

## ORIGINAL ARTICLE

# TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL BASED CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT(SBCPD) IN JIMMA ZONE SELECTED SCHOOLS

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### *Abstract*

*This paper is part of MA thesis in which primary school teachers' perceptions of was explored. The study was conducted in Jimma zone: Gumay woreda, Omonada woreda and Jimma town. Thirteen to fourteen teachers from two primary schools of each woreda were participated. Multiple case study design was employed and the three woreda's school-based continuous professional development was considered. Data were secured through in-depth interview, FGD, document analysis and observation. The data generated by these instruments were independently analyzed and brought together and thematically analysed. These were teachers' meaning of SBCPD, teachers' perceptions of relevance, management, and result in enhancement of students learning, and obstructions. These major themes further analyzed into sub-themes and the sub themes are finally analyzed into issues and views. A cross-case analysis technique was employed to explore similarity and /or differences in teachers' perception and practices of SBCPD among the three cases. Thus the findings indicated that SBCPD is conceived as a means to career development, re-licence and as a means to improve immediate problem solving skills in the school. Finally it is found that there was no significant support provided to schools. This study then revealed that there is a need in clarifying the ultimate goal of CPD, need in supervision and training to support teachers undertaking CPD and strengthening community and school collaboration were points seeking concern.*

### BACKGROUND

Studies on the links between teacher learning and students' achievement are divided into two waves (AFT, 2005). The first wave, beginning in the 1960s, focused

primarily on generic teaching skills. In the 1990s, the second wave of research delved deeper into student learning, focusing on students' reasoning and problem-solving potentials rather than only on the basic skills.

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This inter wave suggests that professional development can influence teachers' classroom practices significantly and lead to improved students' achievement when it focuses on how students learn a particular subject matter; instructional practices that are specifically related to the subject-matter and content. However, since 2000s current development in teacher education shows the linking professional learning to teachers' real work (American Federation of Teachers, 2005).

Teacher classroom practice and interaction at classroom level seem to have vital importance in learning improvement. The following idea confirms this point. "In all education systems, the performance of teachers is one of the handful of factors determining school effectiveness and learning outcomes for teachers' interaction with learners is the axis on which educational quality turns" (VSO, 2002:10). With the changing educational reforms new ways of practice, new ways of working and above all, different ways of instructional practice demand continuous improvement and updating of teachers. Adding to this, Craft (2000) states that the current change in instructional practice demands new knowledge, new skills and increasing commitment to life long learning.

Fullan (1993) states, the intended educational change at three levels: the teacher, the school and the community, emphasizing on the teacher's level. The change at teacher's level is the core as the expected outcome rests on teacher's activities, which is the closest level to learning that directly affects students' achievement. The quality of academic and professional development teachers had during pre and in-service training have direct bearing on their performance and on the achievement of students. Quality of

teaching, which is the result of pre-service and in-service training of teachers, is the core determining element of students' achievement (Lockheed and Verspoor, 1991).

To improve the current status of teaching quality, teachers' professional development is hoped to provide with a way to directly apply what they learn to their teaching. It leads to better instruction and improved student learning when it is connected to the curriculum materials that teachers use, and the academic standards that guide their work, and the assessment and accountability measures that evaluate their success. In agreement with this, many researches report that the more professional knowledge teachers have, the higher the level of student achievement, (National Commission on Teaching and American Future, 1996, 1997; Falk 2001; Educational Testing Service, 1998; Grosso de Leon, 2001; Guzman, 1995; McGinn and Borcden, 1995 Totto, 1999 in Villegas-Reimers, 2003:21).

The present government of Ethiopia has placed great importance on quality education and recognizes it as an essential component for development needs of the society. The recent policy to quality improvement focuses on the complex interaction that takes place in the teaching learning process as the primary level to improve quality of education (MoE, 2005).

As one of the government's top priorities education quality improvement was the top of other education issues. Therefore, within the framework of the Education and Training Policy (TGE, 1994) the Education Sector Development Program (ESDP) is launched as a twenty-year education sector plan with one of the main priorities, quality improvement at all levels of educational

system after extensive study by Ministry of Education (ESDP III). This study revealed important factors affecting teachers performance such as, difficult conditions of work environment; weak pre-service preparation and lack of continuous professional development; an examination system that discourage active learning, creative thinking and development of higher order thinking skills; and weak management and leadership. Based on the recommendations and indicative action plan presented in the study report, a task force was established to produce the 'National Framework for the Teacher Education System Overhaul (TESO) and the program has been implemented since 2003.

Consequently, a program of continuous professional development (CPD) is designed and is put into practice to enable teachers update themselves with new outlooks, approaches and policy directions. Though teachers' professional development was not new in Ethiopia there was no structured provision of CPD for teachers in schools until 2003 (MoE,2004). The TESO CPD of (2003) strategies aims to put that structure in place primarily in primary schools. Teachers professional development is to be practiced at school or at cluster center with the trust that teachers will embrace the concept of life long learning for their own benefit and for the benefit of the pupils they teach and the communities in which they live at large.

