

## The Implementation of Teachers' Continuous Professional Development: The Role of Teachers' Personal Characteristics, Perception towards CPD, and Support of School Leaders

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### Abstract

Professional development for teachers propels schools to excellence and contributes to school growth. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the role of teachers' personal characteristics, perception towards Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and support of school leaders in the implementation of teachers' CPD at Finote Selam town secondary school in Ethiopia. To accomplish this, Ecological Theory served as a theoretical lens, and a convergent parallel mixed design was used. A questionnaire was used to collect data from 304 teachers selected using a comprehensive sampling strategy, as well as 11 interviewers. As findings, teachers' implementation of CPD has no correlation with age, length of service, and perception of teachers towards CPD. However, there is a significant, strong, and positive relationship between teachers' implementation of CPD and school leaders' contribution to CPD. The support of school leaders explains 39.6 % of the total variance of teachers' CPD implementation. Finally, lack of good school culture among use in professional development activities, lack of commitment, lack of funding, and lack of common understanding related to CPD were the most prominent challenges affecting teachers'

### Article Info

#### Article History:

Received:  
November 5, 2023

Accepted:  
May 21, 2024

#### Keywords:

CPD,  
Perception,  
Implementation of  
CPD,  
School leaders'  
support.

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*implementation of CPD. The findings provide theoretical implications to the literature and practical implication to educational institution leaders by identifying the main challenges of teachers in the implementation of CPD.*

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**Cite as:**

Berhanu, K. Z. (2024). The implementation of teachers' continuous professional development: The role of teachers' personal characteristics, perception towards CPD, and support of school leaders. *Research in Educational Administration & Leadership*, 9(3), 295-332. <http://10.30828/real.1386266>

### **Introduction**

Quality education is a crucial element that shapes the advancements of society (Tulu, 2019). Educational and developmental theories are available to assist good quality education and make lessons enjoyable for students (Vadivel et al., 2021). Quality education is influenced by rapid changes in the contemporary world. Changes in the globes and nation's education system required staff development in their profession to update their competencies and to add value for the overall enhancement of students' the learning and education system (Evers et al., 2016; Srinivasacharlu, 2019). One means to update teachers' competencies is teachers' Continuous Professional Development (CPD) (MoE, 2015). According to the MoE (2009, p. 16), CPD is "anything that makes me a better teacher, targeting the improvement of teachers' performance in school situation to learners." CPD can be also explained as an in-service program that consists of learning, disseminating, and reflecting to keep alert to the



contemporary fluctuations and advancement in the teaching world (Evers et al., 2016; Vadivel et al., 2021).

There are two main methods to CPD: traditional and modern, according to Wan (2011). Because they cannot adequately prepare teachers for the new role of knowledge facilitator rather than knowledge transmitter, traditional approaches to CPD—such as one-stop workshops, formal courses, or one-off seminars with a top-down approach to knowledge dissemination—are criticized for their flaws (Wan, 2011). Conversely, modern CPD methods like conferences, informal conversations with coworkers, in-service training, peer mentoring, additional studies, training courses, study networks, collaborative teaching, and research on interest are all collaborative in nature. According to Abakah et al. (2022) and Srinivasacharlu (2019), modern approaches to CPD place a strong emphasis on the value of fostering learning communities where educators may experiment with new ideas, evaluate their performance, and build their understanding of teaching and learning within real-world contexts. There are two approaches to professional development for teachers (Job-Related and Job-Embedded), according to Joyce and Nicholson (1976). Committee work for program design and organization, team teaching, communication with district consultants, professional reading, and curriculum analysis are all included in the job embedding method. Workshops, teacher exchanges, and visits are examples of job-related methods. For the purpose of this research, CPD refers to any activity of teachers in secondary schools of Finote Selam town that contribute to increase knowledge, skills and personal qualities related to learning and teaching process. Teachers' CPD practices may influence student standardized test scores (Martínez et al., 2009). Teachers who have had



opportunities to learn something can predictably offer the same to their students (Vadivel et al., 2021).

### **Association of teachers' implementation of CPD with their personal characteristics and perception towards CPD and support of school leaders**

Chappuis et al. (2009) strongly claimed that obtaining clarity of CPD's goals has crucial significance for its effective and efficient implementation. According to MoE's (2009) research report, approximately 4 out of 5 schools had either absent or inadequate structure of CPD. Several studies by Demelash (2012), Tulu (2019), and Gebre-Yesus (2014) displayed that the practice CPD activities in Ethiopian schools were scanty. However, Rikitu (2019) revealed that teachers' practices of CPD activities were somewhat adequately implemented.

Regarding the association of teachers' implementation of CPD with their personal characteristics and perception towards CPD, several existing scholars found different results. The literature search from 27 empirical studies over how CPD differs across teachers' personal characteristics in a general age group in particular revealed that older workers were less likely to involve in CPD than young workers (Pool et al., 2013). Younger employees are also more likely to participate in development training and education, according to Tones et al. (2010) and Abakah et al. (2022). However, research looking mainly at non-formal and informal learning activities (Lammintakanen & Kivinen, 2012) found a positive correlation with age, while studies looking at more formal CPD (Felstead 2010; Thangavelu et al. 2011) found a negative relationship between age and participation in CPD. Using several age perspectives, a thorough assessment of age-related aspects in CPD was produced, and research gaps were found. Beard and



Wilson (2006); Pajare (1992); Torff and Session, 2008; Torff and Session (2009) noted that attitudes and perceptions about CPD has had a strong influence on the implementation of CPD programs. Qader (2020) also found that teachers' perception of CPD has a crucial role in the delivery of teaching and implementation of CPD activities. A study in Iran showed that teachers have had a positive belief in what they do and recognized the significance of CPD to advance as professional teachers (Vadivel et al., 2021). Saleem (2021) and Widayat et al (2021) exposed that many teachers had a positive attitude towards CPD program. A study in primary schools of Somali region of Ethiopia found that a majority of teachers and school leaders have a clear appreciative perception and knowledge about CPD while it was not fully practiced (Endale & Demessie, 2020).

