Teachers' Perspectives on the Implementation of Continuous Professional Development in UMgungundlovu District in South Africa

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Abstract

The Department of Basic Education in South Africa has sound policies, vision, and mission statement to guide their schools to achieve their prospective goals. The South African Council of Educators' policy manages implementation of Continuous Professional Development to guarantee teachers' effectiveness over time. However, although Continuous Professional Development has long been in effect, it is still not clear how its implementation phase has taken its course and how teachers respond to its objectives. This study aimed to determine teachers' perspectives on the nature of Continuous Professional Development implementation in uMgungundlovu District in South Africa. Using an interpretive qualitative research approach, data was collected from 21 teachers who were randomly selected in the three Circuit Management Centres in uMgungundlovu District using documents analysis, in depth interviews and focus group discussions. The findings revealed that there was no compliance with the South African Council of Educators policies to implement Continuous Professional Development. This non-compliance resulted in Continuous Professional Development becoming ineffective, which may impact on teachers' effectiveness in their teaching.

Keywords: continuous professional development, the South African council of educators

1. Introduction and Background

The best likely education may help people progress in life and enhance the emerging nation (DBE, 2011). Teachers are the first ones to grasp and impart new information to others and they are quick to adjust to new developments (Ajani, 2020). Hence, the Department's goal is to offer quality teacher development opportunities for all teachers regardless of their locality (Bantwini, 2019). To achieve this objective, teachers' effective Continuous Professional Development (CPD) program is determined as a vehicle for teachers to constantly learn, attain and maintain their efficacy throughout their teaching career life. CPD signifies a series of teachers' development activities meant to guarantee teachers' quality teaching and improve learners' results. Conversely, the results of Trends in International Mathematics and Science (TIMSS) which was first run in 1995 (Gustafsson, 2017), Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ) and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) illustrate that learner attainment in South Africa is not pleasingly improving (DBE, 2016; Gustafsson, 2017). These studies are intended generally at assessing whether participating global countries do make progress in education from time to time. Currently, the quality of education in South Africa is crucial due to the demand of high-level knowledge and expertise for its people to cope in the modern world (Alene & Prasadh, 2018). The teachers' lack of content knowledge in subjects is regarded as one of the causes of the poor learner performance in the South African schools (Venkat & Spaull, 2015). As a result, teachers have a huge responsibility to work towards changing this status quo. Therefore, improving the quality of teachers is the key to improving learner performance. For that reason, teacher commitment in a more effective teacher advancement programs and developing teacher expertise is the Department's planned attention area (DBE, 2015). The teachers' preliminary professional training is not enough to carry them through their career life. They need to increase their existing knowledge with new skills to boost their autonomy in their field thus stimulating their teaching and learning persistently. Therefore, CPD is central to teacher learning because only ongoing professional learning reassures a high level of teacher knowledge to influence quality teaching and learning.

2. Contribution to Existing Knowledge

This article examined teachers' perspectives on the nature of the implementation of CPD in the UMgungundlovu District in KwaZulu-Natal, in South Africa. It presented teachers views on how CPD programs are experienced at the school level and at the classroom level in particular. It highlighted the recommendations for the best CPD practices in UMgungundlovu District. It was meant to help the Department of Education in realising their role of monitoring and supporting teachers CPD programs. Also, it will helpe teachers to reflect on the need to review and improve their practices to maintain their high standards of quality work through CPD programs. By foregrounding teachers' voices, this study contributed valuable evidence for designing more effective and contextually relevant CPD interventions which are more responsive and ultimately leading to improved teaching practices and stronger professional characters. Publishing this article to accredited journals, is going to contribute to the existing body of knowledge nationally and internationally.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Teacher Professional Development

The prior research on CPD in South Africa concentrate on administrative or policy analysis, ignoring the real-world experiences of teachers (Ono & Ferreira, 2010: Steyn, 2011). As mentioned in the introduction, South Africa currently requires high level knowledge and skills for its people to cope with the changing world (Alene & Prasadh, 2018). Hence, Bernadine (2019) infer that teacher Professional Development is the route that teachers take to search for and acquire new knowledge, skills, and professional standards to improve in their practice. Bernadine (2019) and Ajani (2021) agree that CPD is a process whereby teachers intentionally pursuit and demonstrate their skills in their learning spheres whilst on employment. It is ongoing and it puts emphasis on teacher change of approaches and principles to enhance teaching and improve learner attainment. It helps teachers to handle constant curriculum changes and invent new developments in their career. It is a drive towards excellence in teaching, and it opens avenues to career advancement including promotion in the job.

