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Original Article

## Continuous Professional Development and Teachers Improved Pedagogical Skills in Secondary Schools in Gulu City

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**Keywords:**

Continuous  
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Teacher's pedagogical skill is a pre-requisite for effective teaching in secondary schools worldwide. Continuous Professional Development (CPD) has been considered to be one of the best educational practices in building capacity of teachers to enable them implement the curriculum more effectively. CPD ensures that all school staff are proficient in teaching learning and are capable of supporting all learners in the school. Dedicating time to CPD is vital to ensure every staff member learns and grows within their role. The current study assessed whether Continuous Professional Development improved teachers' Pedagogical skills in teaching. In a mixed method study, Raw data was gathered using surveys and interviews. Data was examined using SPSS version 18.0. Findings showed that 90% of the teachers agreed that Continuous Professional Development enhanced teacher's pedagogical skills in secondary schools. The study concludes that continuous professional development is a vehicle for administrators' and teachers' improvement; it helps teachers enhance and acquire new ideas and skills and build confidence and competencies in teaching in secondary schools. It was recommended that CPD should be a routine so that all secondary school teachers' capacity is developed to make them more effective in handling students. School administrators should consider CPD in their programming in terms of budgeting, allocation of study leave, facilities, and incentives.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Teaching is a lifelong learning process. The world is always changing, and so is the learning process, curriculum, and educational technology. Teachers need to keep up with these changes since teaching is a lifelong process (Cox, 2019, p.1). A teacher who is always willing to go the extra mile to learn will be effective and successful (Cox, 2019, p. 1). According to Aslan (2012; p. 2), CPD builds the capacity of the school administrators especially as they interact with colleagues during the training and this is useful for the school since it is a collection of people with varied responsibilities but all working to achieve the same goal of teaching and learning (Anslan, 2012)

**Study Objectives**

- To assess whether Continuous Professional Development improve pedagogical skills

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

Continuous professional development practices deliver a tailored teacher supervision focusing on an individual teacher in his work environment while appreciating the role of support supervision from colleagues within a particular teachers works station cognisant of its uniqueness and how this teacher can benefit from colleagues and students (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2005; Schaverien & Cosgrove, 1997; Wasik, 1998). Where as the significance of CPD to teacher effectiveness has been abundantly dramatized (Brown & DeMonte, 2013). Little is known about the effectiveness of continuous professional development on teachers improved pedagogical skills. Yet, their pedagogical skills do not depend on the programme alone but also on the administrators and how well they supervise the given programme.

According to Parsons and Stephenson (2005), administrators' deliberation become a process of animated action that empowers teachers to

improve their teaching learning techniques and how they relate professionally with colleagues and students as they go about with their day –to –day routine in school. (p. 97). To Galaczi et al. (2020) continuous professional development can take various forms with specific focus on building capacity of the teacher through out his career cognisant of the specific needs of each teacher. CPA is therefore a life-long process for teachers, which must be programmed by administrators at all levels of the education system (Galaczi et al., 2020).

Today due to CPD, teachers view about the teaching learning process is dynamic (Akerlind, 2003) because Continuous professional development (CPD) is a capacity building approach that has been considered to enhances teachers professionalism by tapping on their capacities and addressing their weaknesses. Teachers should therefore embrace CPD as one way of re-tooling so that they are more effective in the teaching-learning process.

Continuous professional development has recently focused on the constructivist approach, which consider teachers as enthusiastically contributing in their own learning process, the teacher is therefore considered to be an active learner in the entire learning process and not a passive recipient thereby deflating the banking concept of education and more in support of liberation (Kayapinar, 2018, p. 1). Most teachers don't have the capacity for academic self-development, therefore self-reflection can provide avenue for them to improve as individual teachers. Where as literature is abundant on CPD and its relevance to teacher's acquisition of pedagogical skills, little is known about teachers in in-service programmes and how they manoeuvre with CPD.