Several scholars also supported that teachers' implementation of CPD is also influenced by the support of school leaders (Chappuis et al., 2009; Rikitu, 2019). For instance, Chappuis et al. (2009) stated that education leaders could assist teachers to comprehend the CPD process and provide adequate support. However, Gebre-yesus (2014); Fagense (2019); Tulu (2019), and Rikitu (2019) revealed that the school leaders and district education experts were providing unsatisfactory support for the teachers. Particularly, Rikitu (2019) revealed that the lack of well-trained CPD facilitators in the school was linked to the low level of CPD implementation.

### **Challenges of implementing CPD**

There are several personal and institutional challenges that affect the successful implementation of CPD in schools. As Vadivel et al. (2021) stated, the concerns that should not be left out for better implementation of CPD were positive social interaction and allocation of appropriate time. Moreover, disorganized CPD training manuals



and contents, lack of well-trained CPD facilitators, inadequacy of school leaders' supports, and lack of funds to carry out CPD activities were the major challenges in implementing CPD programs (Rikitu, 2019). Qader (2020) also indicated that a mismatch between teachers' needs and CPD policy. The followings were identified as the prominent challenges of implementing CPD: a poor CPD training policy outline and scarce school support (Obiero & Onduso, 2020); restricted funding (Hustler, 2003); lack of institutional strategy, and low commitment of decision makers (Brekelmans, 2013); and lack of teachers' commitment, teachers' resistance, and inadequacy of need-based trainings (Birkel & Johnson, 2003; Day, 1999; Davidson et al., 2006; Falk, 2001). These challenges vary in terms of the type of context and CPD activities offered in schools (Gebre-yesus, 2014; Fagense, 2019; Tulu, 2019). More specifically, there was not any study that clearly examined the association of teachers' implementation of CPD with their personal characteristics and perception towards CPD and support of school leaders in Finote Selam town secondary school. Therefore, it was essential to carry out a study on the association of teachers' implementation of CPD with their personal characteristics and perception towards CPD and support of school leaders and related challenges in secondary schools of Finote-Selam town, Ethiopia.

### **Teachers' Continuous professional development in Ethiopian Context and Rationale**

Although Ethiopia has been successful in expanding education at all grade levels, quality of education has become a serious issue for all education stakeholders. One manifestation of this, for instance, in 2022, more than 900,000 Ethiopian students took the entrance exam but only 3.3% passed. The pass rate for natural sciences was 3.6% and for social



sciences, it was only 1.3%. Shockingly, 39.2% of the schools had no students who passed the national examination (Addis standard, 2023).

In Ethiopia in 1994, an Education and Training Policy (ETP) that targets at the ruling education system clearly stated the professional development and personal quality of teachers. Later on, MoE (2018) also stated the importance of CPD program for better provision of quality education in Ethiopia. CPD is one of the professional responsibilities of teachers to address problems in the teaching and learning process (MoE, 2018; TESO, 2003; TGE, 2002). CPD is also one of the six main national programs to address the quality of education. However, despite the majority teachers have been involved in the CPD program in various forms; there existed research agreed that the program could not bring a noteworthy enhancement on students' academic achievement and teachers' professional competence. The researcher's interactions with teachers in various occasions we also affirmed that there is still a gap between the anticipated and actual teachers' competence, which creates a gap in students' actual academic achievement (MoE, 2018). The absence of noticeably well-defined purposes, lack of shared vision among CPD partners, lack of satisfactory awareness, and absence of linkage between CPD practice and teachers' career structure are also recognized as factors influencing teachers' CPD practice (MoE, 2009; 2010; 2018).

When researcher come to the research gaps of this study, first, elsewhere outside current research setting, numerous researchers (e.g. Asheber, 2014); Demelash, 2012; Fagense, 2019; Gebre-yesus, 2014; Teshome, 2014; Tesfaye, 2014; Tulu, 2019) simply assess the practice and challenges of teachers CPD in certain schools of Ethiopia. The context of the geographical location where the studies were conducted is different from the setting of this study. CPD for secondary school



teachers is more likely to be different from that for primary and vocational secondary teachers as secondary school teachers strive to acquire crucial subject matter and teaching methodology to equip students for tertiary institutions (Fox 1992; Widayati et al., 2021). That means there is no study carried out on relationship of teachers' implementation of CPD with their personal characteristics and perception towards CPD and the support of school leaders in the Finote Selam town. Thus, this study will shed light on how teachers' personal characteristics and perception towards CPD affected their implementation of CPD. Second, even though there is a large body of literature on CPD, earlier studies have mostly used dispersed approaches to study factors affecting teachers' CPD practice across different educational organizations. In particular, there is a fragmentary and disjointed treatment of the Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Theory aspects. These research, however, have not been able to offer a comprehensive, all-encompassing, and adaptable paradigm for attaining CPD in terms of personal characteristics, perception towards CPD and support of leaders and so forth. Third, there are inconsistencies among scholars regarding factors affecting teachers' CPD practice as they varied in terms of the context and CPD activities offered in schools (Gebre-yesus, 2014; Fagense, 2019; Tulu, 2019). These showed that the level of practice and challenges of teachers' CPD activities are inconsistent and site-based. Some of them found similar results, others didn't. This required further studies on this topic. Therefore, as the practice and challenges of CPD activities are inconsistent and site-based and various teachers would likely have different perceptions and practices of CPD, this study aimed at examining the role of teachers' personal characteristics, perception towards CPD, and support of school leaders in the implementation of teachers' CPD activities in the case of Finote-Selam town secondary





schools. To achieve this general objective, the following basic research questions are raised:

1. What are the relationship of teachers' CPD practice with their personal characteristics and perception towards CPD and the support of school leaders?
2. What are the major challenges that affect the implementation of CPD programs?