3.2 Continuous Professional Development

CPD is the source for effective teacher development to improve quality curriculum delivery throughout the teachers' career life. It equips teachers with professional skills and competence in teaching. In other words, CPD aims to sustain quality teaching and preserve highly skilled teachers (Buhagiar & Tonna, 2015). Therefore, CPD should be implemented to give teachers opportunity to review and refresh their teaching skills particularly the teachers who have a lengthy service in teaching (Ulla & Winitkun, 2018). Moreover, it helped teachers realize the need to work together in collaboration. Bantwini (2018) argue that collaboration amongst teachers is an influential tool for CPD contributing to advancement of skills and practice which is critical for student learning. Effective CPD certifies that the Department system and schools, in specific, have quality teachers who proficiently implement the school curriculum (DBE, 2018). As so, teachers should participate in a variety of development activities to enhance their own learning and instructional practices (Ajani (2021).

3.3 Cognitive Approach to Learning

A cognitive approach to learning underlines the understanding of information and thoughts by an individual and it mostly benefits him in his classroom teaching. It is not feasibly shared with others in practice (Kelly, 2006). The latter statement means that when an individual uses a cognitive approach, it mainly helps them personally. For example, in the case of teachers, it help them in planning lessons, understanding teaching learning and support material to use and teaching more effectively.

3.4 The Socio-cultural Theory of Learning

The socio-cultural approach suggests that learning is socially located (Kelly, 2006). From this viewpoint, teacher learning is characterized by sharing and creation of meaning in collaboration with others.

3.5 CPD in the International Context

CPD is practically in effect in several countries in the world depending on their individual situational needs. The CPD policies that apply in various countries differ according to their developmental needs. Some countries across the globe; like Spain, Poland, Germany, Portugal, United Kingdom, have CPD policies to guide and monitor renewal of teacher licenses, job and pay progression (Geldenhuys & Oosthuizen, 2015; Ajani et al., 2018; Bernadine, 2019). In the countries like Greece, France, Iceland, and many others, CPD is regarded as a compulsion for teachers to transform themselves whilst on employment and teachers are not compelled to partake. In Australian schools, CPD is regarded as an essential tool to develop teachers in technological skills which are regarded as a driving force in the rapid changing and competitive world (Engelbrecht & Ankiewicz, 2015).

3.6 CPD in the South African Context

The South African Council for Educators (SACE) is the official providers of CPD developments across the schooling system (DBE & DHET, 2011; SACE, 2012). Therefore, In South Africa CPD of teachers is managed through the implementation of Continuing Professional Teacher Development (CPTD) Management system (Bernadine, 2019). The CPTD system is empowered by the National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development to manage CPTD system (DBE, 2018; Bernadine, 2019). This policy requires teachers to register with SACE and commit themselves to maintain the Code of Professional Ethics for teachers (Bernadine, 2019). Teachers are allocated professional development points through the CPTD system in a three-year cycle (SACE, 2012; Geldenhuys & Oosthuizen, 2015; Ajani et al., 2018; Bernadine 2019).