In Ethiopia, since 2007 modular approach to CPD program was introduced on rigorous implementation in all primary schools. This program has two main parts:

the two-year induction program for newly deployed teachers and the transitional professional development, for teachers who are already in the system as the opportunity for continuous learning and update with expanding knowledge and share experiences, ideas, and good practices with colleagues from own and other schools (MoE, 2005:15).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Though structured provision of CPD is new phenomenon in Ethiopia (MoE, 2005), and local research reports on CPD are scanty, there are few on the positive effect of CPD on different school matters like student-teacher relationship, sharing idea and experience among teachers, working in collaboration and the like. Amare, Daniel, Derebsa and Wana (2006) reported that CPD has laid fertile ground to build strong academic achievement. On the other hand, Gizaw (2006) for instance found out that CPD has little effect on teachers' classroom practice, utilization of participatory approach of teaching, improved professional knowledge and skills. Similar observation made by Berry (2008:30) in a study commissioned by VSO Ethioia, conducted in three regions namely, Tigray, Afar and Amhara regional states argue that although the policy is to upgrade all teachers to diploma level there is no difference in the teaching quality of certificate and diploma holders; the impact on classroom remains a challenge. Though very few none of them focuses on teachers' perceptions about the program itself (CPD) rather, they all focus on its effect.

It was the findings of the above scholars and other people with similar views and my past personal experience of teaching in primary schools that inspired me to look into the problem closely. In addition, being

an instructor at Jimma University, I got a good opportunity to visit primary schools that run CPD due to Practicum and Community Based Training Program (CBTP) that the University runs in collaboration with the surrounding community and schools. I visited schools running CPD program with different facilities, in different geographical setting and participants with different educational backgrounds. There, teachers I talked to, had varying assumptions about CPD in general and its relevance, management and the expected outcome, students' learning improvement, within the school and otherwise. Some of them viewed it negatively while others had positive feeling and some others had been in indifferent.

The differences among these teachers' views and experiences and the differences among the studies mentioned above have inspired me to think of conducting this study. I decided to explore teachers' perceptions and practices of School based continuous professional development (SBCPD) because teacher's perceptions and belief that leads to change. Therefore, this study is designed to find out answers to the following questions.

1. How do primary school teachers define school-based continuous professional development?
2. How do teachers perceive school-based continuous professional development in terms of: relevance, management, resulting in enhancing learning?
3. What are the major obstructions of school based continuous professional development?

### **Objectives of the Study**

The general objective of this study is to understand the perception and practice of school based continuous professional development of primary school teachers, in Jimma Zone. Specifically:

1. To understand primary school teachers' meaning of SBCPD.
2. To explore the views of primary school teachers on SBCPD in terms of relevance, management and enhancement of students' learning.
3. To investigate how teachers in participating schools link their day-to-day activities SBCPD
4. To identify how well SBCPD is achieving its goal in selected primary schools.

### **Delimitation of the Study**

This study was delimited to the investigation of primary school teachers' perceptions and practices of school based CPD in six primary schools of two woredas and Capital of Jimma zone. Gumay woreda, Omonada woreda and Jimma town, were selected on two premises. It is also confined only with CPD activities which are provided either at school or cluster school. Moreover it is delimited to government primary schools for the sake of in depth analysis and currently CPD program is being practiced in government school only.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This case study is based on some selected primary school teachers in Jimma zone. Due to the nature of the research design that is, qualitative case study, it is not possible to generalize to all primary school teachers. However, the cases are described in sufficient detail to enable readers to

connect the findings and insights to other contexts if appropriate.

### **Research Design and Methodology**

**Rationale:** The ontological assumption for this study lies within the interpretive paradigm, suggests that qualitative researchers believe in the subjectivity of the reality. Qualitative research approach emphasizes the study of research problem inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. To study such problem, qualitative researchers use an emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, the collection of data in the natural setting sensitive to people and places under study and data analysis that is inductive and establishes patterns or themes. Therefore, this approach was preferred due to the intention to understand teachers' perception in detail by directly talking to them, exploring their feeling about the issue under investigation, by going to school and understanding the context/setting in which participants' work.

**Design:** the purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perceptions and practices of school-based continuous professional development. The selection of qualitative multiple case study methods was based on my perception of the problem and the nature of the expected data to be collected, that depends on the social reality and suitability for particular context. In search of deep and rich data that help me understand the situation in detail and my interest in understanding how people make sense of their lives and experiences qualitative case study design is appropriate.

With regard to case study design, Creswell (2007:73) argues that qualitative case study

approach is appropriate when the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g. observation, interview, audiovisual materials, documents and reports). On the basis of this understanding, multiple case study method was chosen and employed for the intention to understand teachers' perception and practices of SBCPD in different social contexts.

Three cases were carefully selected and data collection and organization was done independently following the research questions. Finally, findings were brought together for simplicity and ease of presentation keeping their contextual differences and similarity.

**Subject:** the primary education sector in Ethiopia has built an impressive track record of achievements of access. Building on these achievements, there is an increasing necessity for a shift of focus to questions of quality. The quest for quality in primary education is a compelling contemporary issue in school, within the family, and within the policy process. In response to these concerns, the focus and effort made so far by government to improve teachers' professional quality through school based continuous professional development is the ground for choosing primary school teachers. Besides, I believe a concrete base for quality in all education tiers must be laid at primary schools focusing on improving teachers' teaching quality.

