



**Reflections on School-Based Teachers' Continuous Professional
Development Practices: A Case Study of Selected Primary Schools in Hai
District in Kilimanjaro, Tanzania**

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Abstract

This qualitative study explores the practices and perceptions surrounding school-based Teacher Continuous Professional Development (TCPD) in primary schools within Hai District, Kilimanjaro, Tanzania. With a commitment from the Tanzanian government to enhance teacher competency and improve learning outcomes through TCPD, this research addresses three key questions: (1) Is there any school plan and structure for TCPD implementation? (2) What is the attendance level of teachers in school-based TCPD? And (3) What is the perception of primary school teachers on school-based TCPD? The study had a sample size of 38 participants. An interview and a focus group discussion were used to collect information. Thematic analysis revealed that the surrounding TCPD annual plans reveal significant gaps in implementation and engagement across schools. While some sampled primary schools have made strides in developing structured TCPD plans, many either lack a plan altogether or fail to execute their existing plans effectively. Findings also indicate that more than half of teachers exhibit a positive attitude towards school-based TCPD. The study concluded that while a significant portion of teachers expressed willingness to participate in these sessions, the data indicate that attendance rates are affected by various challenges, primarily the demands of teaching loads and time constraints. Consequently, the perception of teachers towards TCPD is generally positive; however, practical constraints undermine the effective implementation of these programs within the school setting. It was recommended that schools should actively involve teachers in the development and planning of the TCPD annual plans. It is crucial to align TCPD activities with the specific needs and contexts of each school.

Keywords: Continuing professional development, school-based teacher professional development, peer teaching, collaborative and peer activities

Introduction

The Teacher Continuous Professional Development (TCPD) concept has been embedded in nearly all education reforms across different nations. Sustainable Development Goal 4 deals with quality education-ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning for all-with target 4.c being specific on the professional development of teachers. This is based on the fundamental role that a teacher plays in the teaching and learning processes and the subsequent impact on learners' outcomes. Teachers are at the centre of what happens inside and outside of the classrooms. Scholars generally agree that one of the most important ways to improve the quality of teachers and teaching is through professional development (PD) programmes (Kariuki & Itengi, 2020; Schrum, 1999; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

The role of the teacher in the teaching and learning process is widely acknowledged. It is argued that there is a close link between students' achievement and the skills and competence possessed by teachers (Schwille & Dembele, 2007). This is premised on the ground that pre-service training is not adequate in preparing teachers to meet the emerging challenges in the ever-changing educational landscape. Svendsen (2016) notes that researchers, educators and policy makers are convinced that pre-service training is not yielding the expected results. Therefore, resources would be better utilised if directed to professional development. The 21st-century education is bold, flexible, creative, challenging and complex, with a lot of focus being put on quality of teachers, which is a major contributing factor to teachers' effectiveness and pupil achievements. According to Mirunde (2015), the role of teachers and schools is changing, and so are expectations about them. However, according to Boaduo (2010), many teachers working in Sub-Saharan African countries and Tanzania in particular, opportunities to update their teaching competencies are disproportionate and inadequate.

Professional development practices are categorised as traditional (off-site) or school-based (on-site). The traditional model, common in many countries including Tanzania, involves workshops, seminars, and short courses held away from teachers' workplaces, typically as brief events lasting for few days (Kennedy, 2016; Sims et al., 2020). However, this model has been criticised for lack of effectiveness. Traditional programmes can be costly, occur infrequently, and serve only a limited number of teachers. They often lack the duration and depth needed to create meaningful changes in teaching practices (Mizinga, 2016). While these workshops provide knowledge, they do not adequately support teachers in applying what they

learn. In Tanzania, traditional programs aim to enhance teachers' pedagogical skills, yet many teachers still lack the on-site support necessary for effective implementation (Dachi, 2018).

Over time, alternative models to the traditional Teacher Professional Development (TPD) programmes have emerged, including the School-Based-TPD model, which is used in various countries (Muyunda, 2022). The shortcomings of traditional teacher professional development programmes have necessitated a decisive shift in approach, placing funding and responsibility squarely on schools and their members. Ng'andu (2023) asserts that professionals must take charge of their development needs, and this marks a pivotal transition from individualistic efforts to a collective focus on school-wide learning (Kinyota et al., 2019; Mbuli & Zhang, 2020; Njihia, 2020). This framework emphasises the critical importance of needs identification before training and rigorous evaluation thereafter (Rugambwa, 2022). Professional development now predominantly occurs within schools, where leadership is responsible for the design, implementation, and assessment of these initiatives.