3.7 Theoretical Framework

This study is positioned within the parameters of the two theoretical frameworks namely community of practice where teachers learn and change (Wenger, 1998) and transformative learning where teachers learn and transform to become effective teachers (Mezirow, 1997). Between these two theoretical frameworks, the key theoretical framework is Wenger (1998) because it is Wenger's four constituents of learning; the community, practice, meaning and identity which help teachers to continuously learn and grow (Wenger's, 1998). Mezirow 's (1997) transformative theory gives emphasis to Wenger's (1998) theory of learning, highlighting teacher change and transformation in his practice. Wenger (1998) in his perspective of sociocultural theory of learning views all the four components as jointly dependent to each other with learning being central; and he suggests:

3.7.1 Learning in a Community

Teachers as social beings form this central aspect of learning as a community (Wenger, 1998) in a particular social context. There is a sense of belonging because teachers know each other in their own locality. Learning activities are determined by teachers' actual needs for development. Teachers work together, share and creatively exchange their understandings. There is always joint involvement, construction of new knowledge and teachers' transformation (Mezirow, 1997).

3.7.2 Learning in Practice

Teachers learn and keep practicing (Wenger,1998). They critically mirror themselves and consider each other's views as a group. They share and learn from their own existing knowledge. They reconsider their experience and background to critically reflect and refresh their knowledge.

3.7.3 Learning for Meaning

The learning process becomes a creation of meaning when people deliberately learn to understand the world around them (Wenger, 1998). Teachers who are exposed to professional development activities ongoing, are always ready to adjust to ever changing curriculum and can make learning meaningful.

3.7.4 Learning to change Identity

Learning changes a person and his way of thinking to make him fit in the present (Mezirow, 1997; Wenger, 1998). As teachers learn and develop, their uniqueness is modified. Therefore, what leads people to change is the way they interpret the world (Mezirow, 1997). Wenger's four components of learning together provide a structuring framework for a social theory of learning in Figure 1 as follows:

Figure 1. Components of a social theory of learning (Wenger, 1998: 5)

4. Research Methodology

In this study, the qualitative research method embraced the Interpretive paradigm to seek background and experiences of the participants. Department officials and teachers who participated in this study were chosen using both random and purposeful sampling methods. Random sampling explains that each member of the population to be studied has an equal opportunity of being involved in the sample (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). Purposive sampling, on the other hand, is regarded as the deliberate selection of participants based on the attributes they possess, including knowledge and experience, availability, and the ability to express their experiences (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). Overall, 21 schools from the three uMgungundlovu Circuit Management Centres (CMCs) were randomly selected. The advantage of using random sampling was that it avoided researchers' sampling bias to intentionally and being unaware choosing some individuals over others in the sample group (Cassim, 2021). Focus group discussions, documents analysis, and semi-structured interviews were used as instruments to collect sufficient data. The participants included both new and experienced teachers. The researchers used their judgement to purposefully select and interviewed two Department officials who served in the Teacher Development Directorate for they had expertise in coordinating CPTD in the District.

Regarding focus group discussions, one teacher from each school was selected to form three teachers' focus groups discussions. This means that focus groups comprised of seven members per group of males and females from both rural and urban primary and secondary schools. Participants were appropriately coded using pseudonyms to protect their identities and they signed consents. The discussion followed the codes namely: focus group one (F1), focus group two (F2) and focus group three (F3). Participants were identified by using name stickers to ensure that no one called each other's actual name even if they knew them.

Documents such as teachers' CPTD files also known as teacher journals or Personal Development Plan (PDP) (SACE, 2013) were analysed. These files had a record of all teachers' engagements in CPTD. Also, the district officials had CPTD control files indicating engagements that they had had with teachers at uMgungundlovu District including teachers' development plans and workshops held. These CPTD control files documents were also analysed, and they gave researchers an understanding of an overview on CPTD implementation in uMgungundlovu district. In addition, they comprised of information that triggered questions to guide the research study.

Before every interview, the researchers and each participant worked out a time and place that worked for both parties. Prior to the interviews, participants were told that interviews would last between thirty and an hour. A standardized interview guide was created with an emphasis on the wording and order of important questions to guarantee uniformity and eliminate ambiguity. While providing flexibility for in-depth investigation, the guide assisted in preserving consistency between interviewees. To make sure that every question was answered completely, probing strategies were used when participants seemed reluctant to elaborate or when responses seemed incomplete. Additionally, active listening and appropriate nonverbal communication created a supportive and nonjudgmental environment that helped researchers better understand the nuances and deeper meanings in participants' responses.