Studies have shown that CPD aims fundamentally at improving the teaching learning methods and the teachers capacity to tailor learning to the specific needs of the learners while aware of how

to effectively manage the classroom (Wanzare & DaCosta, 2000), while others conceptualize CPD as an in-service teacher training which can be formal or informal aimed at improving teaching learning as well as address key issues of the ever evolving teaching profession (Fullan, 1995). Similarly (Musaaazi Zepeda, 2010; Russell, 2012; Mulkeen, 2010) underscore the significant function of continuous professional development plays today especially in the face of changing curriculums and new pedagogical skills and practices. Nevertheless, teacher continuous professional developments are not regularly and adequately done in secondary schools. The study intends to find out the effects of continuous professional development on teacher pedagogical skills in secondary schools in Gulu city.

The process of teacher improvement is very critical in improving the classroom practices of teachers. In the contemporary world, changes are always taking place; researchers are carrying out various studies and disseminating their study findings. These new bodies of knowledge require teachers to keep updating their knowledge to match contemporary world challenges. To this end, different methods, and tools, including continuous professional development, must be used to improve teachers' pedagogical skills in government-aided secondary schools in Gulu City.

Given the nature of teaching learning today, CPD has been considered widely as key in teacher education because it is the most practical way in which teachers capacity are developed to ensure expertise in their varied academic field rendering it the best practice of capacity building in education (MOE&S, 2017). CPD also fosters collaboration among teachers from different schools and a discipline, which is vital for educational practice because it brings teachers together enabling them share experience, expertise, and build a community of practice there by facilitating knowledge sharing and improves the quality of education

Based on available literature, it is abundantly clear that CPD is a pre-requisite for good pedagogical

practice. However, little is known about the extent to which such association has been incorporated into school programs in Uganda. It is also important to note that most studies about CPD and Pedagogical skills are foreign and therefore the findings may be alien to our secondary school settings. Similarly most studies on Continuous professional development are based on literature review and quite often qualitative. The current study may yield unique findings since it used mixed methods.

In Uganda, many teachers participate in CPD courses organised internally by schools, Non-governmental Organisations, and Government organisations such as the Ministry of Education and Sports. Despite all these, no change has been observed in teachers teaching learning practices and professionalism, reports of poor scheming, lesson plan and absenteeism continue to dominate research findings about secondary school teachers (MOE&S, 2017). The ministry of education and sports emphasizes that CPD must continuously analyse learning needs of the teachers cognizant of the basic minimum professional standards (MEOS, 2001). CPD should be based on clarity of procedures of defining learning needs and associating it with training needs. Organised CPD should attempt to meet the needs holistically at all.

Continuous professional development is a continuous learning process that makes teachers efficient in the instruction activity in secondary schools. The literature cited above found no serious effect of continuous professional development on improved teachers' pedagogical skills. In addition, teachers' quality classroom practices do not have a strong connection to how teachers succeed professionally through continuous professional development in secondary schools. This implies that continuous professional development is essential in improving teachers' classroom practices. Against the backdrop of the literature citations made above, the researcher intends to investigate the impact of Continuous Professional Development in improving teachers' skills and competencies in

classroom practices in secondary schools in Gulu City.

### Theory

While there are many theories that support the idea of continuous professional development, transformative leadership theory will be the framework that this study uses. The comprehensive method of improving one's own abilities and competency over the course of a professional's career is called continuous professional development, or CPD. The idea of evolving leadership was first presented by Burns (1978) in his descriptive study on political leaders. This idea was later applied to organizational psychology. The philosophy of transformational leadership advocates for a style of leadership that places a strong emphasis on inspiring staff members (teachers), articulating a vision, and supporting them in realizing it. Basic abilities of a transformational leader include motivating staff members (teachers), encouraging them, and supporting them. Transformational leaders, according to Bass, Avolio, and Atwater (1996), possess four attributes: they are idealistic, charismatic, inspirational, and intellectually stimulating. Transformational leaders has four attributes, according to Bass, Avolio, and Atwater (1996): they are idealized, charismatic, inspirational, and intellectually stimulating.

A transformational leader changes people and social systems. In its perfect state, it transforms followers into leaders by bringing about significant and constructive change in them. A process known as "leaders and followers helping each other to advance to a higher level of morale and motivation" is what Burns (1978) defined as transformative leadership. Since CPD has been shown to be a source of motivation for teachers in secondary schools, it is the responsibility of the school administration to implement a CPD program in order to enhance teachers' pedagogical skills. People's lives and organizations undergo profound change as a result of the transformative method. Bass (1985) provided an explanation of the metrics for measuring transformational leadership and its effects on the motivation and

performance of followers, or teachers. The first indicator of a leader's transformative potential is how much of an impact they have on their followers, or teachers.