Unlike the traditional approach, school-based TPD focuses on professional development activities at the school level, initiated by either the school or external organisations like NGOs, based on specific curriculum or teacher needs. Key school-based-TPD activities include workshops, online reading, school visits, and professional discussions (Darling-Hammond *et al.*, 2017; Habler et al., 2015; Desta et al., 2013). This model is gaining traction in countries like South Africa and Zambia due to its cost-effectiveness and better use of local resources (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Furthermore, school-based TPD effectively addresses teachers' immediate needs and offers opportunities for on-site practice and reflection (Habler et al., 2015; Burns & Lawrie, 2016). Evidence also demonstrates that well-structured school-based TPD programs have a profound impact on classroom practices and significantly enhance student achievement (Darling-Hammond & Lieberman, 2012; Bruns & Leque, 2014; Watson, 2014; Rugambwa & Mwaikokesya, 2023; OECD, 2019).

Recognising the impact of school-based TPD programmes, the Tanzanian government, through the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MoEST), has adopted school-based TCPD for teachers' professional development alongside traditional programmes. The school-based TCPD model is expected not only to enhance teachers' access to professional development but also to improve their instructional practices, leading to better learning outcomes (MoEST, 2020). School-based TCPD for in-service teachers, which is the focus of this paper, can be traced

back to the late 1990s and early 2000s, when projects such as Education Quality Improvement through Pedagogy (EQUIP–Oxfam) and Collaboration to Support Mathematics Teachers (COSMAT) were introduced to enhance classroom practices and learning (Kitta, 2015; Rugambwa & Mwaikokesya, 2023). The adoption of the school-based TCPD model in Tanzania has been documented in several policy documents, including the Teacher Education Management and Development Strategy (Komba & Mwakabenga, 2019) and the National Framework for Continuing Professional Development for Practising Teachers (Rugambwa & Mwaikokesya, 2023). All these policies require school management to oversee the implementation of school-based TCPD activities aimed at fostering teachers' professional growth. A notable teachers' professional development model introduced in 2020 is known as National Framework for Teacher Continuous Professional Development (NF-TCPD commonly known as MEWAKA in Swahili. This initiative came shortly after the Tanzanian government noted that 80% of its teachers had not received any training in the past five years (MoEST, 2020). Under the NF-TCPD framework, schools are responsible for managing their own school-based TCPD programs. With the nationally designed training manual and modules completed, schools are tasked with creating, implementing, and evaluating CPD programmes tailored to their specific needs (Kea et al., 2019; Mbuli & Zhang, 2020; Haßler *et al.*, 2020).

Despite the aforesaid government efforts, little is known regarding school-based TCPD practices in rural areas in Tanzania and the Hai district in particular (Anangisye, 2011; Dachi, 2018; Kinyota et al., 2019; Kapinga & Kimaro, 2019; Rugambwa et al., 2022). This study was guided by the following key research questions:

- i) Is there any plan and structure for TCPD implementation?
- ii) What is the attendance level of teachers in school-based TCPD?
- iii) What are the perceptions of primary school teachers on school-based TCPD?

Methodology

This study is based on the interpretivist paradigm, which views the world as shaped by people's experiences within social interactions (Creswell, 2014). The interpretive paradigm, posits that there is no absolute truth; rather, individuals construct and derive meanings from a given phenomenon based on their personal beliefs, perceptions, values, and experiences (Ary et al., 2010). This paradigm emphasises the importance of researchers minimising bias during the data collection and analysis process. From an epistemological perspective, interpretivists argue that knowledge

is not an external entity but is socially constructed (Williams, 2011). Ontologically, interpretivists recognise that multiple realities exist (Villiers & Fouché, 2017), with knowledge being subjectively held by research participants. The rationale for adopting an interpretive paradigm lies in the appropriateness of its philosophical assumptions, ontology, and epistemology. These aspects enable the study to gather participants' opinions and their lived experiences regarding school-based professional development practices.