Inductive approach and thematic analysis were used to analyze qualitative data. Inductive approaches use themes that develop from data as analysis tools. As explained in Creswell (2013), data were analyzed and linked with the research aim and research question using the following steps: (i) prearrange data, use a word processor to write out data to fully engage in it, (ii) get understanding, make sense of it (iii) data coding – look for patterns, themes and recurring ideas, (iv) group the codes into types of shared ideas, (v) record data into qualitative findings (vi) interpret data and convey findings.

5. Results

This section presents the findings of the study using data generated from the 21 teacher participants through three sets of focus group discussions. The Department officials in the Teacher Development Directorate who were invited to participate in the semi-structured interviews were busy preparing themselves for interviews. Yet, including them would give a larger sample size to increase reliability. The quotes from teachers were used to confirm data. The teachers' perspectives on the nature of CPD implementation in uMgungundlovu District are communicated using the themes that emerged after the data were transcribed and analyzed which are Department workshops limiting teachers, CPD effectiveness, CPD as a neglected area, giving feedback to others, teachers' workload, the pilot projects and resources and infrastructure.

5.1 Department Workshops are Limiting Teachers

Teacher participants acknowledged that they attended the Department's workshops in some subjects, and they were not continuous and not in all subjects or grades. Teachers attended subjects' workshops once a year and they wanted workshops in other subjects too and according to their needs. Teachers indicated their priority development need in technological skills. Lindy F3 declared, *"You can stay current by attending Department workshops in some subjects, like English and Mathematics."* Other teachers shared similar views.

Zozo F2 stated, *"we attend workshops, not for all subjects, or grades, mostly English or Mathematics, like once a year."*

Beyonce F1 asserted, *"We are living on technology now; our priority need is computer literacy."*

5.2 CPD is not Effective

The findings revealed that CPD was not effectively implemented in uMgungundlovu District. The objectives of CPD were not clear to teachers. Teachers attended CPD introductory workshops, and no further implementation took place. Lastborn F1 revealed, *"It was a CPTD workshop to develop a CPTD file, that's all."* Other teachers shared the same understandings.

Zozo F2 stated, *"I think it was 2017 after that it died off."*

Faith F3 stated, *"The department gave only one workshop on CPTD, that's all I know."*

The CPD workshops were not effective. Teachers did not have a clear understanding of CPD practices. They felt that something needed to be done about it. They inferred that the School Management Team (SMT) needs to play a huge role to capacitate teachers on CPD practices. In addition, teachers declared that they had no developments in CPD. The newly appointed teachers had no understanding of what CPD is about. Faith F3 indicated, *"SMT need to take a stance. The new ones come with no experience."* Other teachers shared the same sentiments.

Beyonce F1 stated, *"We do not have full understanding of it, we are still new in the profession. "*

Zonke F2 stated, *"Some of us are new in the system; we haven't been developed in CPTD; there is a gap."*

5.3 CPTD is a Neglected Area

The findings revealed that CPD, as a development program, was neglected because since its inception phase in the year 2016, the Department organized workshops to present it, and thereafter it died. Some of the teachers did not know what the CPD was about. Unfortunately, Management and SMT did not make any follow-up on this matter. There is a Teacher Development Directorate in the Education sector, but teachers did not know the officials who should be cascading CPD programs to teachers. Zanele F3 stated, *"CPTD is a neglected area, it started, and it didn't continue."* Other teachers shared the same understandings.

Emtee F1 declared: *"There is Teacher Development Directorate in the education sector but up until today we do not know who is handling CPTD, nothing has really happened."*

Faith F3 concurred, *"We expect Management to have knowledge to lead us."*

5.4 Giving Feedback to Others

Teachers were not given feedback on time. It was always the same people who attended workshops, and they were not giving feedback. Management was not supportive and effective to implement teacher development programs. Teachers were not appraised on incoming workshops and the invitations to workshops were not shared with them. Pearl F1 stated, *"I attended those workshops too, but I didn't get a chance to report back. I got no support from them."* Other teachers shared the same understandings.

