Academics Development: Aspirations vs. Realities at Haramaya University

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Abstract

This study purports to investigate the gap between anticipations of professional development programs and the actual implementation practices at Haramaya University. It also aimed at discovering the effect of various professional development endeavors on academic staff capacity and the difference it brought on the processes of university training and education as whole. A case study that constitutes qualitative and quantitative methods, a mixed research approach was employed. In an attempt to achieve the objectives of the study, evidences were collected from staff members, professional development program coordinators and management bodies. The tools for obtaining relevant information were questionnaires, interview, and document analysis. The result obtained shown that the existing system of professional development was a top-down approach, which was dominantly characterized by donor driven than demand driven. The place of teacher to develop, and fully participate in preparation of materials and institutionalization of the professional development program was less regarded or totally non-existent. Moreover, the study strongly underpinned that since there was no a system for need analysis, all the beneficiaries was not at the same level of satisfying position. Apparently, as there was no established practices to make a tracer study in making a follow-up of those participants who had been involved in a professional development training, it seems very difficult if not impossible to know the magnitude and intensity of differences brought on teachers behaviour. In general, it is concluded that in the present system of professional development initiative, there is a visible gap between dreams and real practices.

Key Terms/Phrases

Academics Development and Professional Development

Introduction

Background of the Study

Presently, academic development has become a common interest of educational policy makers, researchers and practitioners. Various reasons can be attributed to this escalating concern on teachers' professional development. Guskey(2002) identified three major factors. These are the growing pressure and accountability on educational institutions, the growth of knowledge in the field of teaching and a constant inherent desire to improve teaching so as to realize each student's potential and academic attainment. Researchers argue that success in the implementation of professional development programs is a decisive input for promoting teachers professional competencies and enhancing quality in education and training (Gordon, 2004). In the era globalization, the profession of teaching sets the contractual context for professional review and development. Acordingly, teachers must have a continuous review of their development needs and the institution must take the responsibility to promote professional development activity: practice, reflection, theory and action, these are the essential parts of professional development (Sultana *et al*, 2010).

Studies in the field of professional development pinpointed out that academic development has been considered as a long term process that includes regular opportunities and experiences planned systematically to promote growth and development in the profession. This shift has been so dramatic that many have referred to it as a 'new image' of teacher learning, a 'new model' of teacher education, a 'revolution' in education, and even a 'new paradigm' of professional development (Cochran Smith and Lytle, 2001). To this effect, academics have to specify whether they want to develop or not, the extent of development they need and what can be done on their part and others. The organizations, at the same time should acknowledge the importance of professional development and should put in place a development plan for its staff member (Visscher and Coe, 2002; Farkota, 2005).

In Ethiopian context, as a major initiative to address problems related to access, equity, and quality of educational provision, the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) introduced the Education and Training Policy (ETP) in 1994. The ETP emphasized the principle of decentralized educational authority to the regional states and called for new paradigms of education based on relevant, active, and student-centered teaching and learning. The ETP established the foundations for all subsequent strategies, guidelines and programs. In the series of the Education Sector Development Programs (ESDP), ESDP I, II and III which were developed in 1997, 2002 and 2005 respectively, for creating trained and skilled human power at all levels, the need for professional development has been highly stressed. More importantly, while all policy documents claim the importance of teachers' effort for promoting learning, the emphasis on improving teachers' quality has boldly been stated in the 2005 Education Sector Development Program (MoE, 2005). The Ministry of Education has given priority for continuous professional development (CPD) assuming that it is the right of teachers as well as of a great value for institutional and national development(MoE, 2009).

Context of Haramaya University

Up to 1985 Addis Ababa University was the only university in the country. Afterward, it was upgraded to university status in 1985 with three decades of functioning as Alemaya Agricultural College (Rayner & Ashcroft, 2011). At the moment, in Haramaya University, several units have been in operation to strengthen the deliberation of professional development programs very enthusiastically. One of the practical evidences for this can be the effort rendered by Ministry of

Education to launch different professional development programs. The ADRC, one of the PDPs in the university, has been offering courses such as instructional skills, ICT in education, course and program design and review as well as assessment and quality issues in higher education for more than 200 staff members between the academic years 2006/07 and 2009/10. The HDP has also been another important PDP established for offering of training to those academic staff members in the teacher education colleges. Presently, the PGDHET has also been making effort to resume the previous professional development training programs with strong passion.