This study utilized a qualitative research approach, which allows researchers to understand a phenomenon through the perspectives and insights of participants who experience it firsthand. A qualitative approach was deemed appropriate as it provided the researcher with deeper insights into the lived experiences of the participants in relation to school-based TCPD. The rationale for this choice is due to the nature of the research questions, which demanded an in-depth exploration of social interaction within specific social settings, such as the rural primary schools. Based on that consideration, the choice of the case study design, which allows researchers to examine more than one case and gain a broader understanding of the phenomenon it helped to obtain thick and rich data from the participants (Ary et al., 2010). By selecting this design, the researcher was able to interact directly with participants. This interaction provided participants with the opportunity to share their attitudes, perspectives, and approaches regarding SB-TPD, enriching the study's findings with nuanced and contextually grounded insights.

The study was conducted in three primary schools located in the Hai district of the Kilimanjaro region. These schools were purposefully selected because they were among the first in rural areas of the Kilimanjaro region to implement the TCPD (MEWAKA) model (MoEST, 2020). A total of 34 participants were included in the study, comprising 3 heads of schools, 30 primary school teachers, and 1 ward education officer. The heads of schools and the ward education officer were involved in the study owing to the fact that, according to the National Framework for Continuous Professional Development of Teachers (NF CPDT) OF 2020, they are responsible for implementing all school-based TCPD programmes. They are responsible for providing support for indoor teacher training. Primary school teachers were included as they are the main target of the school-based TCPD programmes.

Face-to-face semi-structured interviews were used to obtain views from school heads and ward education officers on the school-based TCDP practices. Additionally, focus group discussions (FGDs) was used to collect information from primary school teachers, involving two FGDs per sampled school, with an average of five teachers

in each group. In total, six FGDs were conducted across three schools. The document analysis was used to enrich the information about the issue under study. In document analysis as a data gathering instrument, the researcher would focus on all types of written documents such as attendance sheets, lesson notes, lesson plans and minutes of TCDP meetings. Data were analysed using a thematic analysis framework proposed by Huberman et al. (2014). Data processing started on the first day of data collection and continued throughout the study. This concurrent approach, which combined data collection and analysis, made it easy for researchers to reflect on the data and go back to the participants for verification of the data where necessary. Thus, data reduction was possible, and when necessary, the addition of data could also be achieved. The collected data were processed by field raw data from interviews and FGDs, which were transcribed into text to obtain the main ideas (Huberman et al., 2014). Second, the reading and repeated reading in searching meanings and patterns to get a general sense of the information followed (Pesambili, 2020). Third, the researcher organised data into meaningful groups, identifying the interesting aspects of the data that may form the basis for the repeated pattern (themes) across the dataset. Fourth, the researcher coded and analysed the data (Pesambili, 2020). Descriptive coding techniques were employed to develop codes based on the stated research questions. Subsequently, these codes were combined to form overarching themes by locating and collating text to describe each theme, facilitating reporting in response to the research questions.

Findings and discussion

This study investigated School-Based Teacher Professional Development practices in the Hai district, Kilimanjaro region. The findings are presented based on the three key research questions.

Is there any plan and structure for TCPD implementation?

A school-based TCPD annual plan serves as a structured roadmap for enhancing teachers' pedagogical skills, subject mastery, and professional growth within the school environment. Regarding this, interviews with school heads and ward education officers began by inquiring whether the schools had developed a school-based TPD annual plan. The most common response from participants indicated that the school-based TCPD annual plan was neither regularly prepared nor adequately used by all schools. For instance, one school head shared his experience, stating:

In this school, last year we had our TCPD annual plan. We developed it with the support of the ward education officer and some experts from the district. The

plan included many things, including the date and day of each session and the areas to be discussed. Unfortunately, this year, the 2025 plan is not yet in place; it is something we are working on (Interview, head of school, 2025).

Another head of school narrated that:

In this school, there is a TCPD committee chaired by the TCPD trainer. This committee is responsible for identifying areas or problems to focus on for intervention during a school year. Sometimes, teachers participate in the process of pinpointing intervention areas to bring about change and improvements in teaching and learning activities. For example, in 2023, the committee organised a three-month school-based TCPD session. Since then, we have not managed to develop another school plan (Interview, head of school, 2025).

Another head of school has revealed that they did not have an annual plan, but the school has prepared a flexible timetable, which allows subject coordinators or peer trainers to convene TCPD sessions at their convenience time and day. He also said:

Soon after completing our training, we returned and developed a flexible school plan and simple structure. We have established a convenient system that enables subject coordinators and school trainers to organise CPD sessions as needed (Interview, head of school, 2025).

