

EXPLORING CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: INSIGHTS FROM PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL LEADERS IN ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

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ABSTRACT

Continuous professional development (CPD) plays a crucial role in enhancing the knowledge and skills of school leaders (Nooruddin & Bhamani, 2019). However, there is a need to understand the perceptions and practices of CPD among public primary school leaders in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Therefore, this study aims to fill that gap by examining the effectiveness of current CPD practices in addressing the professional development needs of school leaders in the city. A mixed design study was conducted, involving a sample of (N=50) school leaders from 20 public primary schools in Addis Ababa. Surveys and interviews were used to gather data on the perceptions and practices of CPD. The sample was selected to represent a diverse range of educational institutions in the city. The study revealed that public primary school leaders in Addis Ababa greatly value CPD as a means to enhance their professional knowledge and skills. They perceive the current CPD practices as highly effective in meeting their specific professional development needs. The availability of diverse CPD opportunities, including workshops, seminars, conferences and specialized training programs, was seen as beneficial in addressing the challenges and demands of their leadership roles. This study contributes to the limited research on CPD practices among school leaders in Addis Ababa. By exploring their perceptions and practices, it provides insights into the effectiveness of CPD programs in addressing their professional development needs. Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that educational institutions in Addis Ababa continue to support and invest in CPD programs for school leaders.

INTRODUCTION

Continuous professional development (CPD) for school leaders is the ongoing process of enhancing the school leaders' knowledge, skills and competencies to effectively lead and manage schools (Alemayehu, 2021). CPD recognizes the importance of lifelong learning for school leaders, who play a crucial role in shaping education quality and school success (Bubb & Earley, 2007). In the past, school leaders were mainly focused on administrative tasks and regulation compliance (Renihan et al., 2006). However, the evolving education landscape requires them to be visionary instructional leaders, driving school improvement, fostering positive school culture, engaging stakeholders, and creating a conducive environment for student success (Crum & Sherman, 2008).

CPD for school leaders acknowledges the need for continuous learning to meet these demands (Faizuddin et al., 2022). It offers opportunities to enhance knowledge and skills in areas such as instructional leadership, strategic planning, data analysis, school management, effective communication, and fostering inclusivity (Stevenson et al., 2016). By staying updated with research and best practices, school leaders can make informed decisions and lead effectively (Wondimu, 2019).

CPD comes in various forms, including workshops, conferences, online courses, coaching and collaborative networks (Michaelidou & Pashiardis, 2009). These programs focus on building leadership capacities, reflective practices, pedagogical knowledge, and effective communication and collaboration (Nicolaidou & Petridou, 2011a). Research shows that effective CPD positively impacts school improvement, teacher development, student achievement, and overall school outcomes (Khan & Khan, 2014). Investing in CPD supports the growth of school leaders and improves educational experiences for students (Field, 2005).

Addis Ababa, being the political, economic, and cultural center of Ethiopia, represents a diverse and dynamic educational landscape (Ejigu, 2014). The city is home to numerous primary schools, each with its unique characteristics and challenges (Roseman, 2018). Understanding the perceptions and practices of school leaders regarding CPD can shed light on the current state of professional development initiatives in the city and provide valuable insights into the strategies employed by school leaders to enhance their professional growth (Etsegenet, 2019).

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

CPD enables school leaders to stay updated with research and emerging trends (Cheng, 2017), leading to informed decision-making and effective strategies for teaching and learning (Petridou et al., 2017). It equips leaders with instructional guidance skills, supporting teachers in implementing research-based practices and curriculum development (Ng & Szeto, 2016). CPD also develops strategic planning and management skills for setting goals, formulating policies, resource allocation, and progress monitoring (Mestry, 2017).

Moreover, CPD fosters collaboration through networks and communities of practice (Mestry & Singh, 2007). Communities of practice refer to groups of individuals who come together to share knowledge, expertise, and experiences related to a particular profession or field. These communities are formed with the purpose of fostering collaboration, learning, and professional growth among their members (Davenport & Hall, 2002). This allows leaders to exchange ideas, learn from successful initiatives, and support teacher growth through mentoring and coaching, resulting in improved student outcomes (Nicolaidou & Petridou, 2011b). CPD also helps school leaders build effective communication, conflict resolution, relationship-building, and equity-promoting skills, contributing to a positive school culture (Faizuddin et al., 2022). A positive school climate, nurtured through CPD, enhances student engagement, motivation and well-being (Nasreen & Odhiambo, 2018).