The teachers of such a school leader feel trust, admiration, loyalty, and respect for the leader and, because of the qualities of the transformational leader, are willing to work harder than originally expected.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

The study used a descriptive research design, in which data was collected from different elements of the study population at same point in time (Creswell 2012). According to Cohen (2014), the descriptive research design provides collection of huge data from different elements using different data collection techniques and as such it facilitates triangulation. it considers issues such as rapid data collection and the ability to understand populations from different categories.

### Study Population

The study population consisted of all the secondary schools in Gulu City. The study targeted all members of school administration and teachers because they are the target participants for CPD.

### Sample Size Determination/techniques

Sample size was determined using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sampling size determination table. The total sample of 378 was determined representing the different categories of participants. The study employed both probability (Stratified, Systematic) and non-probability (Purposive) sampling techniques in selecting samples.

### Data Collection Instruments

Data was collected using a self-administered close-ended questionnaire scored on a five point likert scale constructed by the researcher guided by the Basic requirement and minimum standard monitoring tool (MOES, 2001), we asked

questions such as “have you ever attended CPD training?, Are the administrators of your school involved in CPD?, Is CPD budgeted for in your school? With likerted responses. For qualitative data was collected using semi-structured interview guide with questions on CPD and pedagogical skill acquisition.

**Data Analysis**

Descriptive statistics was calculated and results presented in tables in frequency and percents for quantitative data while for Qualitative data we used thematic analysis in which data was coded at two levels, at the initial level were codes were generated, this was followed by focused coding in which categories were generated and later themes generated which were then chosen for presentation according to themes.

**Ethical Consideration**

Gulu university research and ethics committee approved the study. Informed consent forms were developed and all participants signed on the consent form before participating, the participants

were also informed of their will to retreat from the study anytime they wished. Privacy and confidentiality were well observed in that there was no provision for participant name or identification code.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

**Continuous Professional Development Improve Pedagogical Skills**

The majority of teachers, or 90% of them, agreed that continuous professional development is a teacher training strategy that attempts to improve instructors' teaching approaches based on their replies, which are shown in Table 1. After that, 45.2% of the educators said it's critical to comprehend the methods used by educators to modify their education. Additionally, 44.5% of the instructors concurred that professional development is a lifelong activity that enhances teachers' ability to teach. Professional development can take many different forms. Therefore, on-going professional development aids in the enhancement of teachers' pedagogical abilities at Gulu City's secondary schools.

**Table 1: Analysis of continuous professional development of teachers to improve teachers' pedagogical skills in secondary schools in Gulu City**

	SA (%)	A (%)	NS (%)	DA (%)	SDA (%)
Understanding how teachers go about changing their pedagogy is important.	29.0	45.2	9.7	12.9	3.2
Continuous Professional development takes different forms and is a career-long process that improves teacher teaching skills.	42.6	44.5	12.9	0.0	0.0
Continuous Professional development is a teacher training approach that aims at improving teachers’ teaching methods.	29.0	48.4	22.6	0.0	0.0
Continuous professional development developing teachers' pedagogical skills is a continuous learning process that makes teachers effective in the teaching process	41.9	32.3	22.6	3.2	0.0
Continuous Professional development continuously helps teachers acquire new pedagogical skills and knowledge to improve teachers' skills.	38.7	29.0	16.1	3.2	12.9
AVG	35.7	42.6	16.9	4.0	0.8

**Source:** Primary data, 2023

The teachers’ assessment was further confirmed by the data collected from the Administrators on the effects of continuous professional development on teachers’ pedagogical skills. During the interviews, 87% of DoS, D/Htrs and

Htrs emphasised that through continuous professional development programmes, teachers acquire new pedagogical skills and ideas in teaching, improve quality teaching and learning Htr2 reported that:

*Learning continuous professional development helps teachers acquire the necessary skills/strategies for teaching; they improve teachers' teaching methods and help teachers learn new activities for learners. Continuous professional development does not cover the curriculum and essential pedagogical issues.*

Another D/Htr 7 was reported thus.