During the interview, the ward education officer also narrated that:

Not all schools in this ward have in place their own school-based TCPD annual activities plan. As you know, they need adequate time to prepare and implement it. Planning is one thing and implementing it is another issue...experience shows that even the few schools with an annual TCPD plan rarely implement it. They often complain about the lack of sufficient time to convene teacher meetings due to the congestion of the school timetable and other teaching-related activities (Interview, Ward Education Officer, 2025).

The quotes indicate that not all schools prepare an annual school-based TCPD plan. Even a few schools with annual TCPD have not all implemented it. Some schools create only a short-term TCPD plan instead of an annual one, and others were in had haphazard in nature. This suggests that the preparation of school-based TCPD sessions is not regularly done, and/ or in some schools is conducted without planning or based on the coordinators' convenience. This can be confirmed through the ward education officer who said:

In this year (2025), I did not have sufficient time to visit my schools to see if they have prepared their own school TCPD, plans but in 2024 and 2023, I visited some schools. I remember I convened a meeting with all heads of schools and academic teachers whom I oriented on how to prepare the school TCPD annual plans. The challenge is that not all schools prepare a school TCPD plan regularly; sometimes they just duplicate the copy of the last year and submit it to me...others, they

don't prepare it at all, and some are doing it without any plan in place. Maybe because it is still a new idea and many teachers are not used to that. With time, they will learn.

The officer continued:

If you ask me why many schools are not taking it seriously, like during the project, in 2023...Simply, I will say that the whole idea of the school-based TCPD annual plan was planned from the above. We were not involved. It is only the heads of schools and a few teachers who attended the seminar at the beginning are aware of it...

As reflected in the quotes, the ward education officer believes that the school-based annual plan idea is top-down structured as teachers were not fully involved in planning it. Arguably, teachers' engagement in evidence-informed TCPD programmes may lead to improved learning outcomes for their students. This evidence must be used judiciously to inform the design of contextually relevant professional learning programmes. If evidence-based principles are applied without consideration of (1) the socio-political, educational and cultural contexts where the teaching and learning is situated; (2) the institutional culture and its needs – i.e. what the organization has identified as its priorities for teacher learning, given its characteristics and constraints; and (3) the reality of teachers' working conditions, their learners' needs, and what is feasible, the resulting TCPD programme may prove ineffective or unrealistic for such contexts. Ultimately, the impact of a TCPD programme depends on understanding and applying the available research evidence with reference to the needs of the local context (Prain *et al.*, 2022; Zhang *et al.*, 2020).

What is the attendance level of teachers in school-based TPD?

The study revealed that all three interviewed heads of schools revealed that whenever schools arrange any school-based TCPD sessions, most teachers attend, although there were some teachers who failed to attend because of various reasons. The findings indicated that school-based TCPD sessions enjoyed the support from the heads of schools who provided the participants with stationeries and soft drinks. Other heads of schools revealed that they supported school-based TCPD by reminding and encouraging teachers to attend meetings for school-based TCPD. These kinds of support, according to the findings promoted the teachers' attendance in school-based TCPD sessions.

Through document searches in ward education officers, it was revealed that most teachers have attended between two and five school-based TCPD sessions conducted in their schools. In line with the findings, one teacher narrated:

I can say that last year I attended all school-based TCPD sessions conducted in our school by the subject coordinator. Actually, I have to leave everything to attend them as they were called (Interview, standard one teacher, 2025).

Another standard two teacher narrated that, “I can say for the last year, I have attended all the meetings called when I was not around”. She emphasised that:

The head of school is supporting our school-based TCPD by encouraging and reminding all teachers in our school to attend TCPD activities organised by subject coordinators or trainers. He also sometimes supports us with learning and teaching materials and attends the meetings (Focus group discussion, 2025).

This was echoed by another science subject teacher who narrated:

In this school, the school management, particularly the head of school, makes sure that all teachers attend indoor seminars organised by the school. Sometimes, he provides us with soft drinks during the sessions or seminars (Focus group discussion, 2025).