### **Tools for Data Collection**

**Interview guide:** Most of the data from the participants were collected through interview guide. It was preferred because relevant data concerning teachers' perception about SBCPD would be obtained. The interview was held individually to let the participant feel free to speak their experiences and their beliefs about CPD. The interview process was helped by record to keep flow of idea and prevent loss of information.

**Focused Group Discussion:** After in-depth interview, focused group discussion guide was used as data collection tool, useful for revealing the beliefs, attitudes, experiences and feelings of participants through interaction in a way which would not be feasible using other methods, like group meaning and collective behavior of participants. Six FGD one in each school, consists six to seven discussants, was held and the data obtained were included in to the data obtained through other tools and analyzed.

**Observation:** Naturalistic observation is conducted to access data that do not lend themselves to interviews and FGD.

**Trustworthiness:** I validated this study starting from pilot study to the final writing. I piloted the three cases and approved feasibility and secure pre-conditions. Then, while field study I used multiple data sources (in-depth interview, FGD, document analysis and observation). Moreover, I spent about a month in each woreda, couple of weeks in each school, talking with teachers, observing the situation and practice of teachers related to SBCPD. These helped me to secure true and dependable data.

On top of the extended field study, three of my colleagues from Jimma University involved in reading the manuscript of one case and comment on my findings. As a result of their comments I made minor corrections and read the final draft which provided me with valuable feedback. Therefore, pilot study, triangulation, cross reference with colleagues and final discussion with key informants were means of better understanding of the issues.

### **Research Sites and Participants**

Oromiya is one of the nine regional states that constitute the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. It extends from 30 40'N to 10035'N and from 34005'E to 43011'E. Based on Population and Housing Census, the total population of the region is 27,158,471 in 2007 (CSA, 2007). The administrative structure of the Oromiya Regional State consists of the Regional Government, zones and woredas. Presently, the region is divided into eighteen zones, of which Jimma is one.

Jimma zone is located between 7<sup>0</sup> 15'N and 8<sup>0</sup>45'N and 35<sup>0</sup>30'E 37<sup>0</sup> 30' E. It is bounded by four Oromia Zones: Ilu-Ababora in the West, East Wellega in the North East, West Showa in the north and South West Showa in the east and SNNPR region bound it in the south.

Of the 17 woredas Jimma zone consists, Gumay woreda, Omonada woreda and Jimma town were selected on two premises. The first is the socio-economic conditions of these woredas: Omonada is one of Crop producing and cattle rearing woreds in Jimma zone and 55km far to the east of Jimma, capital of the zone. Gumay Woreda is one of the major coffee

producing woredas in Jimma zone and 72 km far to the west to Jimma. And Jimma town is selected because it is the centre for information access. The second reason springs from their access to the main center of information and supervision. Though generalization is not the intention of the study, the selected sites are hoped to give better insight into the condition under investigation in Jimma zone.

**Gumay woreda** is located 70 km from Jimma town to the west. Part of the Jimma zone, it is bordered on the south by Seka Chekorsa, on the southwest by Gera, on the northwest by Setema, on the north by the Didesa river which separates it from the Illubabore, on the northeast by Limmu kosa and on the east by Mana. The administrative center of this woreda is Toba. As to the information obtained from woreda education office there are 26 primary schools of which 11 are first cycle (1-4) and 12 second cycle (5-8).

Gumay woreda has 160 teachers with TTI and 70 diploma holders. Teacher student ratio for primary schools was approximately 62. According to the information from the woreda education office, modular approach school-based Continuous professional development started in 2000 E.C. teachers in all schools were completed course one and by this year, (December 2008 to January 2009), teacher from both selected schools were on course two, between sessions 13 to session 15.

**Omonada woreda** is found 55km east of Jimma town. It is bordered on the south by the Gojeb river which separates it from the Southern Nation Nationalities and peoples

Region (SNNPR), on the west by Dedo, on the northwest by Kersa, on the north by Tiro Afeta, on the northeast by Sokoru, and on the east by the Omo River which separates it from the SNNPR. Nada is the capital of the Omonada woreda.

According to the data obtained from woreda education office Omonada woreda have 26 first cycles (1-4) primary schools 3 second cycle (5-8) in separate compounds; 15 primary schools (1-6) and 29 primary schools (1-8) totally 73 primary schools.

Regarding teachers, there are 373 TTI and 191 diploma holders, totally 564 primary school teachers. Based on the above mentioned data the teacher student ratio for the first cycle was 93, in second cycle (5-8) was 75. Modular approach School based continuous professional development is started in April in 2000 E.C. and in both school teachers were on course one between sessions 3 to sessions 4 while the field work of this study, January to February 2009.

**Jimma town:** According to the data obtained from woreda education office, the town has 13 government and 15 none governmental primary schools. There were 150 male and 182 female totally 704 Primary school teachers. The Modular approach continuous professional development is started around October 2000 E.C. Teachers in both schools were on course two, between sessions 10 to 12 while the field work of this study, February to March 2009.

Teachers from the selected primary schools first cycle grade /1-4/ and second cycle grade /5-8/ were interviewed and some of them were participated in FGD. Teachers

included in the in depth interview based on the following criteria.

