Theme 4:3 Co-curricular or extracurricular program and capacity building

To improve the implementation of curriculum the things merged in formal curricular materials is not enough. Since in the world many things change in fast ways and in opposite directions at once prepared curricular materials serve many years due to economic and other problems of a country. In addition to this it is very problematic to include all useful things in formal/regular curriculum. Therefore, trying to think about the importance of co-curricular and or extra-curriculum programs was suggested in this study. The interview was conducted with school teachers. He stated the importance of PD in the case of co-curricular programs to motivate teachers and school leaders.

Interview participant teachers were discussed the contribution of co-curricular or extra-curricular programs on the formal curriculum implementation.

The members of a club gain basic knowledge and skills appropriate for formal curriculum designed in the case of migration, population and natural resource management.

One of the school teachers stated that additional content relevant to the community in the case of Wolaita and generally in Ethiopia should be incorporated on the existing curricula like peace and security aspects. He forwarded these contents to be part of the subject Social Studies.

In the case of minimizing the academic gap between male and female or according to achievement level (low, medium and high achievers), we use tutorial classes. Co-curricular programs and various committees like student counseling have also contributed to motivate learners for academic performance. (teacher 33).

Pedagogical advantage of the co-curricular program was explained by the biology teacher.

Co-curricular programs of the school have been positively strengthening what students have learned in the formal curriculum. For instance, health related clubs have a very high contribution for the achievement of Biology regular/formal curriculum. Some of these clubs are eye health, malaria, HIV/AIDS and natural resource management. The existence of these clubs will also have a good opportunity to motivate students to involve outside socially and economically relevant activities with self-confidence (teacher 35).

These all have implications about the extracurricular program contribution for formal curriculum. Almost all personal interview informants and FGD members were raised limita-

tion of PD in the case of formal curriculum and co-curricular programs. They discussed extensively the importance of capacity building and its influence for the practice of curricular activities and currently the issues related with PD have interrupted the implementation of curriculum in their school in addition to other factors.

6. Discussions of Major Findings of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to explore how PD of school leaders and teachers influence curriculum implementation in the upper primary schools. Here curriculum implementation implies nationally and school level prepared instructional materials practiced and the mechanisms of implementation taking into consideration the reform of curriculum and various forms of diversity at school level. The relevance, effectiveness and strategies of PD of curriculum implementers will play remarkable roles in the case of pedagogical adaptation; curriculum contextualization; filling gaps related with diversities (academic achievement, learning style, disability, gender, language, culture, socio economic activity and others) by employing instructional differentiation, constructive pedagogy, critical pedagogy, culturally responsive pedagogy and taking into consideration local and international affairs to promote learning outcome of students by means of curricular process. Thus, some of the successes and challenges identified in the findings of this study regarding PD of curriculum implementers was discussed in the following paragraphs.

Document review and findings of the study indicated some of the affordances observed in the case of selected teachers and schools. These were presence of opportunity for upgrading or level qualification improvement of teachers and principals in study conducted schools; supporting CPD program financially at school level; in the case of some subjects like biology and social studies training of co-curricular program linkage with formal curriculum; and nongovernmental organizations contribution in capacity buildings in the areas like active learning method, continuous assessment, curriculum adaptation and instructional supervision.

Findings of the study discussed in the previous section, document review and school observation revealed challenges even if the degree of issues differ within and across schools. Most frequently raised issues related with PD of teachers and principals were conception and practice gap of school based CPD (major part or more than half of teachers have plans in the document but no performance report); limitations of short term training to make teachers professional competent; awareness gaps in connecting PD with others school programs like SIP, co-curricular program and instructional supervision; and inappropriateness of school culture and climate to make discussion deeply how to enhance PD which would influence educational outcome. In the case of curriculum reform or

curriculum change of 2022 capacity building concerning reforms launched, the training was not provided as expected to improve practice of curriculum. The issues discussed confirmed the research findings of [35, 38]. Studies were suggested that Teachers should be viewed not only as implementers of reform, but also as investigators by making collaboration, strengthening PD areas, and adapting curricula and finally teachers should act as problem solvers.

Generally, the findings of PD were inconsistencies with [8, 9] explained strategies of PD. Accordingly, PD is content focused; incorporates active learning; supports collaboration; uses models of effective practice; provides coaching and expert support; offers feedback and reflection; and is of sustained duration. Similarly, [2] state that effectiveness of teachers PD is underpinned by the spirit in which the principal and the teachers work together as professional associates bound together by common purpose that should prevail during staff development sessions. In addition to ineffective procedures of PD shortage of textbooks and teacher's guide has also interrupted PD which contributes to the competence of teachers and influences students' learning outcome.

Major challenges in teachers' development were related with empirical evidence of other studies. Some of these challenges were conceptions and conceptual issues related to teaching, professional development and mentoring, management and leadership, and teachers' work conditions [13]. Similarly, [16] were investigated that CPD practice was not that effective and all the stakeholders were hesitant about its effectiveness. Teachers engaged in CPD were not making the most effective use of it. They associated it with other issues often unrelated to the purposes of CPD.