In the Ethiopian context, CPD for school leaders aligns with the broader vision of educational reform and improvement (Kelkay, 2018). The education policy document of Ethiopia's Ministry of Education emphasizes the importance of professional principles, including a code of ethics and professional development, for school leaders and educational personnel. It recognizes school leadership as a specialized profession requiring specific training and skills to effectively lead educational organizations and schools (MoE, 1994). The government has also recognized the importance of empowering school leaders through professional development initiatives, as outlined in the Education Sector Development Program (ESDP IV, 2010) and the MoE (2013) National Professional Standard for School Principals, Ministry of Education Ethiopia. These policy manuscripts emphasize the need for continuous learning, capacity building and leadership development for school leaders to drive educational change and improvement (Taddese & Rao, 2022).

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Studying the perceptions and practices of public primary school leaders in Addis Ababa is significant for several reasons. First, it provides valuable insights for policymakers and educational authorities to develop targeted policies and programs that address the challenges of school leaders in the region. Second, understanding the effective leadership practices and strategies employed by school leaders can help enhance their effectiveness and contribute to improved educational outcomes (Desta et al., 2013). Additionally, studying school leaders' perceptions and practices facilitates knowledge sharing, collaboration, and the development of tailored professional development opportunities that can strengthen the overall educational leadership ecosystem in Addis Ababa (Kelkay, 2018). Ultimately, this research can drive school improvement efforts and support the success of students in the region.

Limited research exists on the CPD of public primary school leaders in Addis Ababa. Further research is needed to gain insights into their unique context, needs, and challenges, which can inform the development of targeted CPD programs that address their requirements. Additionally, the effectiveness and impact of CPD programs on primary school leaders' professional growth and leadership practices in Addis Ababa need further investigation. Understanding the outcomes and changes resulting from CPD participation can inform the design of effective CPD initiatives.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following two are the basic research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of public primary school leaders in Addis Ababa towards continuous professional development (CPD) programs?
2. What are the current CPD practices and experiences of public primary school leaders in Addis Ababa?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

By applying the Situated Learning Theory, researchers can explore the ways in which school leaders in Addis Ababa public primary schools learn from their experiences, interact with their colleagues, and engage in professional development. Situated Learning Theory, developed by Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger (Lave & Wenger, 1991), emphasizes the importance of learning within the context of real-life situations rather than in isolation. This theory posits that learning is a social process that occurs through active participation in authentic tasks and communities of practice (Billett, 1996). In the context of CPD for school leaders, the Situated Learning Theory suggests that effective professional development should be situated within the specific context of school leadership and provide opportunities for school leaders to engage in authentic, real-world tasks and challenges (Harrison & McKeon, 2008). It emphasizes the importance of collaboration, reflection, and the development of a community of practice among school leaders. (Sentance & Humphreys, 2018).

When conducting research on the perceptions and practices of Addis Ababa public primary school leaders regarding CPD, the Situated Learning Theory can provide a critical framework for understanding how school leaders learn and develop their leadership skills in the specific context of their schools (Sadler, 2009). By considering the theory's principles, researchers can gain insights into how school leaders perceive and engage in professional development activities (Cobb & Bowers, 1999).

The Situated Learning Theory suggests that learning is not merely the acquisition of knowledge and skills in isolation but is deeply rooted in the social and cultural context in which it

occurs (McLellan, 1996). For Addis Ababa public primary school leaders, this means that effective CPD programs should go beyond traditional training sessions and workshops and instead focus on providing opportunities for school leaders to engage in authentic tasks and challenges that are directly relevant to their roles and responsibilities (Collin et al., 2012). These tasks could include problem-solving exercises, case studies, action research projects, or collaborative projects with other school leaders (Filipe et al., 2014). By engaging in these real-life tasks, school leaders can develop a deeper understanding of the complexities and demands of their leadership roles (Drude, 2019).

Additionally, the Situated Learning Theory emphasizes the importance of collaboration and the development of a community of practice (Lave, 1991). School leaders can benefit from engaging in collaborative activities with their peers, such as professional learning communities, mentoring programs, or joint projects (Admiraal et al., 2021). These collaborative experiences allow school leaders to share their knowledge, experiences, and best practices, and collectively reflect on their leadership practices (Rubin, 2009). This can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of existing CPD programs and inform the design of future professional development initiatives tailored to the needs of school leaders in Addis Ababa and similar contexts.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods research design to gain comprehensive insights into the perceptions and practices of public primary school leaders in Addis Ababa regarding CPD. The research design included both quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, allowing for a holistic understanding of the topic. A total of 20 public primary schools were selected using a stratified random sampling technique, and 50 school leaders, consisting of principals and vice principals, participated in the study.