Research conducted on CPD in a local context of Ethiopia can offer numerous benefits to international readers, researchers, policy makers, practitioners and so forth. First, this study can offer numerous benefits for researchers and international readers by enhancing school cultural understanding in CPD using the Bronfenbrenner's Ecological model and bringing diverse perspectives to the table, enriching the academic discourse with unique viewpoints on CPD that might not be present in international or Western-centric research. Moreover, this local research can open up collaborative opportunities, allowing international scholars to participate in projects that can lead to mutual learning and shared resources. This research will also be useful as a future reference for academics from throughout the world studying CPD. More significantly, it will reveal the extent to which secondary schools are benefiting from CPD. Essentially, by providing context-specific knowledge, encouraging partnerships, and adding to a more complete and integrated understanding of global concerns, this local study may greatly enhance the work of international researchers.

Second, on top of these, studying continuous professional development for secondary school teachers is quite an important research project for practitioners, policy makers and other stakeholders. One, the study can be an alternative technique to



improving teachers' CPD implementation by systematically looking into various elements of the relationships of the study variables. If secondary schools of Finote selam town develop a culture of solving problems by conducting research of this kind, a huge amount of resources will be saved from being invested for the wrong reasons. Here, it is fundamental to not forget that our country has very scarce skilled human resources among other things. Therefore, the researcher thinks that the findings of this study will be able to provide policy implementers with information about the levels and challenges to raising teacher participation rates in CPD programs. This study on CPD also helps practitioners maintain and enhance their skills, ensuring they remain competent and effective in their profession. It also aids in career advancement. Second, this study can inform policy development by providing evidence-based insights into what works in continuous professional practice. It also helps policy makers understand the relationship between their perception towards CPD program and challenges of professionals, leading to better support and resources. Third, the education minister's office, educational leaders, and other stakeholders may appreciate the results of this research and provide resources to raise teachers' CPD practice.

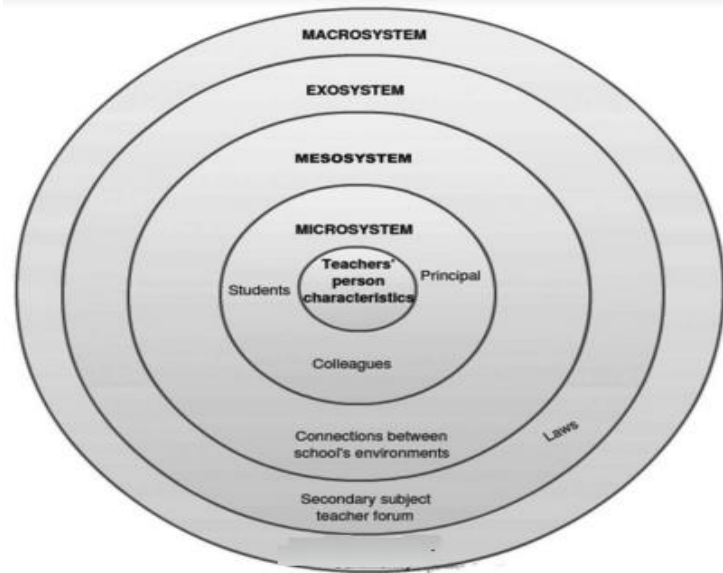
### **Theoretical Framework**

This study followed Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecology of Human Development theory, which underlines the cooperating practices between the individual and the environment. This theory strongly believes that those individuals' events, responsibilities, and interactions in any environments have a great contribution to all aspects of development. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model could also be helpful in examining the teachers' CPD (Kiilo & Kutsar, 2013; Widayati et al., 2021). According to the Bronfenbrenner's (1979)



Ecological Theory, development towards identified goals is sustained through interaction within the environment. In the case of the present study, teachers' main goal is to enhance professionalism via CPD.

In this conceptual model as shown in Fig. 1, the teacher is at the center of the model and the succeeding layers are responsible for the teachers' CPD practice. In the present study, this denotes teachers' personal characteristics such as age and length of service. At the next level teachers' developments are influenced by the environment in which they relate with others (microsystem layer). The microsystem contains the most immediate environmental setting containing the developing teachers. Relationships in a microsystem are bidirectional, meaning that other school stakeholders like the school principals, CPD facilitators, supervisors, and colleagues can affect teachers' CPD practice and change their beliefs and actions. The second layer is the interaction in the school environment (school level) (mesosystems layer) including interactions within the school stakeholders. For example, the conflict between these microsystems, like teachers and the principal blaming each other or blaming teachers for a student's poor academic achievement, creates tension that negatively impacts the teachers' professional development. The third layer is formal and informal social structures (community level) (exosystems layer) which includes local government, education policies, laws, mass media, funds, community resources, politicians, and so forth that can affect teachers' CPD. The last layer is the macrosystems layer which consists of the appropriateness of cultural ideologies, culture, social conditions, attitudes, values, education laws, and regulations to the teachers' CPD practice (Kiilo & Kutsar, 2013).



*Figure 1.* Factors Affecting Teacher’s CPD implementation: Personal and Environmental factors, adapted from Bronfenbrenner (1979) Ecological approach

## Methods

### Research Design

A convergent parallel mixed research design was utilized by incorporating both quantitative and qualitative methods due to several reasons. First, this design aids the researcher to gather and explain a large diversity of data from various school stakeholders related to the teachers’ implementation of CPD and associated challenges (Creswell & Clark, 2007). Second, this design allows the researcher to combine, integrate, and triangulate both the quantitative and qualitative data to strengthen each separately and to fill the limitations behind using one of the two alone. That means a better understanding of the research



topic is also hoped to be achieved by integrating quantitative and qualitative data. Third, this design is also the most prevalent method of mixed method design in educational studies by collecting quantitative and qualitative data to elucidate the findings (Creswell, 2015).