- At least two years service at the school
- Participation in school based/cluster based CPD training
- Volunteer to involve in the study

Teachers with two and above years of experience in the selected schools are assumed to have experience in the continuous professional development program. The summary of research participants are presented in table5 below.

**Table 1.** Summary of Participants' profile

Selected woredas	Selected primary schools	Number of participants									Total participants by woreda		
		Teachers			Directors			Woreda officers			M	F	T
		M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Gumay	Toba-idget	4	3	7	1		1	1		1	1	6	17
	Efo Yachi	4	3	7	1		1						
Omo nada	Asendabo	3	4	7		1	1	1		1	1	7	17
	Nada	5	2	7	1		1				0		
Jimma town	Sato Yido	2	4	6		1	1	1		1	7	9	16
	Mandara	3	4	7	1		1						
		21	20	41	4	2	6	3		3	28	22	50

**Ethical Consideration:** I obtained letter of entry into study sites from Institute of Educational Research, Addis Ababa University to Jimma zone education department, from the zone Education Department, to the three woredas and then from these woreda education offices to all schools included in the study. After the entry to study site was secured, I have got teachers' approval to participate in the research after introduction of the purpose of the study and guarantee to remain anonymous. Overall the data generated from the interviewees and discussants do not reveal the identity of the individual participants.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The intention of this study was to understand primary school teachers' perception and practice of SBPCPD from their perspectives and to find out its implication for the betterments of students' learning. The guiding questions of this study were, (1) How do teachers generally define school-based continuous professional development? (2) How do teachers perceive the school-based continuous professional development in terms of relevance and enhancing learning? and (3) What are the major obstructions of school-based continuous professional development?

The data generated from the participants using the tools indicated above have been organized into meaningful and manageable units. Finally, I recombined the evidences to address the initial propositions of the both theoretical and rival explanations.

**Major and Sub-themes of the Teachers' Perceptions of SBCPD**

The response to the in-depth interview, FGD and the observation note were examined and the central themes mentioned by the informants were identified and categorized into the

following five major themes that represent the participants' perception and experience. These are: teachers' meaning of SBCPD, teachers' perception of the relevance of SBCPD, perception of its outcome in students learning enhancement and obstructions to SBCPD. The major themes are further analyzed into sub-themes and those sub-themes are further analyzed into issues or views.

In Table 1 below, five major themes emerged from the data are analyzed in sub-themes and were analyzed and labeled same (S) if they are described similarly in all cases or labeled different (D) if they are described differently in the following matrix.

**Table 2.** A Cross case display of major and sub-themes of the Study

Major themes	Sub-themes	Cases (C)		
		1	2	3
Teachers' meaning of SBCPD	Skill training	S	D	S
	Means for professional growth	S	S	S
2.1 Teachers' perception of SBCPD relevance	Promote professional ethics	S	S	D
	Improve collaborative work in school	S	S	S
2.2 Teachers' perception of SBCPD management	Develop problem solving skills	S	D	S
	Top-down	S	S	S
2.3 Enhancing students' learning	Doubtful and difficult	S	S	D
	Improve teacher -student relationship	S	S	S
Obstructions to SBCPD	Support- related obstructions	S	S	D
	Student- related obstructions	S	S	D

**Key:** Case1 (C<sub>1</sub>) = Gumay woreda; Case2 (C<sub>2</sub>) = Omonada woreda ; Case3 (C<sub>3</sub>) = Jimma town

S = views/issues were described similarly; D = Views/issues were described differently

**Participants' Meaning of School-based CPD**

The meaning participants attached to SBCPD were analysed and presented under the two sub themes in table 2.

**Table 3.** Teachers' Meaning of SBCPD

Sub-themes	Issues	Informants (I)
Skill training in school	Group discussion, action research and peer c	C <sub>1</sub> I ( All ) & FGD
		C <sub>2</sub> I (2,4,7,8,10,13,14) FGD
		C <sub>3</sub> I (All) & FGD
Criteria for personal and professional growth	Career development and re-license	C <sub>1</sub> I (All ) & FGD
		C <sub>2</sub> I (All) & FGD
		C <sub>3</sub> I (All) & FGD

### Cross-case Comparison of SBCPD Meaning

The case studies in the three woredas suggest similar patterns of teachers' meaning of school-based continuous professional development. In the analysis below, I combined the interview and FGD results across the three cases, and discussed two important points that emerged from the data: Skill training, prerequisite for teacher licensing and career development.

**Skill training:** informants described SBCPD in terms of experience and practice sharing among group members. The group organization varies among the cases for instance in Gumay and Jimma town, the groups consists 4 to 5 teachers, while in Omonada the group consists 7 to 8 teachers. Unlike Omonada woreda, group organization in the other two cases, the school shift system includes classes from first cycle (1-4) and from second cycle (5-8) thus the CPD group is mixed of teachers from both cycles. It was described as good opportunity to share ideas and experience more over created options to diversity of practice.