This study was relied on Haramaya University (HU) owing to the interest and the logistical predilection of the investigator. In essence, the study focuses on Haramaya University due to considering the experience and the location of the researcher. The researcher has been working as academic staff member in the College of Education and as the coordinator of ADRC at Haramaya University for more than a decade.

Statement of the Problem

The researcher relied on the area of study considering his experience as instructor in the offering of various professional courses and the opportunity that he had been the coordinator of the Department of Pedagogical Sciences and Academic Development and Resource Center (ADRC) at Haramaya University. Moreover, the opportunity the researcher had got being a candidate of Higher Diploma Program (HDP) helped him to scrutinize the problem gravely and profoundly. Meanwhile the endeavor of some agencies/centers (e.g. HERQA, HESC) under MoE to sustain quality through Teachers' Development Program (TDP) was another momentous prospect that inspires and encourages him to focus on the topic under consideration.

Since teachers are the most valuable resource available to higher education institutions in the realization of academic programs and institutional goal, an investment in teacher quality and ongoing professionalism is imperative. This mission can only be realized by ensuring that teachers are equipped with subject matter knowledge and an evidence- and standards-based repertoire of pedagogical skills that are demonstrably effective in meeting the developmental and learning needs of all students for whom they have responsibility—regardless of students' backgrounds and intake characteristics, and whether or not they experience learning difficulties (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Westwood, 2006; Wheldall, 2006).

Nevertheless, studies in relation to quality education signify that among the factors affecting quality of teaching in Ethiopian higher education institutions was the fact that pedagogical training has not been considered or less regarded (Abyot, 2001). At the moment although, there are certain initiatives in teachers' professional development, the effect was not encouraging. Moreover, Minale (2006) after studying the condition of Addis Ababa University found that the level of organizational support to the professional training and mainly the implementation appears to be not so much valued by participants.

Continuous staff development programs should be organized to effectively and efficiently address varied needs that help to meet the mission and changes or reforms introduced in an institution. Unless an extensive effort is exerted to continuously develop the academics, the implications to make an institution competitive nationally and internationally as judged by the knowledge they produce using current teaching and learning contents and approaches, as well as educational technology gadgets seems to be questionable (Aytaged, 2012).

Literature in the field of professional development disclosed that few efforts have been made to assess the policy and the outcome of professional development beyond the brief responses

requested at the conclusion of workshops that solely depend on participant reaction. For example, in a meta-analysis of the results of professional development, Wade (1995) concludes that few accounts present concrete evidence of professional development effects on teachers and students. Likewise, Loucks and Melle (1992) further put that most staff development reports are simply statements of participant satisfaction. Also, the researcher's felt that there was no detailed and in-depth analysis of the status of academics professional development programs at Haramaya University. To this end, this professional development study was designed to begin to fill this gap. The study was directed to explore and analyze the problem under the title "Academic Staff Development: Aspirations vs. Realities at Haramaya University". And, in order to carry this out, the following leading questions were formulated:

- To what extent does the implementation of academic development materialized?

- To what extent do the provision of facilities and resources facilitate the implementation of professional development programs?

- To what extent do faculty members satisfied with the existing professional development initiatives?

- What contributions to the professional competencies of faculty members and institutional culture were made as a result of professional development opportunities?

To this effect, the researcher was involved in the description of events, exploration of facts and assessment of the present direction of staff development programs in Ethiopian Higher Education Institutions in general and Haramaya university in particular.

Significance of the Study

This study would have significant contribution to give direction for program planners and developers to endorse and integrate the current professional development frameworks in the process of academic program implementation. In more specific terms, the study can serve as foundation for policy maker in the sector of higher education in general and to the field of professional development in particular. Also, this study can be steppingstone to design appropriate staff development scheme in Ethiopian higher education institutions.