Sampling

The study employed two distinct components for the sampling process: one for surveys and one for interviews. To ensure a representative sample of 20 public primary schools in Addis Ababa for the surveys, the technique of stratified random sampling was used. This approach considered factors like school size, location, and ownership (public/private) in order to include a diverse range of schools for the study. In each selected public primary school, the principal and the three vice principals were included in the pool of sampling for the survey, resulting in a total of 40 school leaders participating, 10 principals and 30 vice principals. Additionally, 10 principals not participating in the survey were intentionally selected for qualitative interviews. Therefore, in total, there were 50 school leaders who participated in the study, 40 sampled for quantitative survey and 10 for qualitative interview.

Data Collection

a. Surveys: A structured questionnaire was developed based on an extensive literature review and piloted for validity and reliability. The survey included questions on demographics, perceptions of CPD, CPD practices, challenges and desired areas for professional development. Surveys were administered electronically or in person, based on participant preferences.

b. Interviews: Ten (10) school leaders were interviewed using a semi-structured approach to obtain more comprehensive understanding of their perceptions and practices of CPD. The 10 public primary school leaders sampled for the interview are different from the 40 individuals to be surveyed. The 10 school leaders interviewed were school principals of the selected schools.

Instrument Validity and Reliability

In the survey instrument used for the study, validity and reliability were determined. The instrument employed a 5-point Likert scale as the response format. The validity of the survey instrument was assessed through content validity which ensured that the survey items were relevant and representative of the construct being measured.

Reliability of the survey instrument was also evaluated. This was done through measures of internal consistency reliability. The technique of Cronbach's Alpha was employed to evaluate the internal coherence of the survey items.

Table 1: The Reliability of the Scales

Instrument	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items	Acceptability
Perceptions Towards CPD	0.832	5	Acceptable
CPD Practices and Experiences	0.796	5	Acceptable

As indicated in Table 1 above, the Cronbach's Alpha values for both variables exceed 0.7 (specifically, 0.832 and 0.796). These values indicate that the instrument demonstrates acceptable internal consistency.

Data Analysis

Quantitative analysis: The survey data collected from the public primary school leaders were subjected to quantitative analysis. Descriptive statistics were employed to summarize and describe the data, including measures such as frequencies, means and standard deviations. These descriptive statistics provided an overview of the responses of the participants and allowed for a better understanding of the distribution of variables related to perceptions and practices of CPD among public primary school leaders.

Qualitative analysis: The qualitative data collected through interviews with the ten public primary school leaders underwent qualitative analysis, specifically employing thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a method of identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns and themes within qualitative data. The transcriptions of the interviews were carefully examined and analyzed to identify key themes and patterns related to school leaders' perceptions and practices of CPD.

Ethical Considerations

The study prioritized ethical considerations by implementing measures to protect participants and maintain ethical standards. Informed consent was obtained, ensuring participants were fully informed and voluntarily agreed to participate. Confidentiality was protected through anonymization and secure data storage. Data integrity was maintained through rigorous data management and analysis techniques.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the outcomes of surveys and interviews conducted with public primary school leaders in Addis Ababa. It explores their perspectives on CPD, their engagement in CPD activities, the impact on their leadership practices, and suggestions for improvement. It also provides a concise analysis and interpretation of the findings in the context of school leadership in Addis Ababa.

Research Question 1:

What are the perceptions of public primary school leaders in Addis Ababa towards continuous professional development (CPD) programs?

Table 2: *The Perceptions of Public Primary School Leaders Towards CPD*

No	Items	N	Mean	SD
1	Continuous professional development (CPD) programs are essential for enhancing the knowledge and skills of public primary school leaders in Addis Ababa.	40	3.75	0.93
2	Primary school leaders in Addis Ababa perceive CPD programs as valuable opportunities for professional growth and development.	40	3.99	0.74
3	Primary school leaders in Addis Ababa believe that participating in CPD programs positively impacts their effectiveness in their roles and responsibilities.	40	4.2	0.82
4	Primary school leaders in Addis Ababa actively seek out and participate in a variety of CPD programs to enhance their knowledge and skills.	40	4.1	0.72
5	Primary school leaders in Addis Ababa perceive CPD programs as necessary for staying updated with the latest educational trends and best practices.	40	3.65	0.68
Overall Average		40	3.94	0.78

Essential CPD Programs for Primary School Leaders in Addis Ababa

According to the Situated Learning Theory, the findings from Item 1, (M=3.75, SD=0.93), Table 2, suggest that the implementation of CPD programs is crucial for the public primary school leaders in Addis Ababa to enhance their knowledge and skills effectively. Situated learning emphasizes the importance of learning in authentic contexts and through active participation in relevant communities of practice. By participating in CPD programs, school leaders have the opportunity to engage in situated learning experiences where they can acquire new knowledge, learn innovative strategies, and develop essential skills that are necessary for effective leadership in the education sector.