**Means to Career Development and re-license:** In all cases SBCPD was described as a means of career development and re-licensure. In few cases it also described as the reasons for undertaking the CPD

courses. The visible difference was not on the definition but on the importance of attaching CPD with re-licensure and career development. In one case, few informants strongly argued that attaching career development and re-license with CPD will end up in false performances and miming rather than showing the reality. The fear of these informants was teachers will be forced to do what they actually can't and don't do; consequently they will copy things from what has been tried for the sake of career development and licensure.

According of the participants of this study, SBCPD is defined in terms problem solving skills and as a means of obtaining re-license and compete for career development. The former definition implies that participants define SBCPD in relation of their immediate context and school environment which gives much sense to their immediate problem of their practical world than theoretical definition.

However the second definition, CPD as a means to re-license and career development, not only defined in a narrow sense but also shows misunderstanding of

the concept of CPD. It is narrowly defined because as stated in review of literature CPD strategy has three distinct phases: induction, which is for newly deployed teachers, transitional CPD, for teachers who are already in the profession, and the proper CPD, which is the life long learning through the life of one's profession. Therefore, the definition implies only the transitional CPD that is planned for two years (MoE, 2005).

The concept was misunderstood because it shows that CPD as a means to teacher re-license and career development that implies both career development and re-licensure

perceived as ends by them selves, while the ultimate goal of CPD, the desired end, is students learning improvement. On top of that, concept of lifelong learning with regard to the expected CPD impact on students' learning achievement through teachers' classroom practices were not mentioned and/or undermined.

**Teachers' Perceptions Regarding the Relevance of SBCPD**

Under this sub section, participants' perceptions of the relevance of SBCPD is analysed into three topics: promoting professional ethics, improving collaboration and develop problem solving skills.

**Table 4.** Relevance of SBCPD in the Eyes of Teachers

Sub-themes	views	Informants (I)
Promoting professional ethics	Correcting misbehaviour at school	C <sub>1</sub> I (1,3,6,7,9,11,12,14) & FGD C <sub>2</sub> I (1,3,4,6,7,8,10,12,13) & FGD C <sub>3</sub> I (2,5,7,8,9,11,12.)
Improving collaboration/collegiality	Working together	C <sub>1</sub> I (All) & FGD C <sub>2</sub> I (All) & FGD C <sub>3</sub> I (All) & FGD
Develop problem solving skills	Action research skill	C <sub>1</sub> I (1,2,4,8,10,13,) & FGD C <sub>2</sub> I (2,3,5,8,9,) & FGD C <sub>3</sub> I (1,2,3,6,7,9,12) & FGD

**Professional ethics:** issues of professional ethics described by participants in the same pattern. In Gumay and Omonada woredas, for instance, the issue of ethics: absenteeism, mistreating students, chewing chat and drinking alcohol, in the way it harm personality and profession, were practiced by few teachers. After these

issues have been discussed openly on CPD program, and teachers plan to conduct action research on such behaviours, there is remarkable change. These changes might be due to the evaluation and its attachment to license and career development, according to many respondents. Unlike these two woredas, in Jimma town, it was expressed in a nutshell, though they share similar concern with the above woredas

**Strengthening collaboration:** participants across the three cases expressed their views on the relevance of SBCPD in terms of strengthening team spirit in the school in almost similar ways. Most of the activities designed in the module and requirements like action research, discussion on the module itself forces them to work together. It strengthen sharing ideas and listening to others and sometimes compromising own idea are important element of SBCPD was expressed in similar manner.

**Problem solving skills:** improvement in problem solving skills is described as one of the benefits of school based continuous professional development expressed in almost similar ways across the three cases. The problems were different depending on the contexts of schools, for instance problems in Gumay woreda was dropout and girls participation, in Omonada and in Jimma however students disciplinary problems. Participants of all woredas felt that contextual problem solving skills were improved.

MoE (2004, 2005) prioritizes different educational issues as national priority, like professional ethics, continuous assessment and gender issues and the like. According to the data obtained from participants of this study, SBCPD is relevant to the improvement of professional ethics, improving students discipline problem, strengthening collaboration at school and developing problem solving skills. It is possible to see their perception was inline with the set objectives of national CPD program that is encouraging and a base for school improvement.

On the other hand this also asserts that the attention given to teachers' classroom practice and transferring the skill learned from CPD into the classroom was again undermined. This implies that more attention is given to factors outside classroom practice.

### Students' Learning Improvement

Impact of SBCPD on students learning improvement according to informants of all cases been analyzed to improving students-teacher relation.

**Table 5.** Students learning improvement

Sub-themes	View	Participants(P)
Teacher-students relationship	smooth communication between teacher and students	C <sub>1</sub> I (All) &FGD C <sub>2</sub> I (All) &FGD C <sub>3</sub> I (All) &FGD

As it is seen in table 4 students learning enhancement is described in only through improving student-teacher relationship that was similar in all cases.

In all cases, students learning improvement as a result of SBCPD was described secondary to other outside classroom activities. Informants reported that much of their time is used for activities outside classrooms, for instance action research, group discussion and report writing. Transferring what is practiced in CPD in group discussion or experience gained from others to the classroom is not emphasized. On the other hand there were informants who argued that CPD shares the time of classroom teaching and make them busy and unplanned to the classroom as the result affect the quality of classroom practice.