While the contributions focus on the experience of universities, the principles and proposals for future directions could also be true for all higher education institutions in Ethiopia. Last but not least, the study could serve as a starting point for initiating other researchers in a wider scale on the same issue or related to this as an input for improving the quality of education in the system of higher education.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This investigation was a case study design and planned to make an in-depth scrutiny of mode of PDP, implementation and the status of the professional development at Haramaya University. Case studies emphasize detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and their relationships explored through the use of one or more cases within a setting or context (Yin, 2009). To provide in-depth understanding and allow for use of multiple data sources, both quantitative

and qualitative data, mixed methods, were used. A mixed methods research combines or associates both qualitative and quantitative forms (Creswell, 2009) and is useful when the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative research can provide the best understanding. Yin (2009) describes qualitative methods as studies that generate words to describe people's action, behaviors, and interactions. Creswell, (2009) put it that quantitative studies generate numbers derived from questionnaires, tests, and experiments. Often both approaches are combined in a single study resulting in greater depth and breadth.

Population and Sample

As it was briefly enunciated in the above, Haramaya University as study center was taken into account. As a result, the respondents for the given study were the group containing all university instructors, department heads, college deans and management bodies who have been involved in developing, receiving, organizing and/or monitoring the professional development programs in the study site under consideration. Moreover, individuals who were/have been directly or indirectly involved in policy formulation (people who took part in preparation of policies, guidelines, frameworks, blue prints, etc) and decision makers at all levels were also part and parcel of the study.

With regard to the sampling procedures, simple random, and stratified sampling methods were employed to select representative sample from academic staff members. Likewise, using mixed purposeful sampling (Patton, 2002) specifically, criterion sampling (cases that meet some criterion), ten senior instructors and PDP coordinators, and 12 academic program leaders were incorporated as core informant of the given study. Likewise, using simple and stratified random sampling techniques, 122 academic staff members were included as a sample of the study. See the following table to have better understanding on how the sampling among the academic staff members was materialized.

Table 1: Sampling

Population		Sample	
Male	Female	Male	Female
669	68	135(102)	23(20)

*Figures in the bracket shows the actual/exact number of sample included in this study

Data Collecting Instruments

The tools designed to collect data were closed and open-ended type of questionnaire (academic staff members), interview guide (for senior instructors, coordinators, and academic leaders) and document analysis (policy/strategic documents and progress reports). Accordingly, the primary sources of the data were instructors, training facilitators and program leaders who in one way or another involved in planning and running the professional development programs. Similarly, secondary sources of the data were information secured from policy and strategic documents, as well as other published and unpublished document of Haramaya University.

Data Collecting Procedures

Information was collected from the respondents through distributing questionnaires in their own place and at their own conveniences. Moreover, some qualitative data also secured through direct contact in a face to face interview. In this way, the researcher created the opportunity to meet and talk with respondents, and was able to avoid unnecessary skepticisms and haziness. It was the belief of the inquirer that such procedures for collecting information could increase the credibility and the validity of the data procured.

Method of Data Analysis

The way data analysis employed could be seen from two major dimensions: qualitative and quantitative data analysis methods. In quantitative data analysis (information procured through questionnaires), parametric test like Analysis of Variance was taken into consideration. Moreover, considering its appropriateness, the Chi-square statistical test for checking the significance difference between observed and expected frequencies was employed. Similarly, in qualitative analysis, identification of thematic areas, in depth explanations, narrations and interpretations were employed.

Results and Discussion

The result of this study is organized around four thematic areas. Namely:

- Conditions of the academic staff professional development programs

- Implementation of the professional development programs

- Academic staff satisfaction as a result of professional development programs

- Contribution of professional development programs to practices

Conditions of the Academic Staff Professional Development Programs

Professional development policy

In Haramaya University, except the ETP and other related documents (guideline for continuous professional development; A Blue Print for Ethiopian Teachers Development Program, and a new Framework for Continuous Professional Development of Teachers, School Leaders and Educators in Ethiopia), there were no well stated policy that are specifically related to the staff development programs in Haramaya University. In the context of the university, the senate legislation emphasizes the importance of staff development initiatives. The document stressed on the effort to build-up staff development plan and organizes short and long term training programs (Haramaya University, 2013). Thus, it is possible to infer that there were initiatives on the establishment professional development guidelines. However, as all the documents were prepared centrally, these lack specificity (not context related). In connection to this, studies revealed that a coherent professional development policy must be devised, which is related to the universities vision and mission. A policy is instrumental in the attainment of its aims and objectives, when it is supported by an appropriate budget provision (Bolton, 2001, Rothwell & Arnold, 2006).