Zozo F2 indicated, *"There is no push; there is no encouragement."*

Zonke F3 indicated, *"Management never show invitations, they keep sending same people all the time."*

5.5 Teachers' Workload

Some teachers taught multi-grade classes. They were overloaded with work and assessments. There was no time to participate in CPD activities or focus on other matters. Teachers wanted time to engage on CPD programs. Emtee F1 explained, *"Firstly, you need Assessment Task Programs (ATPs) for multi-graded classes."* Other teachers shared the same understandings.

Lorraine F2 maintained, *"There should be time allocated for us to work on CPTD; at school it's busy; there's no time."*

Zanele F3 stated, *"I think time is a problem."*

5.6 The Pilot Projects

The teachers acknowledged that CPD was the best tool for professional development. However, they did not see any value from pilot projects because they only focused and benefitted limited schools. Also, they blamed Management for making no effort to monitor the implementation of pilot projects; and to sustain and extend them to other teachers in the district. Lastborn F1 revealed, "*It was piloted to some schools."* Other teachers shared the same views.

Lindy F3 stated, *"Few schools were part of the pilot project. "*

Mandy F2 revealed, *"Subject advisors were supposed to monitor and see how pilot project is spread."*

5.7 Resources and Infrastructure

Teachers revealed that there were no resources, and the infrastructure was very poor to support CPD programs in their schools. Teachers needed WI-FI in their schools to connect to SACE portal. They require computers, electricity, CPD manuals, booklets, and policy documents. Lorraine F2 stated, *"We need to have WI-FI to connect to SACE."* Other teachers shared the same views.

Tyson F1 revealed, "*As you are talking about resources, you need to have internet, computers, booklets, manuals and policy documents."*

Zanele F3 revealed, *"Without infrastructure, it is not easy?"*

5.8 Document Analysis

In alignment with document analysis, the findings revealed that teachers had no records kept as evidence to implement CPD in their schools in uMgungundlovu District. Only one school amongst the focus group two (F2) participants, had a set of files in the teachers' names displayed in the glass cupboard. Lorraine F2 maintained, *"Our retired principal attended CPTD orientation workshop and introduced these files. They all have SACE application forms inside and nothing else."*

Faith F3 revealed, "Some of us are new in the school; we haven't been developed in CPTD Yet."

Lastborn F1: "It was a CPTD workshop to develop file, that's all."

6. Discussion

In alignment with document analysis, teachers had no documents pertaining to CPD records in their schools. The teacher files in a few schools indicated that an orientation was done on CPD and it ended there. There was no necessary follow-up made towards CPD implementation in UMgungundlovu District. Therefore, teacher participation in CPD was very insignificant. For CPD to be meaningful, teachers should have CPD record files, and minute books of CPD meetings held in their effort to implement CPD practices. CPD files should have records of orientation workshops, SACE policy documents, CPD improvement plans, self-initiated activities, school-initiated activities and external-initiated activities by the approved service providers. The district officials were busy to avail themselves for interviews. However, interviewing them would increase the reliability of data.

Teachers attended Department workshops mostly in Mathematics, Science and Technology. Their desire was to see continuous development programs running throughout the year, and in all their subjects. Accordingly, this would keep balance in their classroom practice across the subjects teaching.

To explain the above, it is Department's policy that subjects like English, Mathematics, Science and Technology are regarded as priority subjects (DBE & DHET, 2011). As a result, Funza Lushaka bursaries are provided to potential teachers in these subjects (DBE, 2018). The significance of prioritizing these subjects indicates in the national testing programs, which are TIMSS (DBE, 2016), PIRLS and SACMEQ (Gustafsson, 2017) where participating countries gradually point out their progress. The existing literature further declares that low achievement by learners in these subjects denies them entry into the tertiary level (Bantwini, 2019). Accordingly, the Department requires learners who can master these subjects as early as grades 3, 6 and 9 in the South African schools (Al-Balushi, 2018).