As it is repeatedly stated in review of literature, the ultimate goal of CPD is students' learning enhancement. The success or failure of CPD must be seen in terms of outcome: students' learning improvement which depends directly on teacher's classroom practice. However the reality in the schools, according to informants more focus was given to activities outside classroom.

**Obstructions of SBCPD**

Under this sub-section obstructions to school based continuous professional development described by participants in each case are presented. These were: support-related barriers and student-related barriers.

**Table 6.** Obstructions of SBCPD

Sub-themes	Issues	Informants(I)
Support related barriers	Supervision and training	C <sub>1</sub> I (All) & FGD C <sub>2</sub> I (all) & FGD C <sub>3</sub> I (3,5,11) & FGD
	Material and financial related obstruction	C <sub>1</sub> I (All) & FGD C <sub>2</sub> I (All) & FGD C <sub>3</sub> I (All) & FGD
Students related barriers	Students social and behavioral	C <sub>1</sub> I (All) & FGD C <sub>2</sub> I (All) & FGD C <sub>3</sub> I ( 1,5,9,11) & FGD

As it is seen in Table 5, lack of supervision and training, lack of material and financial support, and students' related obstructions were the main obstacles to SBCPD that were described in all woredas though differently.

**Lack of supervision:** teachers and principals in two woredas, Gumay and Omonada, believed that lack of supervision is main hindrances for effective CPD at their school. They believed that the effectiveness of their effort with regard to

CPD is highly depends on the support: close supervision in the process of CPD activities like action research and report of activities of CPD at school. The participants underscored that with out close supervision and support they don't have confidence in what they were doing.

**Training of facilitators:** Teachers and principals in all participating woredas believed that training facilitators will fill the gap between what is expected of teachers with regard to CPD and their understanding of CPD. Though there is difference between Jimma town and others, because of the help provided by Jimma teachers College, all considered training of facilitators as crucially important. They felt that without training facilitators who can assist the program at school level, it is difficult to expect SBCPD will bring the desired effect. Most importantly teachers questioned the quality of their activities that they think supervision and training would improve it.

**Material and financial support:** Supplementary reading materials, stationery and clerical supports were the main impediments to effective CPD at school across all cases.

**Students' related barriers:** participating teachers and principals of selected school in Gumay and Omonada woreda felt that students' related obstruction: absenteeism and dropout are some of the barrier to effective CPD. The time spent for getting these students back to school and arranging make up classes to these students is additional burden on teachers. It shares the time that they would use for things that will enhance quality teaching in the school.

## DISCUSSION

### Teachers' Perceptions and Educational Effectiveness

There has been convergence of available research data pertaining to the question of what factors contribute to teacher effectiveness over decade. Some of the factors fall under the heading of teacher characteristics: the way they practice their profession (Anderson, 2004). The right ground for teachers' professional practice is classroom which is under the control of teachers' belief. In line with this idea, literature on education quality indicates a strong link between teacher professional development and quality-specially in the areas of teachers' belief and practices, students' learning and on the implementation of educational reforms (UNESCO, 2006:71).

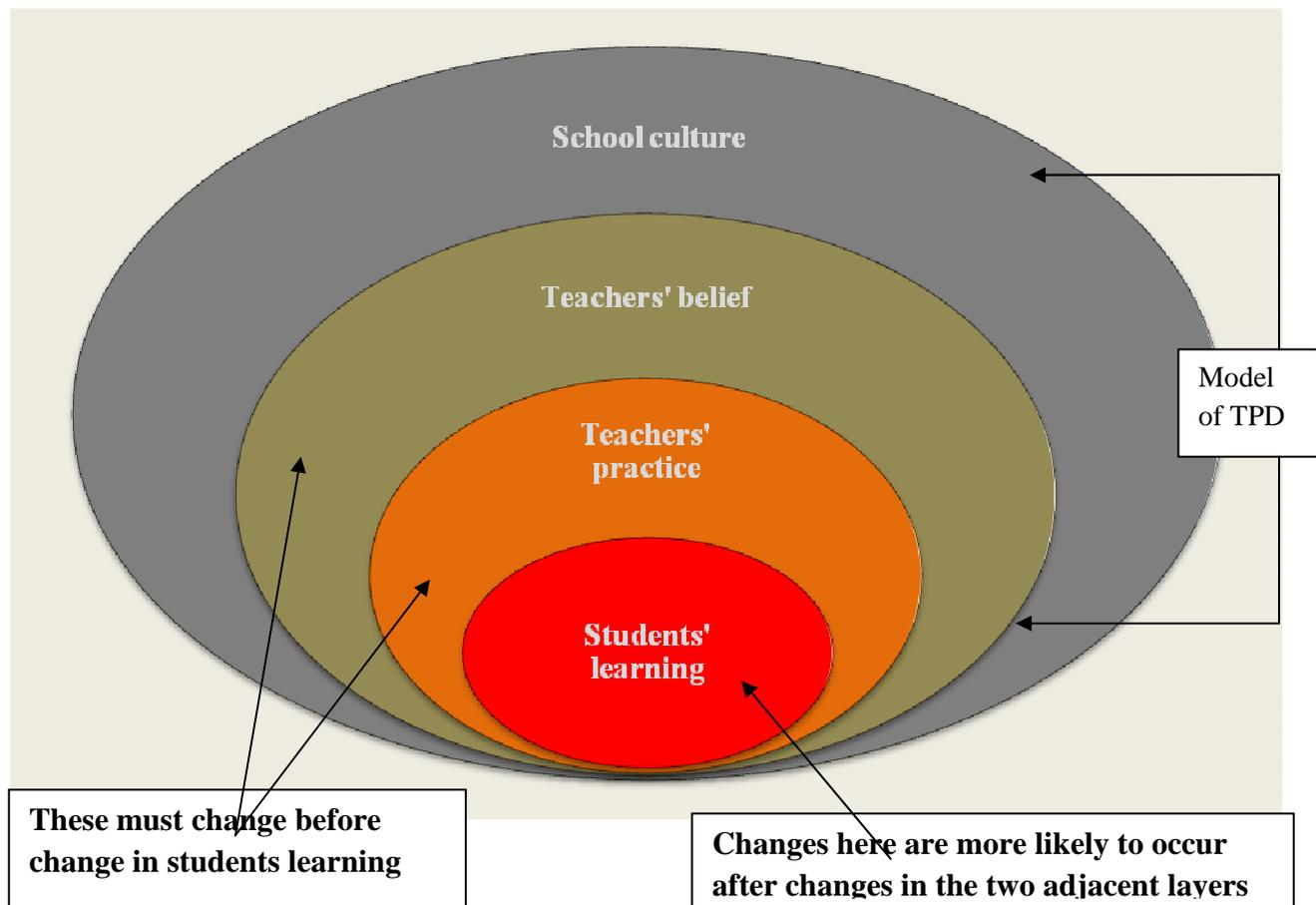
According to Brophy and Good (1974) in McKenzie & Turbill (1999) a better understanding of teachers' belief system or conceptual base will significantly contribute to enhancing educational effectiveness. Similarly, Hargreaves & Fullan (1991) emphasis teachers thought process as the base for what teachers do in practice. It is what teachers think, what teachers believe and what teachers' do-at the level of the classroom that ultimately shapes the kind of learning.