Furthermore, the findings indicate a strong connection or inference between CPD programs and the professional growth of school leaders. Situated Learning Theory highlights the importance of social interaction and collaboration in the learning process. CPD programs provide a platform for

school leaders to engage in collaborative learning with their peers, share experiences, and collectively explore solutions to common challenges. Through these collaborative learning experiences, school leaders can enhance their professional growth and develop a deeper understanding of effective leadership practices. Similar to the quantitative data, one of the interviewees said:

I firmly believe that continuous professional development (CPD) programs are essential for enhancing my knowledge, skills, and effectiveness as an educational leader. They provide valuable opportunities to stay updated with the latest research and best practices, collaborate with colleagues, and engage in self-reflection for continuous growth. CPD programs are crucial for meeting the evolving needs of my students and school community. (Interviewee 1, December 2022)

Moreover, the findings suggest that CPD programs play a significant role in keeping primary school leaders informed and up-to-date with the latest educational practices and policies. Situated learning emphasizes the importance of learning within the context of real-world challenges and needs. The rapidly evolving field of education requires school leaders to continuously adapt and refine their approaches to meet the changing needs of students and the demands of the education system. CPD programs provide a structured framework for school leaders to engage in ongoing learning, gain insights from experts in the field, and explore emerging research and trends. This situated learning approach ensures that the professional development of school leaders is relevant, timely, and aligned with the current realities of the education sector.

Valuable Growth: Perceptions of CPD for School Leaders in Addis Ababa

Situated Learning Theory provides insights into the findings from Table 2, Item 2 ($M=3.99$, $SD=0.74$), highlighting the importance of the social and contextual aspects of learning. According to Situated Learning Theory, learning is situated within a specific context and occurs through active participation and interaction with others. In the case of CPD programs for primary school leaders in Addis Ababa, the situated learning perspective suggests that the positive perception and recognition of the benefits of these programs are influenced by the social and contextual factors surrounding the leaders' learning experiences.

The findings indicate that school leaders in Addis Ababa perceive CPD programs as valuable opportunities for their professional growth and development. Situated Learning Theory emphasizes that learning is not an isolated individual activity but occurs within a community of practice. CPD programs offer a range of learning opportunities, such as workshops, seminars, conferences, and collaborative activities that are specifically designed to address the needs of school leaders. These structured learning experiences provide a clear direction for professional development and enable school leaders to apply their learning as a platform for school leaders to engage in collaborative learning with their peers, share experiences, and collectively explore solutions to common challenges. Through these collaborative learning experiences, school leaders can enhance their professional growth and develop a deeper understanding of effective leadership practices. The social interaction and collaboration within CPD programs contribute to the positive perception of their value. Just like the numerical data, one of the interview participants expressed a similar sentiment:

As a primary school leader in Addis Ababa, I value CPD programs for their role in my professional growth and development. They keep me updated with the latest research and best practices, helping me improve my teaching techniques and adapt to student needs. CPD programs also foster collaboration and networking, allowing me to exchange ideas and learn from other educators while building a supportive professional network. (Interviewee 3, December 2022)

Furthermore, the findings suggest that school leaders in Addis Ababa view CPD programs as valuable because they provide a structured and focused approach to their professional development. Situated Learning Theory highlights the importance of learning within the context of real-world challenges and needs directly related to their roles and responsibilities. The alignment between the learning opportunities provided by CPD programs and the contextual needs of school leaders contributes to their perception of value.

Positive Impact: CPD Programs and School Leader Effectiveness

Situated Learning Theory provides insights into the findings from Table 2, Item 3 ($M=4.2$, $SD=0.82$), highlighting the significance of the social and contextual aspects of learning and belief formation. According to Situated Learning Theory, learning is situated within a specific context and occurs through active participation and interaction with others. In the case of CPD programs for primary school leaders in Addis Ababa, the situated learning perspective suggests that the belief in the positive impact of these programs is influenced by the social and contextual factors surrounding the leaders' learning experiences.