### **Participants**

All the secondary school of Finote Selam town's teachers, CPD facilitators, principals, and education experts were the total target population of the present study. Secondary and preparatory schools of Finote Selam town, Ethiopia, were chosen by purposively sampling technique. In those schools, there are 335 teachers which included as a sample through comprehensive sampling methods in the quantitative study. However, 304 teachers (90.7%) were completing the survey. For qualitative data, the researcher selected 3 principals, 3 CPD facilitators, and 5 concerned educational experts of the district and province education office, totally 11 samples were selected via maximum variation sampling method since it assists the researcher to choose small people that foster the variety appropriate to the research questions.

Eleven interviewees were selected based on the following inclusion criteria: they had to be employed for at least ten years; they had to be working on CPD-related duties; they had to be enrolled in secondary school prior to the interview; they had to be willing to participate in the study and expect good knowledge about CPD. Regarding demographic factors, respondents had more than ten years of experience, strong academic backgrounds, and CPD knowledge or proficiency. To get distinct and generally good viewpoints from each group, the researcher needed to involve principals, CPD facilitators from three secondary schools, and significant specialists from the

provincial and district education bureaus. Research involving a range of groups is beneficial because it may enhance the range of opinions and fields of expertise that may be used to the research topic, as well as boost the study's applicability and relevance for end users (Stalley et al., 2021). As a result, data collection from a diverse range of participants based on their roles within the school may provide a reasonably balanced set of perspectives and a range of views to studies on CPD practice and related difficulties.

**Table 1.**

*Demographic Characteristics of Participants (Quantitative and Qualitative)*

Personal Variables	For quantitative (teachers)		For qualitative		
	N	%	N	%	
Sex	Male	248	79.7	9	81.8
	Female	56	18.0	2	18.2
Length of service	<10 years	19	6.1	0	0
	11-20 years	223	71.7	5	45.45
	>21 years	62	19.9	6	54.55
Age	<29	39	12.5	0	0
	30-34	119	38.3	0	0
	35-40	65	20.9	2	18.2
	>40	81	26.0	9	81.8
Total	304	97.7	11	100%	

As shown in Table 1, most of the teachers in the secondary schools of Finote Selam are in adulthood stage. With regard to length of experience, the majority (71.7%) of the respondents were having 11-20 years of experience. Moreover, all school leaders (Interviewees), district and province Education Office experts have been working for



more than 10 years. Hence, it can be said that the majority of respondents are experienced teachers, school leaders, and education experts.

### **Instruments, Validity and Reliability**

Both qualitative and quantitative data gathering instruments were used in this study. Since the questionnaire is more appropriate for the investigation as it is inclusive of a variety of questions, closed-ended and open-ended the latter one potentially allows the respondents to generate more ideas. To collect quantitative data from the teachers, three scales were used using Likert scale which is not difficult to construct and takes less amount of time to reply. The likert scale ranges from 1(Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) for all scales. Sound instruments must meet the tests of validity and reliability. Questionnaire used for this study was initially developed by Abebaw (2019). Hence, the previous researchers proved the validity of the questionnaires and used in Ethiopian context. Hence, the studies involved a questionnaire that has two parts. The first part deals with the background of respondents. The second part consist of items that measure the perception, school leaders, support, practice, and challenges of CPD. For the second part, the details are described as follows:

*Teacher's perception towards CPD scale.* This scale was adapted from previous empirical studies in Ethiopia (Abebaw, 2019; Al Asmari, 2016; Hustler et al., 2003). Originally, Abebaw (2019) adopted from Al Asmari (2016) and Hustler et al. (2003) and validated in Ethiopian schools. According to Abebaw (2019), Cronbach Alpha for teacher's perception towards CPD scale was 0.83. He constructed and validated in Ethiopian context. The scale has 9 items (sample of items: Professional development activities help me to develop my own

instructional skills; Set my own learning goals to improve myself professionally continuously and CPD in education has a positive impact on teacher effectiveness and efficiency). When investigating the scale of Cronbach's coefficient alpha using SPSS-25, this scale has an alpha value of 0.612. Regarding fitness of the scale, the researcher carried out CFA which revealed. Chi-square( $\chi^2$ )/df =2.45, which is less than five, the scale has a good fit. IFI=.95, NFI=.95, CFI=.96, RMSEA=.052, RFI=.94, and NNFI =.95, which corresponded to a reasonable fit (Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2003). A wide range of different Cronbach's coefficient alpha labels was used by different scholars to interpret alpha values calculated (Griethuijzen et al., 2014; Taber, 2018). For instance, Taber's (2018) alpha value between 0.61– and 0.65 was categorized as moderate. Even if several scholars identified 0.7 as benchmark for reliability analysis, a Cronbach's alpha above 0.6 is considered acceptable due to several context matters. First, in this study, sample sizes are somehow small which tend to yield lower alphas. If sample size is somehow small, between 0.6 and 0.7 might be reasonable (Taber, 2018). Griethuijzen et al. (2014) also reported a cross-national study's Cronbach's alpha around 0.6 was acceptable. Second, Alpha is influenced by the number of items in scale. If scale has only a few items, above 0.6 might be acceptable (Taber, 2018). Third if item-total correlation is moderately high to high (.40+), then the item will make a good component of a summated rating scale which shows a good internal consistency. Item-total correlation of the scale is above 0.4 (Leech et al., 2015). Lastly homogeneity of participants or teachers was also contributed for low Alpha level. Hence, Cronbach's coefficient alpha of teacher's perception towards CPD scale had a reasonable reliability level (Field, 2009).