These narratives suggest that most teachers are willing to participate in school-based TCPD sessions organised at the school level. This is all the more reason why OECD (2009) reports that school-based TCPD is a rewarding provision for teachers' acquisition of new knowledge. Svendsen, (2016) study also revealed that many teachers were in support of school-based TCPD. The findings of a study conducted on the implementation of school-based TCPD in Ethiopia on the implementation of school-based TCPD by Sims et al. (2020) equally revealed that the majority of the teachers knew the purpose of school-based TCPD and perceived the programme positively. This means that the low levels of implementation of school-based TCPD could not be mainly as a result of teacher attendance in meetings, but rather to other factors, as one subject coordinator confidently said:

Actually, I want to be sincere with you, sir.... Many teachers are interested in attending internal TCPD workshops and seminars. But I can say, I do not remember when we have conducted one...all end in planning. The big challenge is teaching load and time (Focus group discussion, 2025)

In the same vein, the focus group discussion with teachers indicated that not all school-based sessions were attended by all teachers. The most paramount challenge was that of a lack of time to conduct all the planned activities in schools. Although this excuse can be justified depending on the number of activities to be done, it is also worth noting that time will never be enough, but with good planning, time can

be made available for each activity. Wondem (2015) puts it that while supporting the views that teacher education and professional training should be in a school environment, it should also be recognised that such provisions require investment of time and money. Similarly, Powell and Bodur (2018) assert that time should be invested in the right activities.

Finding indicates that a lack of enough time to attend school-based TCPD activities was attributed to teaching load, high teacher-pupil ratio, and other extracurricular activities. Lack of enough time for so many activities, coupled with prioritising teaching as teachers' core business (Kennedy, 2016), seemed to have claimed the biggest chunk of factors leading to low levels of attending school-based TCPD in schools. The findings on the time factor as inhibiting the full participation of teachers in school-based TCPD sessions are consistent with the findings of Prain et al. (2022), where some school-based TPD activities were not done due to limited time. Time as a factor affecting the smooth implementation of school-based TPD equally came up in the study of Zhang et al. (2020).

Having analysed the views of heads of schools, ward education officers and teachers on the time factor challenge in the teachers' participation in school-based TCPD sessions, the researcher concluded that the challenge was real and needed proper mitigation measures to ensure that important programs like school-based TCPD (Craft,2000) are not greatly affected. However, while acknowledging that a lack of time was a real factor for failure to attend the planned school-based TCPD sessions, the findings also revealed that in some schools, TCPD was not just given priority (Alexander, 2013). For example, at one school, the respondent was not sure of what TCPD actually was.

Focus group discussion and interview findings were supported by document analysis. The study findings showed that only one school had records of teachers who attended school-based TCPD sessions. The other two visited schools had only a few teachers' attendance records. One head of school narrated:

Actually, I don't have accumulated any school-based TCPD attendance records for my teachers...because they were not given to me by trainers who coordinate meetings (Interview, head of school, 2025).

The assertion indicates that school-based TCPD sessions are not implemented to the full extent can still be justified by the availability of teachers' attendance records found in sampled primary schools. Findings of attendance records equally showed inadequacies in teachers' attendance record-keeping. For example, attendance records that could indicate the names of teachers who participated in school-based

TPD sessions, a school-based TCPD file that could document lesson plans, lesson notes, meeting minutes, and any other related documents were not in place. Records are very important at every level of implementation as they serve as verifiable indicators and subsequently as a measure of progress in an intervention (UNESCO, 2014; Avalos, 2011). This is all the more reason UNESCO (2014) states that to improve the quality of education, there is a need to move away from the ad hoc TCPD provision with little follow-up towards a more sustainable vision of TCPD.

This scenario points to one thing; lack of consistency in terms of conducting school based TCPD activities (Kea, 2019) and also an indication that no sessions actually took place in some instances because the practice of all school based TCPD activities at school are verifiable through records of attendance and documentation of implementation of various document such as lesson notes and lesson plan in school based TCPD files (Ashebier, 2013). Furthermore, reports are very important at every level of implementation as they serve as verifiable indicators and are used as measures of progress in particular interventions (UNESCO, 2020).

What are the perceptions of primary school teachers on school-based TCPD?

The findings indicated that teachers' perceptions with regard to school-based TCPD were both positive and negative as presented hereunder.