The findings indicate that school leaders in Addis Ababa hold the belief that participating in CPD programs positively impacts their effectiveness in their roles and responsibilities. Situated Learning Theory emphasizes that learning is not an isolated individual activity but occurs within a community of practice. CPD programs provide a platform for school leaders to engage in collaborative learning, share experiences, and exchange knowledge with their peers. Through these collaborative learning experiences, school leaders gain new insights, strategies, and best practices that they believe contribute to their effectiveness as educational leaders. The social interaction and knowledge exchange within CPD programs contribute to the formation of these beliefs. One of the interviewees shared a comparable viewpoint to the quantitative data:

CPD programs are invaluable for my professional growth and benefit my students and school community. They keep me updated with the latest research and educational practices, providing insights into innovative teaching methodologies and emerging technologies. This knowledge enables me to make informed decisions, implement evidence-based practices, and create an engaging learning environment. CPD programs also offer specialized training for school leadership, equipping me with the skills to effectively lead my school and foster student success and well-being. (Interviewee 5, December 2022)

Furthermore, the findings suggest that school leaders attribute the positive impact of CPD programs to their ability to acquire new insights, strategies and best practices. Situated Learning Theory highlights the importance of learning within the context of real-world challenges and needs. CPD programs offer opportunities for school leaders to access up-to-date information, research findings, and innovative approaches that are relevant to their roles. This exposure empowers school

leaders to make informed decisions, implement effective instructional practices, and provide better support to teachers and staff. The alignment between the learning opportunities provided by CPD programs and the contextual needs of school leaders contributes to the formation of their beliefs regarding the positive impact of these programs.

Active Participation: Primary School Leaders Engaging in CPD

Based on Table 2, Item 4 ($M=4.1$, $SD=0.72$), it can be inferred that primary school leaders in Addis Ababa demonstrate a proactive and enthusiastic attitude towards their professional development. This implies that these leaders actively seek out and engage in various continuous professional development (CPD) programs. Their proactive approach indicates a commitment to enhancing their knowledge and skills in order to improve their effectiveness as educational leaders, aligning with the principles of Situated Learning Theory.

The Situated Learning Theory emphasizes the importance of learning within authentic and meaningful contexts. Primary school leaders in Addis Ababa, by actively seeking out CPD programs, recognize the value of ongoing learning and growth. They understand that education is a rapidly evolving field, and staying updated with the latest research, practices, and innovations is crucial. Actively seeking out CPD programs enables them to engage in authentic learning experiences that are situated within their roles as educational leaders. One of the individuals interviewed expressed a perspective that aligned closely with the findings derived from the quantitative data:

*Actively participating in CPD programs helps me expand my knowledge and stay updated with the latest research, best practices, and innovative approaches in education. These programs provide valuable insights into teaching methodologies, assessment techniques, and emerging technologies, allowing me to make informed decisions and improve student learning outcomes. Engaging in self-reflection and seeking feedback from experts enhances my leadership practices, leading to a positive school culture and improved student outcomes. Additionally, CPD programs offer specialized training to develop the skills needed for my role as a primary school leader.
(Interviewee 7, December 2022)*

Through their participation in a variety of CPD programs, primary school leaders in Addis Ababa demonstrate their dedication to professional development, which is a key aspect of Situated Learning Theory. They understand that effective leadership requires a well-rounded set of knowledge and skills. By engaging in diverse CPD programs, they acquire a broad range of competencies, including instructional strategies, curriculum development, assessment techniques, and leadership skills.

Staying Updated: CPD Programs for School Leaders in Addis Ababa

Based on Item 5, ($M=3.65$, $SD=0.68$) in Table 2, it can be inferred that primary school leaders in Addis Ababa recognize the importance of continuous professional development (CPD) programs as a means to stay updated with the latest educational trends and best practices. This recognition aligns with the principles of Situated Learning Theory.

Situated Learning Theory emphasizes the importance of learning within authentic and meaningful contexts. Primary school leaders in Addis Ababa, by perceiving CPD programs as necessary, demonstrate their understanding that professional learning should be situated within their roles as educational leaders.

By participating in CPD programs, primary school leaders engage in authentic learning experiences that are situated within the context of their schools and educational systems. They have the opportunity to explore and apply new strategies, approaches, and best practices that are relevant to their specific educational contexts. This allows them to bridge the gap between theory and practice, integrating new knowledge and skills into their leadership roles and decision-making processes. The viewpoint shared by one of the interviewees closely mirrored the findings obtained from the quantitative data:

By actively engaging in CPD, I can gain knowledge about new instructional strategies, curriculum frameworks, and assessment techniques that have the potential to enhance my teaching practices and improve student learning outcomes. The programs offer a platform for me to learn and adopt best practices in education. These programs bring together educators from diverse backgrounds, creating an environment where experiences can be shared, and ideas can be exchanged. Collaborative sessions and networking opportunities allow me to learn from the successes and challenges of my peers, expanding my repertoire of effective teaching and leadership practices.

(Interviewee 9, December 2022)

The findings indicate that the recognition of CPD programs as necessary reflects the commitment of primary school leaders in Addis Ababa to ongoing professional development, which is a key aspect of Situated Learning Theory. They understand that effective leadership requires continuous learning and growth. By actively participating in CPD programs, they demonstrate their dedication to expanding their knowledge and skills, enhancing their leadership practices, and improving educational outcomes within the situated context of their schools.