*School leaders such as supervisors, principals, and CPD facilitators, contributed to CPD implementation scale.* Author adopted this scale from Abebaw (2019). The scale has 12 items. Sample of items include: the school CPD facilitators prepare a training opportunities based on my training needs; the school principals prepare discussion forums with other schools; and the school leaders encourage and support me to exercise peer evaluation on CPD practices). This scale has sub dimensions such as school principals support for CPD (4 items); School facilitators (CPD) (3 items), and supervisor support (5 items). To investigate the fitness of the scale, the researcher carried out CFA which showed. Chi-square( $x^2$ )/df =2.23, which is less than five, the scale has a good fit. CFI=.97, IFI=. 96, RMSEA= .072, RFI= .96, NFI= .96, and NNFI =.96, which corresponded to a reasonable fit (Schermele-Engel et al., 2003). For reliability studies, author utilized Cronbach Alpha and its value for school principal contribution to CPD sub dimension 0.883, for CPD facilitators 0.9, and for supervisor the contribution to CPD implementation 0.9. The total Cronbach Alpha was 0.9. Thus, the scale is highly reliable in all sub dimensions and in the whole scale (Field, 2009).

*Teachers' CPD practice /implementations scale.* Practice is the vital phase in any type of CPD activity. According to Hargreaves and Fullan (2012), a CPD program's implementation requires careful preparation, honest communication, collaboration among implementers, and support from a variety of sources. The teachers' CPD practice scale made an effort to measure the extent to which CPD is being implemented in Finote Selam town's secondary schools. The findings showed how much the respondents agreed with the activities of CPD. It has a total of 13 items. Total Cronbach Alpha was .875. By conducting CFA, the researcher was able to determine the scale's fitness. The scale



has a very good fit as  $\chi^2/df = 1.9$ , which is less than five. Very good fit was shown by  $IFI=.97$ ,  $NFI=.98$ ,  $CFI=.98$ ,  $RMSEA=.041$ ,  $RFI=.96$ , and  $NNFI=.97$ . Sample items include: I am preplanning for CPD activities based on the evaluation of implemented CPD practices and I have prepared portfolio by recording all CPD documents; and I frequently conduct action researches with other teachers or groups.

*The challenges of implementation of CPD program in the school.* List of major challenges from previous scholars (Fagense, 2019; Gebre-yesus, 2014; Tulu, 2019) that affect the implementation of CPD programs were mentioned and teachers responded their level of agreement according to their respective schools. It has 12 items. Sample items include: I was not well oriented about the significance of CPD activities. The summary of the reliability of the scale was presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.**

*Summary of Reliability Results*

Variables	Cronbach Alpha	N of Items	Scale mean	Scale Std. Dev
Teachers' Perception of CPD	.612	9	25.8059	5.40674
Teachers' implementation of CPD	.875	13	26.8322	8.41664
School leaders' support of teachers	.9	12	21.1184	8.63865

In order to support and strengthen the data that were collected using the questionnaires, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with principals, CPD facilitators, and district and province educational office experts. To design semi structured questionnaire, author followed the following procedures. First, author prepared questions from the literature reviews in line with the objectives and basic questions of the study. Thus, the semi-structured questions



included information about the perception of teachers, practice and its personal and institutional factors that affect the implementations of CPD programs. Regarding factors that affect the implementations of CPD programs, in line with Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecology of Human Development theory, the teacher is at the center of the model and their practice of CPD were influenced by their personal characteristics, interactions with school stakeholders and environments (microsystem); formal and informal social structures (ecosystems layer); and macrosystems layer (appropriateness of cultural ideologies, culture, social conditions, attitudes, values, education laws, and regulations) (Kiilo & Kutsar, 2013). Second, author validated questions based on the comments of subject matter experts. Third, author ensured trustworthiness of the semi structured questionnaire via the following procedures: first, the selection of participants was not comprehensive, but was conducted by setting inclusion criteria before data were collected to avoid bias and subjectivity (see participant subsection). Second, author performed audio recordings from participants based on their full volunteerism.

### **Data Analysis**

Both quantitative and qualitative analyses were performed on the collected data. Quantitative data were analyzed by using descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage (to summarize personal information), mean scores (to address research question 2-challenges), and inferential statistics such as Spearman correlation and linear regression (to address research question 1). Spearman Rho is utilized because the data's variables are ordinal or interval-scaled, namely, the five-point Likert interval scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Given that the dependent variable in this study has a normal



distribution and multicollinearity is not an issue, linear regression is also suitable (Ross & Willson, 2017).

Narration was used to assess qualitative data in order to corroborate and strengthen quantitative findings that aligned with the primary study research questions. The researcher and the researcher's assistance conducted interviews in Amharic before translating and transcribing the material. The researcher double-checked those audio recordings to make sure the translation and transcription were accurate because author is also fluent in Amharic. Listening audio recordings that correspond with transcripts in order to acquaint the author with the entirety of the interview response. The researcher used paragraph style to do data cleansing after transcription. This is employed to categorize data in accordance with the study questions. Next, the researcher imported the information into NVivo. Third, the researcher rearranged data via categorizing the data according to the study questions. Fourth, to identify the words or phrases that address the study questions, the researcher performed data exploration (using the "Query command"). Subsequently, the researcher started categorizing pertinent data. Ultimately, the researcher has exported the nodes and included verbatim quotes from the participants to clarify themes or study objectives. Throughout the results section, the researcher used several, in-depth quotations to highlight specific features of the quantitative findings.

## **Results**

A total of 335 questionnaires were disseminated to all teachers of secondary schools in Finote Selam town, however, 304 respondents (90.7%) were filled the questionnaire, which is a reasonable amount of samples to head the analysis.

**Correlation among teachers’ characteristics, support of school leaders, teachers’ perception towards CPD, and teachers’ implementation of CPD**

In addition to the correlation between study variables, this section of the research deals with the status of perception of school-based CPD, support of school leaders for CPD implementation, and status of teachers’ implementation of CPD via mean and the relationship between study variables through Spearman correlation.