This implies teachers' beliefs and understandings about learning and teaching, their beliefs about the nature and purpose of the curriculum, their current classroom practices, and teachers' and/or administrators' perceptions of changes in the school culture all have potential to contribute to enhance learning. Thus, to enhance learning as a result of change in school culture needs time and is a process not one time activities. According to Fullan

(1990; 1991) and Heckenberg (1994) staff development is a process not an event of one time and states that it will take time to show up in students learning. The process necessitates that changes in student learning are preceded by changes in

teachers' beliefs, understandings, and practices (Fullan, 1990; Guskey, 1986; Turbill, 1994). This implies that much has to be done on awareness raising to improve classroom practice and on how to transform good practice from CPD activities to classroom.

**Figure 1.** below attempts to show the relationships between and among the many factors listed: school culture, teachers' belief and teachers practice and students learning.



*Figure 1 Schematic representation of theoretical model adapted from Mckenzie and Turbill (1999)*

This model assumes that student learning, teacher learning, and classroom practice are not only interdependent, but they are all embedded in the school. It further argues that student learning is at the core of the school culture, and is shaped by the complex mix of, and interactions between a series of events and processes that occur within and between all the layers of the school culture depicted in Figure 1. Part of this mix is the teacher development program that schools decide to adopt.

Essentially, the model assumes, if student learning (the inner layer in Figure 1) is to be positively influenced then teaching practices must first change. Teaching practices (the next layer in Figure 1) are in turn shaped and framed by teachers' beliefs especially their beliefs about learning, teaching, and the nature and purpose of whatever they are trying to teach thus before classroom practices can change, teachers must first be given the opportunity to examine and modify their belief systems (the next layer in Figure 1). Finally the school culture not only determines the nature of the teachers' development program which the school decides to adopt, it will also influence and be influenced by the inner layers which are imbedded with in it.

This theory assumes that if this combination is appropriate then not only will the learning of both teachers and students be enhanced but will also spread across, and influence the culture of the whole school setting (Turbill, 1994; Duffy, 1990). Conversely, the theory would predict that if the mix is inappropriate, then not only will learning be 'inhibited', but that these inhibitory influences will spill over to the whole school learning culture (Turbill, 1994).

In the recent past, theorists have begun to recognize the importance of what goes on in the mind of an individual teacher. Studies have explored the effects of teacher beliefs, the metaphors a teacher uses to describe his or her work, and the values a teacher assigns to a particular practice or concept. They have found that these thought processes have a profound influence on education. It is the minds of those teachers that must be explored. It is the actions of those teachers that make education what it is today (McKenzie and Turbill, 1999).

## CONCLUSIONS

This study was intended to understand participants' perceptions of school-based continuous professional development. The findings have revealed that the general perception of SBCPD is the same across the cases. The main findings of the study were teachers' meaning; teachers' perception in terms of relevance, management, students' learning enhancement, and obstruction to SBCPD. Based on the above major themes the following concluding points are made.

As per the literature there seem misunderstanding of the concepts and scope of SBCPD. Participants define SBCPD in terms of skill training among colleagues and as a means of career development and teacher re-license. However, the literature and policy underlined the issues of students' learning improvement through teachers' life long professional learning and creating professional learning community at school.