Research Question 2

What are the current CPD practices and experiences of public primary school leaders in Addis Ababa?

Table 3: *The Current CPD Practices and Experiences of public primary school leaders*

No	Items	N	Mean	SD
6	Primary school leaders in Addis Ababa have access to a variety of CPD opportunities, such as workshops, seminars, or conferences.	40	4.2	0.66
7	Primary school leaders in Addis Ababa actively engage in CPD activities to enhance their professional knowledge and skills.	40	4.1	0.78
8	Primary school leaders in Addis Ababa receive support and encouragement from their institutions to participate in CPD programs.	40	3.69	0.63
9	Primary school leaders in Addis Ababa have opportunities for collaborative learning and sharing best practices through CPD activities.	40	4.11	0.94
10	Primary school leaders in Addis Ababa perceive the current CPD practices as effective in addressing their professional development needs.	40	4.21	0.72
Overall Average		40	4.06	0.75

Diverse CPD Opportunities for Primary School Leaders in Addis Ababa

The findings from Table 3, Item 6 ($M=4.2$, $SD=0.66$) viewed through the lens of Situated Learning Theory, suggests that primary school leaders in Addis Ababa actively seek out and participate in a variety of CPD programs, such as workshops, seminars and conferences. Situated Learning Theory emphasizes the importance of learning within authentic contexts and through active engagement in real-world practices.

This implies that primary school leaders in Addis Ababa recognize the value of learning through participation in CPD programs situated within the educational context. By actively seeking out workshops, seminars and conferences, they purposefully engage in learning experiences that directly relate to their roles as educational leaders. This active participation allows them to acquire knowledge and skills in a meaningful and practical manner. The following perspective articulated by one of the interview participants closely resembled the results obtained from the quantitative data.

One of the primary CPD opportunities available to me is workshops. These workshops are organized by educational institutions, professional associations, and government bodies. Attending these workshops allows me to engage in interactive learning experiences where I can collaborate with experts in the field and fellow school leaders. I can acquire practical strategies, techniques, and insights that are directly applicable to my leadership role. Workshops cover a wide range of topics, including instructional leadership, curriculum development, assessment strategies, and school management. (Interviewee 2, December 2022)

Situated Learning Theory also emphasizes the role of social interaction and collaboration in the learning process. The findings suggest that primary school leaders in Addis Ababa actively engage with other professionals, experts and peers during CPD programs. Workshops, seminars and conferences provide platforms for networking, sharing experiences, and exchanging ideas.

Active Engagement: Primary School Leaders Pursuing CPD in Addis Ababa

In the above Table 3, Item 7, (M=4.1, SD=0.78), the active engagement of primary school leaders in Addis Ababa in CPD activities to enhance their professional knowledge and skills aligns with the principles of the Situated Learning Theory. This demonstrates their recognition of the value of learning within authentic contexts and through active involvement in real-world practices.

This signifies that primary school leaders in Addis Ababa comprehend the significance of participating in CPD activities situated within the educational context. By proactively taking part in CPD activities, they immerse themselves in learning experiences that directly pertain to their roles as educational leaders.

Moreover, this indicates that primary school leaders in Addis Ababa acknowledge the importance of social interaction and collaboration in the learning process. They actively engage with other professionals, experts, and peers during CPD activities, fostering the exchange of experiences, ideas, and insights. This sociocultural aspect of CPD activities resonates with the Situated Learning Theory, which underscores the role of social engagement in knowledge acquisition and skill development. The viewpoint expressed below by one of the interview participants closely paralleled the findings derived from the quantitative data:

I understand the importance of staying updated in the field of education and seek out CPD opportunities such as workshops, seminars and conferences to deepen my understanding of educational theories, learn from experts, and acquire practical strategies. Engaging in CPD activities also allows me to network with peers, collaborate, and acquire specific skills that contribute to my effectiveness in leading my school and supporting teachers. As a primary school leader, I prioritize my professional growth through active engagement in continuous professional development (CPD) activities. I recognize the ever-evolving nature of education and actively seek out workshops, seminars, and conferences to expand my knowledge, learn from experts, and acquire practical skills. By engaging in CPD, I not only deepen my understanding of educational theories but also foster collaboration with peers and acquire strategies that enhance my leadership abilities and support for teachers in my school. (Interviewee 4, December 2022)

Furthermore, this suggests that primary school leaders in Addis Ababa view CPD activities as opportunities to learn within a community of practice. They recognize that learning is not solely

an individual endeavor but flourishes through involvement with experienced educators, researchers, and practitioners. By actively seeking out opportunities to learn from these individuals, primary school leaders can tap into a wealth of knowledge and expertise specific to their professional context.