**Table 3.**

*Correlation among Teachers’ Characteristics, Support of School Leaders, Teachers’ Perception Towards CPD, and Teachers’ Implementation of CPD*

Variables	Mean	1	2	3	4	5
Age	32.5 years	1				
Length of service	12.24 years	.425**	1			
Support of school leaders	1.760	-.093	-.036	1		
Teachers’ perception towards CPD	2.867	-.113*	-.132*	.024	1	
Teachers’ implementation of CPD	2.064	-.087	.016	.59**	-.095	1

*\*\* is significant at 0.01 and \* is Significant at 0.05 levels*

As shown in Table 3, for a five-level Likert scale, means (M) can be classified into 3 groups:  $M \geq 3.66$  is high;  $2.34 \leq M < 3.67$  is moderate, and  $M < 2.34$  is Low (Yamashita & Millar, 2021). Thus, except teachers’ perception towards CPD program, which is moderate, teachers’ views about composite scores of school leaders’ the contribution of CPD, and teachers’ implementation of CPD are at the low level.

**Teachers’ perception towards CPD program.** In the qualitative data collection session, then the principals, CPD facilitators, and education experts were asked to explain the perception of teachers towards CPD program. During the semi-structured interviews, participants replied that they lacked interest and desire to involve in the CPD program. In

line with this, one interviewee (CPD facilitator) addressed the issue using the following words:

*On the condition that teacher education is supported with training based on the interests and needs of the trainees, a training designed after gaps between actual performance and expected performance, it could have fruitful outcomes; however, it would be unsuccessful to invest on such an endeavor if trainees do not give due perception and consideration on the continuous professional development program.*

Supporting the above argument, during the interview, some participants agreed that to enhance their perception towards CPD activities, there should be an alignment of CPD tasks and teachers' needs in skills and knowledge. However, the reality in the school is different. Supporting this, during this idea, one school principal stated the following statements

*Teachers do not view CPD as involving the professional growth of them through gaining knowledge in teaching and experience. However, scholars in the field of education also argued that CPD is a process whereby a teacher achieves professional growth in teaching and becomes effective and efficient in his or her execution of duty protocol. However, teachers in my school don't perceive CPD positively.*

### **Implementation of continuous professional development program.**

From quantitative findings, we can understand the implementation of CPD activities in secondary schools of Finote Selam town are insufficient and needs improvement. In the same vein, the interview section was also shown similar findings. For instance, a school principal replied as:

*The goal of the CPD program was to promote student accomplishment by keeping instructors' skills and knowledge up to date. However, neither the students' nor teachers' knowledge was updated. The students always complain due to lack of teachers' teaching skills and subject matter knowledge. These all indicate the CPD training did not attain its objectives. Therefore, there was no effectiveness of the implementation of CPD program in schools.*

The other contributor (a district education expert) replied that:

*In the selected schools, the implementation status of CPD program is almost in bad condition. That means the school leaders and teachers ignored the CPD issues. They are focusing on other teaching and learning issues. They forget the principle that without updating teachers it is impossible to bring the desired changes in the school.*

In general, both qualitative and quantitative data showed that the implementation of CPD programs in schools was inadequate.

**The school leaders such as supervisors, principals, and CPD facilitators, contributed to CPD implementation.** Over this issue, qualitative findings also support quantitative results. For instance, a CPD facilitator replied as follows:

*The CPD training was not given in the regular way and nobody could pay attention to the issues of CPD training; teachers do not have awareness about CPD and there was no coordination in the school for CPD training. The school leaders have also no awareness to give support and guidance for teachers.*

A district education expert is also commenting his ideas as:

*In this year, we did not give any training and did not make discussions with school leaders and teachers rather than trying to*



*supervise the implementation of it. This is because we gave mandates for school leaders to lead CPD training effectively.*

The other interviewee (a school principal) also expressed in the way that:

*We are preparing checklists to check the practice of CPD training for the second semester in this year, to speak frankly; we did not give attention for CPD training in the schools. We have not led the training in a regular way. We did not design a systematic way of supporting and following up activities. In addition to this, the negative attitudes of teachers towards CPD training made difficulty to follow up and give support. Therefore, we did not give adequate support for teachers.*

The data gathered from the questionnaire and interviews confirmed that there were inadequate school leader support activities of the CPD program in the schools.

Moreover, according to Cohen's (1998) interpretation of the correlation (< 0.30, small; 0.3-0.5, medium; and  $\geq 0.5$ , large), Table 3 also displayed that there was a significant, strong, and positive relationship between teachers' CPD practice and school leaders' contribution to CPD activities ( $r=0.59$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). However, teachers' CPD practice has no correlation with age, length of service, and perception of teachers towards CPD. Teachers' perception towards CPD were negatively corrected with length of service at a low level ( $r=-.132$ ,  $p<.05$ ). In this respect, it can be said that the increase of school leaders' contribution to CPD activities will yield to an escalation in teachers' CPD activities.

There is no way for running regression analysis to examine whether age, length of service, and perception of teachers towards CPD have had an impact on teachers' implementation of CPD since there is no





correlation among the composite sets of variables (Leech et al., 2015). However, since a correlation of below .60, which doesn't run the risk of multicollinearity (Leech et al., 2015), linear regression was carried out to investigate the influence of school leader support on teachers' implementation of CPD.