Training modules included in the professional development program

In Haramaya University, the current professional development training coordinating center is designated as Post Graduate Diploma in Higher Education Teaching (**PGDHET)**. The center is responsible to organize and/or give support in training. In a document study, it is found that the following professional training modules were included.

Table 2: Professional development training modules

Module	Title	Hour
Module 1	Reflective instructors	22
Module 2	Teaching with ALMS	24
Module 3	Program designing	18
Module 4	Assessment	20
Module 5	Special needs	8
Module 6	IT	8
Total		100

In the course of continuous teachers professional development practices, although it is a recent phenomenon to establish centers/divisions/coordinating offices in Ethiopian universities there were formal/informal discussion among instructors/professors on academic matters, curriculum development and research practices. More importantly, through the control of the academic vice president office, one can assure that there were short-term trainings offered to the academic staff members organized at international, national and institutional levels.

On the other hand, according to the national document of TESO, more formalized and relatively well structured professional development training was started in the academic year 2003/04 with the title of Higher Diploma Program (HDP) (MOE, 2003). HDP is a one year on-the-job training of teacher educators, mainly on such themes like active learning, reflective practice, continuous assessment, and action research (Temesgen, 2006, Minale 2006). Furthermore, in response to the demand to professionalism and the concern to quality education, starting from the academic year 2005/06 through special funding assistance from Nuffic of the government of the Netherlands, the establishment of staff professional development programs at nine universities had been actualized (where Haramaya university is part of these). This staff development program was named as Academic Development and Resource Center (ADRC) and one of the main roles of this center was continuous professional training (Cantrell, 2009). Hence, the idea and practice of formalized professional development training was a recent initiative.

From the above fact, what has been understood and practiced by the universities as an element of PDP is INSET. This has usually been organized and offered by centers like HDP, ADRC and PGDHET. As one respondent reflect it:

> On my part, I have benefited a lot from HDP and other professional development practices. I have effectively employed some of the insights in the professional development activities to organize my teaching and to promote the culture of discussion. Professional development practices are helpful in managing differences and resolving misunderstandings, I guess (ED: March, 2011).

On the other hand, another respondent contrasting the above idea provide it:

> There was Higher Diploma Program I took part, but I quitted because it was memorization of facts than exploration into new horizons. If training is "ticking" to inventories-as is it the case in this program, it is so boring, nonsense, masticating of what PD means. PD has to involve, rather, challenging and changing the policy and educational system- practice vis-a vis new theoretical insight. This is impossible under current Ethiopian condition. In other words, freedom, freedom of consciousness and action are all inexistent and hence PD never realizes where these are suppressed in Ethiopia and the university (D. D, March, 2011)

It means the dominant approach to PD has been staff training and this was strongly criticized by scholars like Guskey (2000) to consider it as a sole means of teachers' professional development. On top of this, although some respondents feel that the training was essential to their profession, other asserted that the provision of INSET was redundant and boring. Consequently, respondents expressed their view that they did not get what is expected from the current INSET under operation.

Budget and trainees of the professional development programs

In Haramaya University, the budget assigned for the purpose of professional development programs was not known and it was not also regular. Recently, however, the university started to allocate constant budget for the academic professional training programs. In view of that, the university has allotted Ethiopian Birr equal to 500,000 from university budget and 565, 784 from project fund (in 2012/13 academic year) for the purpose of payment to trainers' honorarium, trainees' allowance and arrangement of refreshment during training (Haramaya University, 2013). As the current professional development program coordinator clearly put, the money budgeted for the purpose of academic staff professional development training is sufficient. As he articulated:

> In terms of budget allocation, we did not face problem. Our problem lies on accessing well experienced and trained facilitators. Since experienced and trained facilitators are leaving the university for various reasons (e.g. long- term training, transfer to other university), we encountered quite a lot of problems to involve as many candidates as possible (Kk: March, 2013).

Regarding the number of trainees, only 107 academic staff members had participated in the recent training programs organized by PGDHET. As, the coordinator stated, there is no recorded data on the number of enrolments and the rate of dropout of the training programs. As a result, it is found challenging to judge the effectiveness and efficiency of the professional development training under operation. Overall, the number of trainees involved in the recent professional development program was very small as compared to the existing faculty members in the university.