Throughout the study, it was possible to identify a number of external and internal barriers to SBCPD that directly or indirectly influence teachers' perceptions about SBCPD and their practices. External factors are those outside schools that have

direct influence on teacher perceptions while internal factors are those inside to school including teachers' readiness.

Figure 2 Summary of obstructions, from interview and FGD data

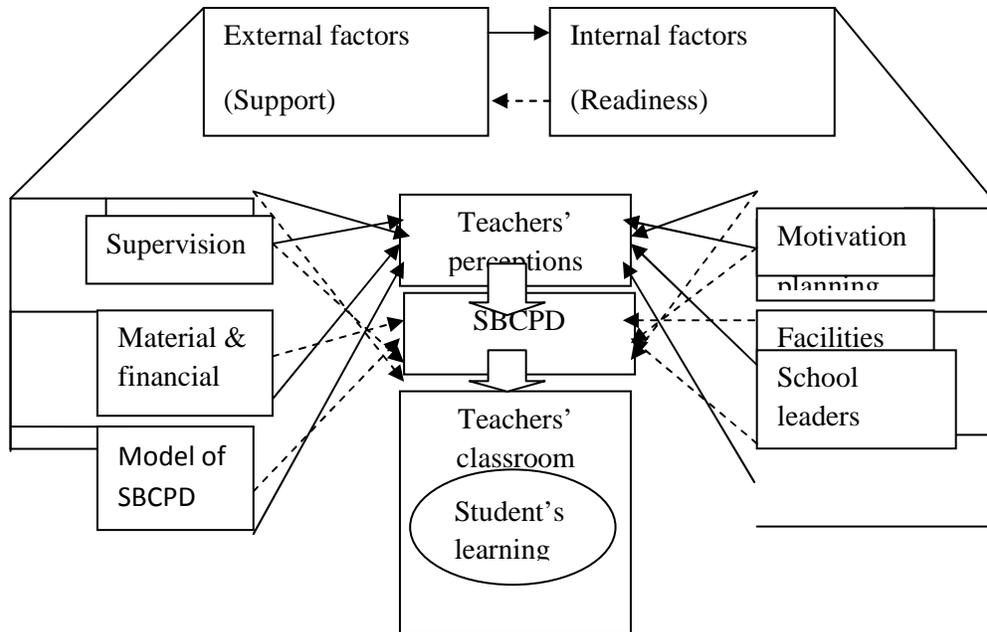


Figure 1 summarizes the salient factors that internally and externally militates teachers' perceptions and practices with regard to SBCPD. In the above figure, the unbroken arrows represent the direct influences while the broken arrows represent indirect influence on teacher's perception positively or otherwise. The double arrows are to show strong link between teacher's perception and SBCPD; and the expected impact of SBCPD on teacher's classroom practices that will result in student's

learning improvement. Therefore, to improve student's learning which is at the heart of classroom practice, external and internal factors need to be altered in some way.

SBCPD activities are less relevant to influence teachers' classroom practice due to the lack of subject specificity skills training. That is, they indirectly influence the ultimate objectives of SBCPD. They however may enhance students' learning through improving teachers' professional

ethics. This implies arguably indirect influence to the ultimate objectives of SBCPD.

With regard to the relevance of SBCPD practice in schools, however strengthen collegiality and collaboration, can enhance problem solving skills through action research and improve teacher-student relationship.

### **The Need in Clarifying Concept and Purpose of SBCPD**

Efforts to improve students learning achievement through teachers' Continuous Professional Development is becoming necessary and become part of the reform process. However, this can be effective, if teachers fully understand the concept of the SBCPD and make their own efforts with regard to classroom practice and student learning. As it is expressed in the interview and FGD in some cases there was misunderstanding of the general concept of SBCPD, its scope and nature. As stated in the literature, it is what teachers believe and what they do at classroom level that has direct influence on students learning improvement. This can be improved through:

- Disseminating the concept, experiences and good practices related to classroom practice to schools through pieces of writings.
- Creating forum of primary school teachers experience sharing in media.

### **The Need to Assist SBCPD**

To alter the current teachers' classroom performance with SBCPD, proper support

needs to be offered. Support is necessary during the early stage of school-based continuous professional development; that may pave way to the long term plan: supervision, training, material and financial provision.

Supervision can be provided by strengthening cluster centers (CRC) s with material and training. Training supervisors and facilitators from schools will alleviate the problem in this regard.

Integrated planning help not only improve budget problem but also improve planning of SBCPD at institutional and personal level. It enforces the real integration SBCPD with schools and teachers' daily activities, teaching and learning.

### **The Need to Maintain Proper Motivations**

By proper motivation, I mean the one that balance between extrinsic motivations (emerging from outside the person) and intrinsic motivation (emerging from within). Teachers have to be motivated to engage fully in continuing professional and personal development in the school. The process of rewarding should help to distinguish between those who perform the role well, and those who perform the role with excellence.

On the bases of skills and improved performances brought into the classroom that will, obviously is, resulted in students learning improvement. I believe the motivation in line with classroom performance on top of in school performance will result in improved teaching and learning.

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