Positive perceptions

Participants' perceptions tend to determine the success of the programme under implementation. The study revealed that more than half teachers who participated in the focus group discussion had positive perceptions on the TCPD programme. This is seen from the way the respondents reacted to the question of whether school-based TCPD in schools was important or not. More than half of teachers were clear that they wanted school school-based TCPD program to continue as they perceived it to be beneficial. This is seen from the responses to their attendance during meetings. As earlier alluded to, two-thirds of participants indicated that they were ready to attend TCPD in their respective school, which is an indication that teachers are keen to uphold the program because it is important to them. One standard one teacher had the following to comment concerning the usefulness of TCPD:

Of course, we need it... for example, two years ago we had in-house training on how to teach standard one and two children basic literacy skills...it was a day seminar, but I learned many things, including new teaching strategies...in short, it gave us a new experience (Focus group discussion, teacher, 2025).

This Assertion indicates that primary school teachers perceive the school-based TCPD program positively, as it improves their teaching and learning skills and sharing of pedagogical content knowledge between teachers, improves their knowledge and application of teaching strategies and skills.

The ward education officer and heads of schools emphasised that the program was beneficial not only to teachers but pupils. They said that school-based TCPD addresses immediate school and classroom needs and changes the way teachers think about teaching and learning, and cooperation between them. It clearly emerged that both head teachers and ward education officers acknowledged the importance of the program and the need to uphold it. Alexander (2013) considers TCPD as critical to the successful implementation of various educational reform initiatives. It is emphasised that for policy reforms and curriculum review to be successful, the professional development of teachers should be given priority.

These views seem to be progressive because no man is an island; teachers need to work together as colleagues, discuss professional matters together, share challenges and seek solutions together (Hubler et al, 2014). Just as one head of school rightly put it, that:

Sometimes, some teachers may have trouble with teaching certain topics, and they can bring the challenge to the group and through group discussion, a solution can be found (interview, head of school A, 2025).

A critical examination of this excerpt reveals that respondents value school-based TCPD as their most effective means to enhance their professional skills and deepen their knowledge while fulfilling their responsibilities in their respective schools. This perspective aligns with the theory of knowledge, which emphasises the importance of continuous learning. Indeed, school-based TCPD is an optimal approach for teacher professional development due to its flexibility and affordability (Hardman *et al.*, 2015). The respondents' views also echo the arguments of Ng'andu (2020), who asserts that TCPD is vital for school improvement, as it provides teachers with opportunities to acquire new knowledge. The program's flexibility allows it to be conducted at times and in places that are convenient for teachers, while its affordability means that there are no individual expenses incurred during its implementation. As a result, teachers can develop their professional skills while actively carrying out their duties (Fareo & Awalowo, 2013).

Based on the arguments presented, it is clear that enhancing teachers' teaching skills is essential. School-based TCPD innovation appears to be the most effective intervention, as it encourages teachers to reflect on their competencies, update their

skills, and develop further through continuous interactions with colleagues (Kariuki & Itegi, 2020). Hubler et al. (2014) linked the process of knowing to learning, emphasising an ongoing cycle of reflection and action. This learning process fosters critical thinking, which enhances teachers' awareness and understanding. Many respondents echoed this sentiment, indicating that school-based TCPD is a relevant intervention for teacher professional development and should be continued in schools.

Negative perceptions

Contrary to the positive perceptions of two-thirds of respondents, one-third of respondents were not in support of school-based TCPD and claimed that the program was time-consuming, and others suggested that CPD sessions should not be conducted after official working hours. In this case, one teacher complained that:

...the TCPD program should not be conducted out of the working hours, as every teacher in this school is engaged in farming activities to earn an extra income

Teachers also complained about the compulsory nature of school-based TCPD sessions. They perceived it as an ideological instrument designed to manipulate and control teachers rather than helping them to grow professionally. This is a widely shared concern among teachers. Further evidence from the statement of the participant indicates that teachers' worry is not the TCPD itself, but rather does not add anything to their work promotion. During the focus group discussion, one teacher reflected the same view:

I don't feel comfortable with the forceful imposition of TCPD on teachers. It makes me feel the TCPD session is an extra burden designed to keep teachers staying in school for many hours just to attend sessions, which does not add anything to my salary.

Focus group discussion with teachers revealed that negative perception toward school-based TCPD was also caused by a lack of teachers' involvement in planning school-based TCPD. Some of the teachers complained that the available TCPD session content was predominantly determined by the school-led process. Thus, in terms of content, the CPD was identified as undifferentiated to the needs of individual teachers. The following narration, offered by FGD participants in school 'A', represented the views of most participants:

The content of TCPD in our school is normally determined by the school-led process. Last year, the school management prepared a so-called school-based TCPD needs assessment....and suggested the three TCPD focus areas for all teachers. Besides, the selected focus areas are not directly relevant to our

classroom practices. It is neither centred on subject matter nor pedagogical practices. For example, one area was improving the learning outcomes of pupils. Besides, we have been working on this issue for many years now, but the school keeps on urging teachers to work on the same old content...TCPD has already become boring.