Implementation of PDP at Haramaya University

Conditions created for the implementation of professional development

In order to examine the conditions in the implementation of professional development programs, a questionnaire was prepared and employed as a tool for gathering important evidence. In general, the questionnaire consists of four dimensions: appropriateness of professional development

programs to the day-to-day practice of faculty members; accessibility of the necessary resources/facilities; support from colleagues and program leaders; and consideration of time for professional development practices.

Availability of the professional development event was established by the respondents 'yes' response. And the non-availability of the professional development event was designated by the respondents 'no' response. Overall, the frequencies of faculty members response under 'yes' and 'no' categories were used in each dimension for calculating the Chi-square and checking hypothesis of equal probability. Let us examine Table 4:

Table 3: The significance difference between observed and expected frequencies

		Yes	No	Chi square	Remark
Relevance	Observed	69(56)	53(44)	2.10	Not significant
	Expected	61	61		
Resources	Observed	49(40)	73(60)	4.72	Significant(.05)
	Expected	61	61		
Support	Observed	20(16)	102(84)	55.12	Significant(.01)
	Expected	61	61		
Time	Observed	34(28)	88(72)	23.90	Significant(.01)
	Expected	61	61		

*Numbers in the brackets are percentages

In table 3, it can be observed that the activities of professional development training have relevance to the actual classroom practice as coined by 56 percent of the respondents. And the remaining 44 percents of the respondents found PDPs as unrelated to their upcoming professional duties. However, the existence of facilities, collegial support and adequate time in the implementation of professional development programs were identified by below the average percentage of the respondents. This is because, as the data evidenced only 40 percent of respondents for resource, 16 percent of the respondents for support, and 28 percent of the respondents for time indicated the availability or fulfillment of conditions in the implementation of professional development programs. Accordingly, the necessary conditions for implementation of professional development initiatives were not provided up to the expected level as shown by the majority of the research participants.

Moreover, Table 3 clearly demonstrated that the obtained values of Chi-square for facilities, support and time (4.7, 55.1, and 23.9 respectively) were significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels with degree of freedom equal to 1. This means that there was a significant gap between the plan and the actual practices in the implementation of the professional development programs in Haramaya University. Consequently, the need to devise strategies to enhance the transferability of faculty members professional development to experiences, resources allocation, time consideration and support to the implementation of professional development need be to be considered as the most urgent and opportune conditions. Zinn and Caffarela(1999) pinpointed that professional development, whatever its form and model can be aided or impeded by a variety of factors. These factors can be classified into four domains within which these support or impede the influence of professional development (1) people and interpersonal relationships, (2) institutional structures, (3) personal considerations and commitments, and (4) intellectual and psychosocial characteristics. Zinn, and

Caffarela, further clarified that these four domains are useful when thinking through supports and barriers to professional development programs and career success for higher education institutions.

Similarly, Loucks-Horsley (1998) examined different contextual factors that influence professional development events. As a result, students, faculty members, classroom practices (curriculum, instruction, assessment and the learning environment), policies; resources, organizational structures and culture, time, and history of professional development are factors to affect the implementation of professional development.

Faculty members assessment of the professional development programs

In an endeavor to have clear understanding about faculty members' assessment, a questionnaire was used to measure the views of respondents on the existing professional development programs. Accordingly, items on rating scales (alternatives that include 'Not at all', 'Rarely', 'Often', and 'Always') in which the participants were asked to demonstrate their assessment of the phenomenon with the relevant statement from four for 'always' to one for 'Not at all' was developed. Look at Table 4, to see how this was organized in quantitative terms.