Finally, all study conducted schools were prioritizing how to improve students' academic achievement on paper and pencil tests which provide more attention for traditional methods of teaching. It was criticized by a previously conducted study. [32], conducted research on the topic 'challenges of implementing a top-down curriculum innovation in English language teaching: perspectives of language teachers in Kenya. The study revealed that one of critical problems of curriculum implementation according to findings of this study was over emphasis on examination. He suggested involvement of teachers in the development of curriculum innovations, organized continuous professional development, and development of materials that support teachers in their implementation and review of assessment procedures. The findings of this school and two schools professional developments of educators were sharing commonalities with macro level studies of general education of Ethiopia in the case of challenges discussed and strategies forwarded [26-31].

The importance of sustained PD teachers was investigated to change paradigm shift in the implementation of curriculum. It was found that teaching and learning approaches employed in the classroom by most teachers were teacher-centered and encouraged rote learning hence lacking in active student involvement in the learning process [19]. They were recom-

mended that there should be sustained school based teacher PD activities specifically addressing pedagogy for improved curriculum implementation and ultimately improved learning outcomes. It will be suggested that applying principles of PD stated by [7] and international experiences of teacher education explained in [8] by considering context of schools and its impact to improve the activities like instructional method improvement; curricular materials development and modification; curriculum implementation; and effectiveness of curriculum reform to search other alternatives or strategies of curriculum delivery.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations/Implications

Findings of the study revealed that factors related with professional development of teachers and principals influence the implementation of curriculum in the case of upper primary schools or middle education. Most frequently raised factors are subject matter knowledge, commitment of teachers and school principals to participate in PD, taking formal CPD as only ways of PD and other school related issues.

Study participants agreed on the importance of PD and regular CPD and they were explained in the case of teachers' contribution to curriculum implementation and impacts on students' learning. The observation of teachers indicated that lack of incentives and other school related factors hindered the implementation of PD. There has been a difference among schools in the case of PD in general and school based CPD particularly. Most of informants were discussed that the school that were participated in short term training provided in the case of CPD, co-curricular program, active learning method, continuous assessment and contextualization of curriculum have a good opportunity to improve their daily curricular activity because it fulfill professional competence gaps and motivate them to implement curriculum.

Researchers were suggested how to improve the PD of principals and school teachers based on findings and conclusions of the research. Since, there is low economic status, it is difficult to engage all principals and teachers continuously and yearly in face to face short term training which facilitates the implementation of curriculum trying to think about other alternatives will be important. So, it needs a paradigm shift of PD of teachers and school principals from traditional ways to post-modern which recommends employing virtual and combination of face to face and e-learning/d-learning/m-learning modality of capacity building by using locally accessible ICT and other supportive technologies such as mobile, television. To apply paradigm shift in the case of PD for both teachers and principals' validity, relevance and merits of areas of capacity building should be checked critically by professionals intensively and extensively searching international experience for adaptation will be recommended. Beyond formal CPD, searching various

alternatives and themes of PD will have the advantage of improving quality, equity, relevance and internal efficiency of education.

Final remark of the study will be the ways of curriculum development, educational reform and PD of teachers should re-conceptualize and theorize based on locally existing problems and multidimensional diversity of Ethiopia. One size fits for all scenarios would affect the quality and relevance of curriculum implementation and development in multidimensional directions in a multicultural and multilingual community like Ethiopia in case of top down curriculum policy implementation. So, thinking about multiple mechanisms of PD of educators which recognize diversity will have advantages to improve quality and efficiency of teachers performance related with curricular and/or instructional activities.

Finally, the components of professional development of curriculum implementers and curriculum policy of middle education should provide attention on the following three critical factors to improve students learning outcome. First, strategies of curriculum implementation like curriculum/instructional adaptation, curriculum/instructional differentiation; second, curriculum reforms like competency based curriculum practices, indigenous knowledge ICT integration; and third, practicing a pedagogical strategies, which consider dynamics of world scenario and development 21st century skills through curriculum and teacher education policy formulation and implementation.

Abbreviations

CBC	Competency Based Curriculum
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
ESDP	Education Sector Development Program
ETP	Education and Training Policy
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
MoE	Ministry of Education
PD	Professional Development
SIP	School Improvement Program

Author Contributions

Mandado Gizachew: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal Analysis, Funding acquisition, Investigation, Methodology, Project administration, Resources, Supervision, Validation, Visualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing

Solomon Areaya: Conceptualization, Methodology, Supervision, Validation

Statements

Wolaita Zone represents administrative structure in Ethiopia below region or state and above district; and Wolaita represents as language, name of nation and administrative

structure with total number of population around two million in southern Ethiopia.

Middle education or upper primary education is educational structure in Ethiopia and include grade 7 and 8 according to 2023 ETP of Ethiopia with standard age of learners' year 13 and 14 respectively.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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