**Table 4.**

*The Influence of School Leaders Support on Teachers' Implementation of CPD*

Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	P
1 (Constant)	13.949	.985		14.154	.000
Support of school leaders	7.984	.565	.631	14.138	.000

R=.631<sup>a</sup>, R<sup>2</sup>=.398, Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> =.396, P<0.01, ΔR<sup>2</sup> =.398, F(1,302)= 199.869, P<0.01 Durbin-Watson=1.896

As shown in Table 4, one model was obtained by including school leaders' support of teachers as independent variables. According to Model, school leaders support significantly predicted teachers' implementation of CPD (R=.631<sup>a</sup>, R<sup>2</sup>=.398, Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> =.396, P<0.01, ΔR<sup>2</sup> =.398, F(1,302)= 199.869, P<0.01). The support of school leaders regarding teachers' implementation of CPD activities explains 39.6 % of the total variance of teachers' implementation of CPD. When t-test, results showed that school leaders' support was an important predictor of teachers' implementation of CPD. As a result, it is understood that school leaders' contribution to CPD activities is highly predicting with teachers' practice of CPD.

### **Challenges of implementation of CPD program in the School**

Teachers' responses to challenges that hinder the implementation of CPD programs in their respective schools are presented in Table 5 as follows:



**Table 5.**

*Challenges of Implementation of CPD Program in the School*

No	How much do you agree with the following statements?	Mean
1.	There is not a school culture among my colleagues that encourages me to participate in professional development activities.	4.04
2.	My colleagues and I don't share a common understanding related to teacher development.	3.8
3.	Lack of funding for additional personnel to cover classes prevents me from participating in professional development activities.	3.62
4.	I am not motivated by the school or district or province to better apply CPD practices	3.54
5.	I am less committed to implement the CPD practices	3.53
6.	The available CPD trainings do not meet my needs	3.37
7.	I was not well oriented about the significance of CPD activities	2.98
8.	I have not understand the CPD training manuals	2.91
9.	The working environment in my school is not positive and supportive.	2.86
10.	Teaching-related duties prevent me from participating in professional development activities beyond the work day.	2.69
11.	The contents of the CPD manuals are irrelevant	2.45
12.	The timing of provision, in our school, significantly affected teachers' access to CPD.	2.33
13.	Salary supplements would encourage me to participate in professional development activities.	2.24
14.	The contents of the CPD manuals are unclear	2.15

As indicated in Table 5, lack of good school culture among use in professional development activities, lack of commitment, lack of funding, and lack of common understanding related to CPD were the most prominent challenges affecting teachers' implementation of CPD.



Interview results revealed that shortage of material and financial resources and support from the district education bureaus as challenges to implement CPD effectively and efficiently. A CPD facilitator also remarked that “The contents of the available CPD material are not only irrelevant but also unclear and inapplicable within the ongoing school context”. A school principal responded that “the Ministry of Education declared a quality education assurance package containing six pillars, one of which is CDP (as part of the teachers ‘development program). They said that the program was working in all schools and education offices of different levels. However, there is still a lack of common sense of ownership and various aspects of supports and continuous follow-up of the process”.

A province expert also suggested that teachers, CPD facilitators, principals, and district experts were not taking full responsibility of having a common sense of ownership to boldly implement the planned activities of school-based CPD. Interviewees also commented that the school-based CPD activities were not directly linked with the teacher’s career development structure and not integrated as criteria for performance evaluation. Moreover, a supervisor suggested that some principals were not willing to support the staff during the actual practice of school-based CPD. There was not informally in the overall school-based CPD implementation processes due to the absence of standardized procedures across schools in Finote selam as participants further pointed.

In conclusion, it is believed that less involvement of teachers in the implementation process, insufficient professional support executed by district and province experts, secondary school principals and CPD facilitators, less organized school situation to support CPD and less



attention to allocate sufficient budget and materials to encourage the implantation of CPD are the major challenges against the best performance.

### Discussion

This study aimed at examining the role of personal characteristics and perception towards CPD and the support of the school leaders in predicting teachers' implementation of CPD and associated challenges in secondary schools of Finote-Selam town through Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecology of Human Development as a theoretical lens. The present study revealed that even if teachers' perception towards CPD program, which is moderate, teachers' views about composite scores of school leaders' the contribution of CPD, and teachers' implementation of CPD are at the low level. This was further supported by the interviewees' justifications as majority teachers do not view CPD as involving the professional growth of them through gaining knowledge in teaching and experience. That means they don't perceive CPD positively. In line with the present study, in Ethiopia, the Ministry of Education's research report found that nearly 4/5 schools' CPD structure is either absent or inadequate. Congruently with the present finding, Chappuis et al. (2009) and Rikitu (2019) revealed that the school leaders and district experts were offering insufficient teachers' support. Congruently, Demelash (2012), Tulu (2019), Gebre-Yesus (2014), and Rikitu (2019) displayed that the implementation of CPD activities in Ethiopia were scant and needs improvement. Due to this, there is a gap between the planned teachers' professional knowledge and skills and actual competence (MoE, 2018). Therefore, these teachers' professional development gap is challenged by both contextual and personal factors (Clardy, 2000).



As show the results of this research, the school leaders such as supervisors, principals, and CPD facilitators were poorly contributed effectively in implementation CPD in school. The interviewees also attested to the fact that, although school administrators are vital in putting Continuing Professional Development (CPD) into practice in educational settings by fostering a culture of support, formulating and communicating a clear CPD vision, and guaranteeing that personnel have access to the necessary training and resources, their own input was minimal. Some other interviewees also stated that school leaders have also no awareness to give support and guidance for teachers. These indicate that their main responsibilities contradict with this study. Supervisors and school principals have the responsibility to implement and strengthen teaching- learning process by giving support and creating suitable circumstances for the development of the learner (MoE, 2018).

The present study displayed that there is no relation between teachers' implementation of CPD and their personal characteristics such as age and length of service. On the contrary, prior scholars showed that CPD implementation differs in terms of age group and length of service (Pool et al., 2013; Tones et al., 2010). For instance, Tones et al. (2010) noted that younger employees' professional development desires and implementation are higher in most organizations. Incongruently with the present result, teachers' profession development is affected by prior knowledge and experience (Microsystem layer in Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecology of development) (Martínez et al., 2009). The present study found that there is a negative relationship between the attitudes of teachers toward CPD activities and length of service. In contradictory to the present finding, Silane (2003) argued that there was no correlation between the attitudes of teachers toward



CPD activities and length of service. This showed that Ethiopian teachers' implementation of CPD were inadequate irrespective of their personal characteristics such as age and length of service.