Understanding the good course of the Departments' strategy to priorities specific subjects, the capacity of teachers teaching other subjects may not be equally attended to. These scholarly ideas agree with Venkat and Spaull (2015) who posit that the low rate of achievement by learners is challenging incompetency of teachers in the subjects teaching. This may be the reason for the poor quality of education in South Africa. Beginner teachers are highly qualified and very skilled when they commence their first jobs. However, due to their academic history, they lack capability to present the entire curriculum subjects in the medium of English which may impact on their overall classroom teaching (Mncube et al., 2021). Hence, CPD is a development approach to help teachers regain their competency constantly in all curriculum subjects (DBE & DHET, 2011; Bantwini, 2019).

Teachers longed for development in technology to improve their computer skills, which they indicated as a limitation in their attempt to implement CPD. In accord, CPD is needs based (Farooq, 2016) and teachers should recommend their professional development needs (Ajani, 2021). Accordingly, it is a development need that becomes an impetus to teachers' keenness to partake in professional development programs (Ajani, 2020). Calleja (2018) agrees that good teachers' professional development is brought into line with learners' learning needs. Furthermore, it arouses teachers' attention to engage and exchange knowledge with others.

Teacher reflection challenges teachers' knowledge and their determination to develop. Therefore, teachers should be given an opportunity to suggest what would be their dire needs for development instead of dictating and assuming what; and what not for them. Non-involvement of teachers in deciding their needs for development may result in a professional development activity becoming unsuccessful and incoherent to their classroom teaching. Also, South Africa has had no formal training in the content and methods associated with technology education (Engelbrecht & Ankiewicz, 2015). This may have discouraged teachers from accessing SACE portal and it indicates that teachers did not attempt to implement SACE policy.

There were no support programs to develop teachers. When teachers are left on their own and not supported in any professional development action, it lowers their enthusiasm to continue with that activity (Ajani, 2021). Alternatively, it is in the community of practice that teachers regain their interest through engagement with others where they showcase their existing knowledge. Therefore, the SMT should actively take charge of their role of developing themselves and others.

When this study was conducted using the focus group discussions, teachers were still not clear about CPD policies and had no mastery of its practices. This indicates that CPD was not effective, it was abandoned. It appears that there was a gap in the implementation of CPTD in the District. Hence, CPD is meant to inspire and help teachers identify their professional development needs (Engelbrecht & Ankiewicz, 2015). Therefore, the gap in the implementation of CPD entails that teachers may have missed an opportunity to learn and acquire the necessary knowledge and skills that they aspire to teach the intended curriculum. So, the teacher's quality of teaching may not have improved. This finding confirms that SACE may not certify that the Department system and schools have quality teachers who proficiently implement the school curriculum as the Department policy demands (DBE, 2018).

CPD in uMgungundlovu District was not made significant to teachers. As a result, teachers may not have opened to change and transformed them into better teachers (Mezirow, 1997). This may have affected their instructional practice, and they may have failed to innovatively adjust to the demands of quality education. In this way, the status-quo of poor-quality teaching and low learner achievement, as mentioned in the background of this study may not have changed. Teachers attended Department workshops, but they did not give feedback to others. This explains that the new information did not reach out to all teachers, but it was cognitive (Kelly, 2006) and it remained only with the individuals who attended the workshops. However, teachers learn well and quickly when they work together (Ajani et al., 2018). Giving no feedback, restricted teachers in generating their own series of constant progress (Ajani, 2021). However, giving feedback would guarantee professional improvement and change for further growth that may

still be due to them (Ajani, 2021). The findings showed that the teachers' need for professional development was not valued by Management.

To explain the above, there was no encouragement from Management to support teachers in their attempt to implement CPD. Bantwini (2019) posits that overall school development is influenced by the kind of assistance that Management offer to their teachers in their professional development stage. The SMT denied teachers an opportunity to engage with others in collaboration in their own context where they collectively share, discuss, and develop one another. For teachers, this may indicate that CPD has lost its meaning of becoming an approach to influence change in their schools. Working in collaboration would provide a platform and support between teachers and Management to participate collectively in determining their progress needs, to plan and to lead their development activities (Botha & Nel, 2022). In this way every teacher would have a voice in issues pertaining to their jobs (Ajani & Buthelezi, 2022).