*Continuous professional development makes teachers discover their talents in teaching, builds more interest in teachers to remain current in teaching and builds more confidence in teachers.*

Lastly, DoS 10 also observed that,

*Continuous professional development makes teachers become creative in teaching and makes teachers remain relevant in the contemporary world as they become more confident in teaching. Continuous professional development programmes are not accessible to all teachers and are not well integrated into teachers' professional learning goals and careers.*

The results of the data analysis showed that CPD greatly enhances the pedagogical abilities of secondary schools in Gulu City. Instructors' agreement that on-going professional development is a teacher training strategy that attempts to enhance instructors' teaching techniques serves as proof of this. 87% of the school administrators (DoS, D/Htrs, and Htrs) agreed with the findings, stating that instructors gain new teaching concepts through on-going professional development, which raises the standard of instruction and learning. These results support Hyatt's (2017) assertion that an essential component of teacher education is continual professional development, or CDP.

Practical experience and up-to-date educational abilities. The pedagogical approaches to learning used by the younger generations diverge from those of the older generations. Adaptability, self-assurance, communication, teamwork, imagination, leadership, and organization are a few of the abilities that modern educators must possess. Boyer et al. (2004) and Goldsmith and

Roberts (2011) discovered a comparable outcome with Nigerian secondary school teachers in separate but related studies. More precisely, they discovered that administrators can be involved in school reform initiatives that support teachers' development through on-going professional development. According to a different Fullan (2008) study, teacher professional development must be on-going in order to implement educational reforms.

A total of 44.5% of the educators concurred that professional development comes in various forms and is an on-going activity that enhances educators' ability to teach. According to school leaders, on-going professional development

increases instructors' confidence in one way, helps them find their teaching talents, and increases their desire to stay current in the field; The results were corroborated by Srinivasacharlu (2019), who stated that continuing professional development (CPD) repeatedly equips teacher educators to stay current on emerging trends. It provides teacher educators with current information and the newest advancements in the field of education, reorienting them. Through CPD, teachers become more aware of their teaching strengths and develop a greater desire to stay up to date with teaching practices. If organized more regularly, continuous professional development might occasionally turn into one of the issues that prevent teachers from finishing the curriculum. The importance of on-going professional development initiatives including introduction, coaching, and training workshops was emphasized by 87% of DoS, D/Htrs, and Htrs.

It helps teachers stay current with their pedagogical abilities and preserve their professional knowledge. The pedagogical approaches to learning used by the younger generations diverge from those of the older generations. Adaptability, self-assurance, communication, teamwork, imagination, leadership, and organization are a few of the abilities that modern educators must possess. Boyer et al. (2004) and Goldsmith and Roberts (2011) discovered a comparable outcome with

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A total of 44.5% of the educators concurred that professional development comes in various forms and is an on-going activity that enhances educators' ability to teach. According to school administrators, continuous professional development (CPD) helps teachers identify their areas of strength, increases their desire to stay up to date on teaching techniques, and boosts their confidence. Srinivasacharlu (2019) corroborated these findings by stating that CPD repeatedly gets teacher educators ready to stay up to date on the most recent advancements. It provides teacher educators with current information and the newest advancements in the field of education, reorienting them. Through CPD, teachers become more aware of their teaching strengths and develop a greater desire to stay up to date with teaching practices. Occasionally, on-going professional development turns into one of the elements that determines teachers level of curriculum implementation

87% of DoS, D/Htrs and Htrs emphasised that continuous professional development programmes such as induction, coaching, and training workshops, are a critical pre-requisite for

high-quality instruction in Ugandan secondary schools. This is consistent with the findings of Wanzare and Da Costa (2000) in Mulunda (2018), who stated that teacher professional development is a way of teacher preparation that strives to enhance instructors' techniques of instruction, their capacity to tailor instruction to the requirements of each student, and their mastery of classroom management. This is due to the fact that it eventually results in higher-quality education in Uganda. In general, schools lack institutionalized continuous professional development systems,

even though teachers' on-going professional development significantly improves the caliber of instructional practices. Plans for on-going professional development to fill in knowledge gaps or improve proficiency

The procedures in place for administrators' and educators' on-going professional development, however, fall short of meeting the needs of modern educators. However, the curriculum and crucial pedagogical topics are not covered by continual professional development.