Apparent from the assertion is the contents of TCPD in the target schools were not personalised to individual teacher's needs. Teachers' participation in the need's assessment run by schools to identify the contents of TCPD was a mere formality. Participation in undifferentiated and repeated TCPD contents without examining the improvements gained has made it boring to teachers. Similarly, a participant from school 'C' reiterated it as:

The focus of TCPD in my schools addresses issues that are common challenges at the school level. As a result, TCPD content is often shaped around these widespread problems, neglecting the specific professional development needs of individual teachers. Consequently, TCPD is viewed as a standard approach for teachers to plan and work towards improving or resolving school-wide issues.

A critical examination of this excerpt reveals that TCPD is often mistakenly viewed as a strategy for addressing school-wide issues. Teachers are tasked with planning and working to improve student behaviour, academic achievement, and literacy skills, rather than focusing on their own professional growth. Consequently, the purpose of professional development—engaging teachers in activities that enhance their own learning—is overlooked. The data collected clearly indicate a failure to tailor TCPD to content that is relevant to individual teachers' classroom practices. The content analysis of the CPD framework document also supported the same view.

Another teacher expressed dissatisfaction with inappropriate timing of school-based TCPD activities, as the following quote indicates:

Sometimes the head of school arranges meetings during very busy times when we are supposed to prepare lesson notes and mark pupils' exercise books. He will tell us that we need to meet with the subject coordinator to teach each other on certain topics or prepare a lesson plan together...I think they should find a more convenient time, like during the holiday or at the end of the term.

Another perspective from the group was that school-based TCPD is only effective when it is motivated by intrinsic factors; however, when school management imposes it on teachers, they develop a negative perception. This narration was supported by most participants during the focus group discussion, as the following quote indicates:

The negative attitude we experience is largely due to the school itself. It seems to follow a corrective approach to development, waiting for the syllabus to

change before implementing any developmental programs. For instance, last year we had only two workshops, and this was solely because we received new textbooks for grades one and two. This response came only after identifying a gap or challenge in that area (Focus group discussion, teacher, 2025).

Rather, they seem to do it to fulfil their administrative responsibilities. One of the reasons for this situation could be the lack of a kind of discussion protocol that could guide their conversation in such a way that everyone in the group would benefit from it (OECD, 2015). Unless their discussions are rich in descriptions of practice, give attention to evidence and help to examine alternative interpretations and possibilities, their meeting would likely become routine. The focus group discussion result indicates the existence of this kind of situation in the visited primary school. Some teachers claimed that they met for the sake of meeting, and no rule could guide the discussion. One participant also mentioned this about the trainers: “...*the trainer of the group is also just one of us, no difference.*”

Three teachers had the opinion that many teachers did not see the need to engage in TCPD activities because they were not interested in a teaching career. They conceived teaching as a less rewarding field but a laborious career. Hence, even after joining the profession, they are still looking for other jobs to escape the miserable life of teachers. for example, one teacher narrated:

Teaching is not my preferred profession. I have never thought of becoming a teacher; all of a sudden, I decided to become a teacher after my unfortunate score in the form four national exams...The only thing I like from my profession is the relative time freedom it gives me....our school has few pupils...so I teach only in the morning ... I use the free time for farming activities.... I need professional development that vertically upgrades my status to find myself in a better place than spending time on SBTCPD routines. Thus, my participation in the TCPD routine is merely for obeying my head orders.