Though, teachers in uMgungundlovu District attended workshops and initiated their own development activities they seemed not to understand their relation to CPD practices. This may indicate that teachers were on their own in their attempt to implement CPD. Furthermore, invitations to the workshops were not shared with teachers, which may have denied them an opportunity to participate in their CPD activities. This further denied them a space to engage in a community of practice where they would better understand the nature of learners' mistakes in their subjects and an opportunity to work together on how they need to react to them (Brodie, 2013) to improve their teaching and learner progress.

Teachers asserted that the pilot programs did not benefit all teachers. There was no follow-up done by the Department to ensure progress and no action was taken to sustain that development initiative. This denied teachers an opportunity to learn in collaboration where they learn and practice to make their learning significant to them (Wenger, 1998) and to modify their individuality (Mezirow, 1997). For teachers to improve in teaching, schools must invest in their professional growth (Engelbrecht & Ankiewicz, 2015). Consequently, teachers may not be at par with others in the district; now that some of the schools missed out on an opportunity to participate in the pilot projects. This could be a start to their lifelong professional development activities. In terms of the acquired knowledge and skills, this may challenge teachers' varied levels of expertise in the district, resulting to some teachers becoming more competent than others. For teachers to progress continuously, their professional development programs should be recurring to stimulate their subject delivery (Ajani et al., 2018).

The teachers were frustrated because they had no experience of any engagement in CPD practices. In addition, they lost out on an opportunity to implement CPD owing to the unavailability of resources and the infrastructure that was very poor. Failing to implement CPD may have challenged SACE policy which is recognized by law to focus mainly on the management and implementation of CPTD (SACE, 2012; Ajani, 2021). Correspondingly, the SACE Annual Report indicates that some educators were still confused about recording their activities to SACE electronically and manually in their own files (SACE, 2019). This may indicate a gap in the implementation of CPD in uMgungundlovu District. A needs analysis discussion between the teachers and Management to determine teachers' professional development needs may be a way forward. Using a needs analysis schedule may help to determine the gap in teachers' inability to record their activities to SACE.

7. Conclusion

The study focused on the nature of the implementation of CPD in UMgungundlovu District in KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa. It came to light in the study that teachers had no CPD record files as evidence of their CPD activities. The study discovered that SACE policies are disregarded, thus, delaying effective continuous professional development programs to run in uMgungundlovu District. CPD was not implemented, which made it ineffective. Therefore, teachers were automatically deprived of their opportunity to develop continuously in their professional career and to meet the required curriculum standards necessary for effective teaching and increased learner performance. The CPD's intended contribution to teachers' knowledge, skills and instructional practice in the schools was not clear to teachers. There was no supervisory push for teachers to implement CPD in UMgungundlovu. The management lacked proficient supervision and motivation at all levels by the District officials and school management teams, who needed to ensure that teachers were adequately trained to implement CPD in their schools.

Based on the findings from this study, it appeared that there was a gap in the implementation of CPD. Therefore, a gap entails that teachers may still need to take advantage of an opportunity to learn and acquire the necessary knowledge and skills that they aspire to teach the intended curriculum. Therefore, the study recommends some strategies to improve the nature of implementation of CPD in uMgungundlovu District as follows:

(1) There is a need for teachers' refresher course on Continuing Professional Teachers Development (CPTD) to support CPD inexperienced teachers and the newly appointed teachers.

(2) CPD groups need to be strengthened and supported by Department officials on a time basis to ensure effective CPD implementation.

(3) The Department need to absorb more teachers in the system to help reduce the teachers' load, thus making time for teachers to engage in CPD activities.

(4) School management teams need to ensure that the systems to develop teachers are in place. There should be teacher groups which include Management to monitor the implementation of CPD.

(5) There should be information sharing sessions where teachers discuss any matters pertaining to their professional development, including giving feedback to others.

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