Table 4: Faculty members' assessment of the professional development programs

	N	Mean	SD
Needs identified have been met through professional development(PD)	122	2.10	1.07
PD generally meets the needs of the institution than me personally	122	2.48	1.17
I feel that I have a part in setting the agenda for PD trainings	122	1.95	1.11
I feel that too many training days are driven by university PDPs	122	2.08	1.06
PD providers think of it mainly as a commercial activity	122	1.95	1.06
PD provides me the opportunity to improve my teaching & skills	122	2.70	1.24

*Minimum point is 0 & Maximum point is 4

Table 4 shows that professional development programs provide faculty members the opportunity to improve their teaching awareness and skills have attained highest mean value. From this finding, one can understand that although respondents' identified the contribution of professional development endeavors to improve their teaching awareness and skills, other important professional needs were not considered. The reason for this could be the absence of need assessment practices and the inclination to consider only the national/institutional need than individual needs. On the other hand, faculty members' involvement in setting agenda for professional development practices was given least score. This refers to involvement of faculty members in planning the upcoming activities were not taken seriously into account. Faculty members' prioritization of the professional development plan to meet the need of the institution rather than individuals was in the second place. Meaning, faculty members' needs and interests were not primarily considered in the deliberation of PDP. Overall, it can be deduced that faculty members' involvement in planning and enacting the PD initiatives seems less regarded.

Meanwhile, in an interview conducted with selected staff members and data secured in open ended responses, it can be inferred that absence of practical applications was the major cause for irritation of the participants. Poor presentation or delivery of pedagogy and weak planning coming close behind were some of the uncomfortable situation that debilitate the implementation of professional development programs. Some of the participants' reflection in an open ended item looks like this: 'Silly games or irrelevant topics that do nothing for me in the classroom'. As one informant in an interview mentioned it:

> Professional development means spending a lot of time on government initiatives and slavish following of government videos. I noted that the delivery of content did contain some variation; much was made of repetition. Activities which rely mainly on us were the trainees' ideas and there were no news. It was dominantly repetition of the same kind of INSET (GH: March, 2011).

The other category contained mixed feelings, positive and negative comments. 'All INSET days have been superb'. More responses touched on matters such as 'overload' and 'absence of follow up'. 'Just giving us more work to do when we have no time'. From the reflections, therefore, it is possible to infer that faculty members' assessment and ways of looking at the professional development activities were assorted and are of mixing nature with favorable and unfavorable feeling to the implementation of the professional development programs in Haramaya University.

Table 5: Summary of ANOVA-Mean differences of faculty members' assessment

Respondents attributes	Source of variations	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Sex	Between Groups	2.545	17	.150	1.099	.365
	Within Groups	14.176	104	.136		
	Total	16.721	121			
Academic Rank	Between Groups	17.061	17	1.004	1.104	.360
	Within Groups	94.513	104	.909		
	Total	111.574	121			
College	Between Groups	193.693	17	11.394	1.448	.130
	Within Groups	818.602	104	7.871		
	Total	1012.295	121			
Teaching Experience	Between Groups	1211.809	17	71.283	1.270	.226
	Within Groups	5835.732	104	56.113		
	Total	7047.541	121			

Table 5 demonstrated that the mean differences in faculty members assessment across variables as sex, academic rank, and experience in teaching. The result revealed that there was no significant mean difference in the assessment of faculty members at 0.05 level of significance. Moreover, it was found that assessment of faculty members on the implementation of PDP is consistent across the existing colleges. Meaning, although it is fact that faculty members vary in some demographic and professional characteristics, they have uniform judgments on the general condition of professional development programs in Haramaya University.

Appropriateness of the professional development programs

Regarding the relevance of the various professional development initiatives, interview discourses were carried out with respondents and they have drawn out the following arguments. We can see how the succeeding respondent in interviews sessions expressed negatively about the appropriateness of PDPs in place:

> Was the training useful in developing your instructional practice? Meaningful learning does occur inside-out! The externally imposed HDP cannot improve my instructional practice because it was born sick-designed outside-in, top-down. Moreover, it is a campaign. Learning is never campaign-like professional development must be consistent and always on-the-process (DT: March, 2011).

On the other hand, in an archival study where trainees were asked to reflect their feeling about the existing PD training, the following respondent put it like this:

> Now, I feel that I am a better practitioner than I used to be. I have acquired immense practical knowledge and skills to deal with my lecture dominant teaching methods presented in training module. I suggest that the time allotted for some module be increased in relation to other modules. The module on ICT is really fascinating. I wish I could put into practice what I have gained from module (GG: March, 2011).

Views on the usefulness of professional development programs for faculty members are numerous and they are also different. Some see it as everything that a learning experience should not be. It is worthless and rarely sustained, deficit oriented, radically under-resourced and politically imposed rather than professionally based, lacking in intellectual rigor or coherence and treated as an add-on rather than as an inherent part of a natural growth process. In short, it is an ill-designed, pedagogically naive and demeaning exercise that often makes participants more cynical than making them become more knowledgeable, or committed.