The quote indicates that teaching is perceived as a disappointing profession in terms of the economic rewards and social values it offers, suggesting a loss of motivation on the part of teachers for teaching as a profession and TCPD endeavours. Instead, the quote indicated teachers' motivation to pursue vertical professional development programmes that bring them economic rewards and relatively better social value. The pressing conditions of teachers' lives forced them to spend every free time they have on parallel income-earning activities to offset the challenges of living on the low pay teaching offers. In this sense, spending time on TCPD matters is secondary. Besides, the conception of TCPD as a routine activity narrowed teachers' prospective learning opportunities to improve practices. A further critical examination of the participant's

experiences indicated that participation in TCPD is mere compliance with the school system. In a similar vein, another teacher during a focus group discussion gave another reason for the negative attitude toward TCPD activities in his school:

Many of us hold beliefs that teaching is a simple occupation that can be done with little orientation and resources. To this end, once teachers have adjusted themselves to certain content and teaching methods, they stick to them throughout. It has become normal to see many teachers insisting on teaching the same subject to the same class for several years to avoid new preparation and challenges. Thus, the motivation of teachers to engage in reading, academic dialogue, and TCPD sessions is almost equal to none. To me, TCPD session is not a matter of academic concern for teachers, but it is a matter of fulfilling the requirements set by the district and the school

This quote entailed important insights that branded teaching as a stagnant and simplistic undertaking. It reflected the absence of motivation and courage on the part of teachers to walk out of their circle as a result of the value they attached to TCPD sessions. Teachers were resistant to participating in TCPD sessions. Therefore, the prospects for teacher learning and effective professional development suffered. Congruently, focus group discussion participants in School C reflected the following:

Teacher grievance on the absence of training opportunities related to TCPD has been a source of teacher dissatisfaction in our school. Teachers were required to start TCPD with little orientation, of less than half a day. This is because even the workshop introducing the peer facilitator manual (piloted between August and September 2022) was provided only to one teacher in each school. Hence, the awareness of teachers as to what TCPD is and is not, how to do TCPD within the workplace and why it is an important undertaking for teachers is less clear. Instead, many teachers think that TCPD is an extra burden imposed on teachers by district officials.

This assertion highlights the lack of proper awareness among teachers as one of the reasons behind their negative perception of engaging in TPD. It also reported that teachers' perceived understanding of TPD as an extra burden appeared damaging for prospective TPD practices. Lemu (2013) and Eroglu and Donmus (2021) found that a positive perception among teachers toward TCPD is essential for ongoing professional development. Kinyota et al. (2019) emphasise that while changing attitudes is critical, motivation is key to facilitating that change. The negative perception of some teachers toward TCPD, as indicated by participants in this study, is likely to hurt the implementation of TCPD in the three sampled primary schools in Hai District. More efforts are needed to emphasise the importance of TCPD. According to Guskey's (2000) theory, changes in teacher attitudes often stem from

changes in behaviour. Therefore, while teachers must acknowledge their need for professional development, school leaders should motivate them to engage positively in TCPD to achieve the desired results (Mbuli & Zhang, 2020).

Conclusion and recommendations

The findings surrounding TCPD annual plans reveal significant gaps in implementation and engagement across schools. While some sampled primary schools have made strides in developing structured TCPD plans, many either lack a plan altogether or fail to execute their existing plans effectively. Interviews with school heads and education officers indicate that the preparation of these annual plans is not consistent, with some schools opting for short-term, uncoordinated initiatives instead of a comprehensive yearly strategy. While a significant portion of teachers expressed willingness to participate in these sessions, the data indicate that attendance rates are affected by various challenges, primarily the demands of teaching loads and time constraints. It is evident from the responses of both school heads and teachers that while there is an interest in professional development, organisational and logistical barriers hinder full participation. Consequently, the perception of teachers towards TCPD is generally positive; however, practical constraints undermine the effective implementation of these programs within the school setting.

It was recommended that schools should actively involve teachers in the development and planning of the TCPD annual plans. Collaborative workshops can facilitate input from all staff members, fostering ownership and increasing the relevance of the programs. It was also recommended that continuous training sessions should be organised not only for school leaders but also for teachers regarding TCPD plan preparation and implementation. This could include practical exercises to create a culture of professional growth. Schools should re-evaluate the scheduling of TCPD sessions to ensure they fit within the teaching timetable without overwhelming educators. Flexibility in scheduling, such as holding sessions during school breaks or integrating them into existing planning periods, may enhance participation rates. School management should actively promote attendance by fostering a culture that prioritises professional development. This can be achieved through consistent reminders, providing needed resources, and facilitating conversations about the importance of TCPD among teachers. Educational authorities should allocate sufficient resources—time, training materials, and expert facilitators—to support schools in implementing their TPD plans effectively. It is crucial to align TCPD

activities with the specific needs and contexts of each school. Initiatives should be designed based on the school culture and priorities, considering the unique challenges faced by teachers and students alike.

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