Institutional Support: Encouraging CPD for Primary School Leaders in Addis Ababa

Based on the data provided in Table 3, Item 8 ($M=3.69$, $SD=0.63$), the support and encouragement primary school leaders in Addis Ababa receive from their institutions to participate in CPD programs can be understood through the lens of Social Learning Theory. This theory emphasizes the importance of social interactions and observational learning in the process of human development and learning. In this context, the fact that institutions in Addis Ababa provide support and encouragement to primary school leaders implies their recognition of the value of fostering a culture of continuous professional development. By actively supporting CPD participation, institutions implicitly acknowledge the importance of creating an environment that promotes ongoing learning and growth among their leaders.

Drawing from Social Learning Theory, the support and encouragement provided by institutions indicate their understanding of the benefits of learning within authentic contexts and the value of active participation in CPD programs for the professional development of their leaders. An interview participant exhibited a remarkable similarity to the findings from the quantitative data:

I receive strong support and encouragement from my institution to actively participate in continuous professional development (CPD) programs. My school recognizes the value of ongoing learning and the positive impact it has on my leadership abilities and the overall quality of education provided. My institution understands that CPD programs offer opportunities for me to expand my knowledge, acquire new skills, and stay updated with the latest educational practices. They encourage me to take part in workshops, seminars, conferences, and other relevant CPD activities that align with my professional goals and the needs of the school. By providing support and encouragement, my institution demonstrates its commitment to my professional growth and development.
(Interviewee 6, December 2022)

This allocation of resources aligns with the principles of Social Learning Theory, as it emphasizes the importance of providing the necessary resources and support for individuals to engage in meaningful learning experiences. Additionally, the support and encouragement from institutions imply that ongoing learning is valued and prioritized within the educational community. This sends a message that professional growth is not only encouraged but actively supported, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and development among primary school leaders.

Collaborative Learning: CPD Activities for Sharing Best Practices in Addis Ababa

In Table 3, Item 9 ($M=4.11$, $SD=0.94$), the existence of robust collaborative learning opportunities and the deliberate sharing of best practices through CPD activities for primary school leaders in Addis Ababa signifies a comprehensive commitment by their educational institutions to foster a vibrant and supportive professional learning community. The fact that primary school leaders are provided with collaborative learning opportunities implies that their institutions recognize the immense value of social interaction, shared experiences, and collective knowledge construction in the process of professional development. It suggests that leaders have the privilege to actively engage and collaborate with their peers, subject-matter experts, and experienced professionals

during CPD activities. This fosters a sense of shared purpose, facilitates the exchange of diverse perspectives, and nurtures a culture of collaboration and continuous learning.

Furthermore, the deliberate sharing of best practices implies that primary school leaders in Addis Ababa have access to a rich repertoire of practical knowledge, successful instructional strategies, and effective leadership approaches within their professional community. It suggests that leaders are encouraged to share their own expertise and experiences to contribute to the collective wisdom of the community. This sharing of best practices enables leaders to learn from one another, adapt successful strategies to their own context, and continuously improve their instructional and leadership practices. The presence of such collaborative learning and sharing opportunities creates an environment where primary school leaders can actively participate in a vibrant community of practice. It implies that leaders are part of a supportive network where they can engage in meaningful dialogue, receive constructive feedback, and benefit from the collective wisdom of their colleagues. The community of practice fosters the growth of professional relationships, nurtures a sense of belonging, and provides a platform for ongoing reflection, collaboration, and professional growth.

Perceived Effectiveness: CPD Practices Meeting Needs of School Leaders in Addis Ababa

From the findings on Table 3, Item 10 ($M=4.21$, $SD=0.72$), the perception of primary school leaders in Addis Ababa regarding the effectiveness of current CPD practices in addressing their professional development needs indicates a positive alignment between the provided opportunities and their specific requirements. The fact that primary school leaders perceive the current CPD practices as effective implies that these practices are considered valuable and beneficial in supporting their ongoing professional growth. It suggests that the CPD activities provided are relevant, timely, and cater to the specific needs and challenges faced by the leaders in their roles. The viewpoint expressed by one of the interview participants in the following statement bore a striking resemblance to the findings drawn from the analysis of the quantitative data.

The CPD practices in place provide me with a diverse range of options, including workshops, seminars, conferences and specialized training programs. These opportunities cover a wide range of relevant topics and are designed to meet the specific needs of school leaders like myself. Whether it's instructional leadership, curriculum development, or school management, I can find CPD activities that directly address my professional development goals. The content and delivery methods are well-structured and engaging, ensuring that I gain practical insights and strategies that can be applied directly to my work as a school leader. The current CPD practices foster a collaborative and supportive environment.