According to a survey completed by 76% of school administrators, Gulu City's secondary schools have inadequate policies for ongoing professional development. The study's findings are consistent with those of Ogunyinka et al. (2014), who found that inadequate policy implementation hinders the provision of high-quality teacher education. The drastically low performance of secondary school instructors is caused by the subpar delivery.

Studies show that programs that are tailored to meet particular needs of schools are more successful, particularly those that include peer review and demonstration. They enable collaborations between the school's personnel and teachers. The objectives of the school, their duties, and on-going professional development should be closely related. This is also a means of guaranteeing that incentives for further training will come from larger group objectives focused on the rather than just the professional development of individual teachers.

Implementation of innovations. Despite the close identification of these elements with effective teacher learning and changes in teacher orientation, few studies empirically connected the specific learning activities to specific changes in teacher belief. In secondary schools where collaboration and trust between individuals are weak or not established, approaches to continuous professional development, which embrace these mechanisms have implications for school administrators.

The results showed that 69% of the teachers agreed that on-going professional development aids in the acquisition of fresh knowledge and pedagogical abilities by instructors, hence enhancing their pedagogical proficiency. According to 78% of school administrators, on-going professional development helps instructors learn new pedagogical techniques and enhance their existing pedagogical expertise. This is consistent with research by Srinivasacharlu (2019), who found that in order to stay at the top of their field and serve society, teacher educators must constantly update their knowledge and acquire new abilities. According to 22% of respondents, not all teachers can access on-going professional development programs, and they are not effectively incorporated into educators' professional learning objectives and career paths.

Finally, DoS 10 noted that teachers gain the pedagogical abilities and teaching methodologies they need through ongoing professional development (Alemayehu, 2021). Secondary school administrators are working hard to implement continuous professional development techniques in the classroom. Through observation, modelling, and interaction, they are creatively and successfully utilizing continuous professional development to increase teacher effectiveness (Mann & Webb, 2022). CPD is one of the techniques and procedures that are employed. CPD, or continuous professional development, is a procedure that helps instructors become more effective secondary school educators.

In Gulu City's secondary schools, on-going professional development is a process that enhances teachers' instructional abilities. The results are corroborated by the findings of Akampurira (2016), who notes that workshops and seminars—a type of continuing professional development program—are also lacking. There are situations where improving one's education is non-existent. According to the researcher, this method aids in the on-going learning and professional development of educators and administrators. According to the administrators'

responses, instructors in Gulu City's secondary schools are able to enhance their teaching and learning practices by gaining new ideas through on-going professional development.

## CONCLUSION

Instructors, who gain confidence and competence in their ability to educate secondary school students, all thanks to on-going professional development, acquire enhanced and new concepts and skills.

A method of teacher preparation called continuous professional development seeks to enhance educators' instructional abilities. Understanding how educators adapt their pedagogy is crucial, as on-going professional development enhances teacher effectiveness and can take many various shapes over the course of a career. Teachers need to stay up to date with the constantly changing world, curriculum, and educational technology. Because teacher collaboration is essential to learning, continuous professional development offers direction and continuing support that can lead to greater performance in the classroom. Teachers who participate in continuous professional development can enhance their instruction and pick up new skills.

## Recommendations

The school administrators should come up with set standards of continuous professional development opportunities, which include special programs that happen outside of classroom hours and continuing education options that help teachers improve their pedagogical abilities. Teachers' jobs in schools will need to be reorganized as a result of this process in order to accommodate the new learning opportunities. It will be up to school administrators to create procedures and regulations that allocate resources like time, space, equipment, and rewards. These educational chances would contribute to the development of possibilities to satisfy the various demands of secondary school teachers in enhancing their pedagogical skills.



To support and enforce teacher pedagogical abilities in secondary schools, the Ministry of Education and Sports should promote frequent training sessions in the form of workshops, seminars, conferences, short courses, and exchange trips on continuing professional development. Teachers would benefit from guidance on how to improve the quality of instruction in secondary schools.

It is recommended that Head teachers conduct routine evaluations of the implementation of opportunities for on-going professional development to ensure that the knowledge, skills, and experiences gained during training are used. The Ministry of Education and Sports as well as the government should make sure that the educational possibilities are accredited and institutionalized. In order to guarantee the success of these initiatives, they need also assess the caliber of the training resources and labor force.

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There was no conflict of interest among authors in processing this article.

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