The present study found that there is no correlation between teachers' implementation of CPD and their perception towards CPD programs. Incongruently, Hargreaves (1994) also stated those teachers' perceptions as the springboard for what teachers practice in real situations. Moreover, Beard and Wilson (2006); Pajare (1992); Qader (2020), Torff and Session (2008); Torff and Session (2009), attitude and perception about CPD has had a strong influence on the implementation of CPD program. Perception is one of the factors implementing teacher's CPD in schools (Davidson, 2006). This means that the present study showed teachers have a positive clear understanding and perception about CPD while it was not fully practiced.

This paper also noted that there is a significant, strong, and positive relationship between teachers' implementation of CPD and school leaders' contribution to CPD activities. The support of school leaders is significantly predicting by teachers' implementation of CPD activities. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory supported the present findings in the way that the relationships between individuals and staff's working environment constitute contexts of development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Similarly, prior scholars also found that teachers' professional development occurs when favorable and supportive learning environments are provided by school leaders (mesosystem layer in Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecology of development) (Bransford et al., 1999; Julian & Ruiz, 2020). CPD facilitators in CPD



also play a crucial role in establishing favorable learning environments for teacher professional development (Bransford et al., 1999).

The present study also found lack of good school culture among use in professional development activities, lack of commitment, lack of funding, and lack of common understanding related to CPD were the most prominent challenges affecting teachers' implementation of CPD. Interviewed participants also identified that lack willing and commitment of some principals to support the staff during the actual practice of school-based CPD is a challenge that affecting teachers' implementation of CPD. Similar to the present finding, there are numerous factors affecting teachers' CPD including personal and environmental factors (Kiilo & Kutsar, 2013; Widayati et al., 2021). The present study is also supported by the exosystem layer in Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecology of development). The exosystem layer includes the local education district's uncoordinated CPD, practices, laws, funds, and community resources that can affect teachers' CPD. The last layer is the macrosystems layer is supported by the present finding; particularly the contents of curriculum and CPD activities are relevant to the teachers' profession development (Kiilo & Kutsar, 2013). Moreover, congruently to the current study, disorganized CPD training manuals and contents, lack of well-trained CPD facilitators, inadequacy of school leaders' supports, and lack of funds to carry out CPD activities were the major challenges in implementing CPD programs (Rikitu, 2019). Qader (2020) also indicated that a mismatch between teachers' needs and CPD policy. The followings were identified as the prominent challenges of implementing CPD: a poor CPD training policy outline and scarce school support (Obiero & Onduso, 2020); lack of institutional strategy, and low commitment of decision makers (Brekelmans, 2013); and lack of teachers'



commitment, teachers' resistance, and inadequacy of need-based trainings (Birkel & Johnson, 2003; Day, 1999; Davidson et al., 2006; Falk, 2001). These challenges vary in terms of the type of context and CPD activities offered in schools (Gebre-yesus, 2014; Fagense, 2019; Tulu, 2019).

### **Conclusions, Implications and Suggestions for Future Scholars**

In this study, data for examining the role of personal characteristics and perception towards CPD and the support of the school leaders in predicting teachers' implementation of CPD and associated challenges were obtained from both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Even if teachers' perception towards CPD is a moderate level, the overall implementation of teachers' CPD program and the level of school leaders' support in thus study areas were low. This showed that the implementation of CPD program in secondary school of Finote Selam town is insufficient and it needs improvement. Teachers' implementation of CPD has no correlation with age, length of service, and perception of teachers towards CPD. However, there is a significant, strong, and positive relationship between teachers' implementation of CPD and school leaders' contribution to CPD activities. The support of school leaders explains 39.6 % of the total variance of teachers' implementation of CPD. Finally, lack of good school culture among use in professional development activities, lack of commitment, lack of funding, and lack of common understanding related to CPD were the most prominent challenges affecting teachers' implementation of CPD. The findings provide theoretical implications to the literature and practical implication to educational institution leaders by identifying the main challenges of teachers in the implementation of CPD.





Based on the major findings, first, this study has a theoretical contribution in the literature on perception towards CPD; support of school leaders and teachers' implementation, and challenges of CPD. Secondly, this study has the following practical implementations. First, the study strongly recommends to education institution leaders to create a shared and common culture among teachers and schools, which is suitable to their active engagement in CPD activities. Region, province and district education bureaus can prepare conferences, discussions, and experience sharing platforms among schools to assist teachers to have more experience sharing about CPD programs. Principals, supervisors, and education officers can formulate systems and make available material and financial resources so that help teachers to understand the essence of CPD and apply accordingly. A needs analysis can also assist school leaders in crafting a good CPD content for teachers. Therefore, school CPD facilitators can give speedy replies and endorse teamwork occasions with coworkers to build up a shared learning culture.

This study was also limited to one town, Finte Sealam town; thus, the paper can be extended by incorporating different towns and districts where school culture can influence teachers' implementation of CPD. Some respondents may have biased outlooks owing to their school and societal and cultural differences, which influence the results of the study (Zhang et al., 2021). Using numerous respondents through a questionnaire and interview is crucial to attain better objective conclusions. Furthermore, with a convergent parallel mixed design, by gathering data at one time, it is less likely to conclude the general teachers' implementation of CPD and its associated factors. Therefore, future scholars should use longitudinal designs to deliver more decisive and validate evidence, and this study won't include the



primary teachers' views. Moreover, control variables such as school type, and participation in in-service courses might have various impacts on teachers' CPD practice. Thus, future scholars can understand and consider these control variables as essential for studying and designing effective educational interventions in CPD practice.

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