(Interviewee 8, December 2022)

The positive perception of effectiveness also suggests that the CPD practices in place are designed to address the evolving demands and changing educational landscape in Addis Ababa. This alignment between the CPD offerings and the needs of primary school leaders demonstrates a commitment to providing relevant and impactful professional development opportunities. Furthermore, the perception of effectiveness indicates that the current CPD practices are likely to be well-structured and thoughtfully designed.

CONCLUSION

The study, which employed a mixed design approach and included a sample of 50 school leaders from 20 primary schools in Addis Ababa, offers valuable insights into the current state of CPD in the educational landscape. The findings of the study indicate that school leaders generally recognize the importance of CPD and its potential to enhance their leadership skills and improve overall school performance. However, there are variations in the extent to which CPD is prioritized and effectively implemented across different schools. Some school leaders actively engage in CPD programs, attending workshops, conferences, and professional development courses, while others face challenges in accessing relevant opportunities due to resource constraints or limited support from educational authorities. Furthermore, the study highlights the significance of collaboration and networking among school leaders as key factors in promoting effective CPD. The exchange of ideas, sharing of best practices, and building professional relationships were identified as crucial elements in fostering continuous growth and improvement among school leaders. It is evident from the study that there is a need for concerted efforts from various stakeholders, including educational policymakers, school administrators, and the wider educational community, to enhance the provision of CPD opportunities for school leaders. These efforts should focus on addressing the barriers to access and ensuring the availability of relevant and high-quality CPD programs that align with the specific needs and challenges faced by school leaders in Addis Ababa.

IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL PLANNING

This article highlights the importance of educational planners prioritizing and investing in continuous training and development programs for school leaders. It suggests that allocating resources to support professional development initiatives for school leaders should be a key focus of educational planning. The findings from this study can be used by educational planners to create training programs that specifically target the enhancement of leadership skills. The study emphasizes the need for monitoring and evaluating the impact of professional development programs for school leaders. Educational planning should incorporate mechanisms to assess the effectiveness and outcomes of these initiatives. By collecting data and feedback, educational planners can make informed decisions, refine existing programs, and develop new strategies to enhance the quality and relevance of professional development for school leaders.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Questionnaire To Be Filled by Public Primary School Leaders

I: General Information. Sex: Male ___ Female ___
 Age: _____
 Academic Degree: _____

Please answer (X) according to the following key:
 SA = **Strongly Agree**; A = **Agree**; U = **Undecided**; D = **Disagree**; SD = **Strongly Disagree**

II.	The Perceptions Public Primary School Leaders Towards CPD	Rating Scale				
		SD	D	U	A	SA
		1	2	3	4	5
1	Continuous professional development (CPD) programs are essential for enhancing the knowledge and skills of public primary school leaders in Addis Ababa.					
2	Primary school leaders in Addis Ababa perceive CPD programs as valuable opportunities for professional growth and development.					
3	Primary school leaders in Addis Ababa believe that participating in CPD programs positively impacts their effectiveness in their roles and responsibilities.					
4	Primary school leaders in Addis Ababa actively seek out and participate in a variety of CPD programs to enhance their knowledge and skills.					
5	Primary school leaders in Addis Ababa perceive CPD programs as necessary for staying updated with the latest educational trends and best practices.					
III.	The Current CPD Practices and Experiences of Public Primary School Leaders	SD	D	U	A	SA
6	Primary school leaders in Addis Ababa have access to a variety of CPD opportunities, such as workshops, seminars, or conferences.					
7	Primary school leaders in Addis Ababa actively engage in CPD activities to enhance their professional knowledge and skills.					
8	Primary school leaders in Addis Ababa receive support and encouragement from their institutions to participate in CPD programs.					
9	Primary school leaders in Addis Ababa have opportunities for collaborative learning and sharing best practices through CPD activities.					
10	Primary school leaders in Addis Ababa perceive the current CPD practices as effective in addressing their professional development needs.					

Appendix 2: Interview Guides for Public Primary School Leaders

Section 1: Background Information

1. Can you please provide a brief overview of your role as a primary school leader in Addis Ababa?
2. How long have you been serving in this role, and what motivated you to become a school leader?
3. In your opinion, why is continuous professional development important for primary school leaders?

Section 2: Current Practices in Continuous Professional Development

1. What types of continuous professional development opportunities are currently available to primary school leaders in Addis Ababa?
2. How are these CPD programs designed and organized? Are they mandatory or voluntary?
3. What are the common challenges faced by primary school leaders in accessing and participating in CPD activities?
4. Are there any specific strategies or initiatives employed to overcome these challenges?