On the other hand, some other respondents acknowledged the contributions of professional development training programs to their classroom practice. And, as trainees put it in their formal reflections, the contributions of professional development experiences were immense, unique and have extremely affected their approach in teaching. To mention few, the professional development training helped them to identify and manage the complexity of classroom environment and the way they assess the learning performance of their students. Expressing the importance of training in acquainting the various assessment methods, another discussant added that:

> I can now safely say that I feel that I am a professional in managing my students in classroom practices. I am very well introduced to the available classroom presentation methods. I am very grateful. Surprisingly, I did not think that I should deal with some students that need to be treated differently. I presumed that all students are the same. Thanks to the training module special needs and inclusive education. Now, I know that I should take into consideration individual differences

while dealing with students at every stage including during delivery and assessment of classroom instruction (YM: March, 2011).

Moreover, a key finding in open ended responses was that faculty members viewed professional development programs as effective when it was relevant and also when they could apply their training to classroom situations. This held constant across all fields and colleges. Not surprisingly, the issue of tailoring professional development efforts or programs to specific needs was more important for faculty members in various colleges. Similarly, beneficiaries' involvement in designing and enacting professional development programs was less regarded or totally ignored. Younger faculty members have better perceptions than experienced and were more concerned that the content and delivery of INSET was of a high standard and most faculty members disliked INSET where they felt they were the main contributors. Faculty members expressed the need for new information and being treated as a professional. Newly qualified academic staff members in particular were looking for insights into improving their classroom skills and so were keen that the delivery and content of INSET was appropriate. Venue and timing appeared to be of little concern although some academic staff members have difficulties with venues which were merely concentrated to the main campus. Meanwhile, the investigation pointed out to some issues in the university academic programs regarding tension between departmental and whole institution agenda. Meaning, the professional development initiatives were in trouble to choose between the need of individual and the institution demands.

Academic staff satisfaction on the PDP of Haramaya University

The respondents were asked how much satisfied they had been with their professional development experience over the last 5 years. They were required to tick a box on a rating scale which ranged from 1 = a very little extent to 5 = a very great extent.

Table 6: Faculty members' satisfaction with professional development

	N	Mean	SD
On professional development	122	2.63	1.48
On promotion prospects	122	2.23	1.59
On teaching skills	122	2.95	1.47
On self-confidence/self-esteem	122	3.09	1.59
On the desire to learn more	122	3.21	1.62
On student learning outcomes	122	2.87	1.50
On leadership skills	122	2.71	1.51
Aggregate mean		2.86	

One can observe from Table 6 that the overall score, 2.86 indicating that most faculty members were satisfied than dissatisfied with their professional development experience. The table further reveals

that although other sectors seem higher than the average value with regard to their promotion prospects, respondents seem relatively dissatisfied. Moreover, faculty member's improvement in developing leadership skills was not carried out as other dimensions of the professional development plan were enacted. In open-ended responses, faculty members enunciated that although they are unhappy at the beginning of the planned professional development training, once they involved, they develop interest through time in the activities and the contents of professional development trainings.

A similar study conducted by Department of Education and Skills by Manchester Metropolitan University and Education Data Surveys revealed that most faculty members were satisfied with their professional development programs over the last 10 years. The study further identified that unfavorable feelings were linked with 'one size fits all' standardized professional development provision, which did not consider faculty members existing knowledge, experience and needs (Gray, 2006).

Table 7: Summary of ANOVA-Mean differences of faculty members' satisfaction

Respondents attributes	Source of variations	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Sex	Between Groups	2.053	19	.108	.751	.757
	Within Groups	14.668	102	.144		
	Total	16.721	121			
Academic Rank	Between Groups	15.056	19	.792	.837	.658
	Within Groups	96.518	102	.946		
	Total	111.574	121			
Colleges	Between Groups	149.080	19	7.846	.927	.552
	Within Groups	863.215	102	8.463		
	Total	1012.295	121			
Teaching Experience	Between Groups	837.479	19	44.078	.724	.787
	Within Groups	6210.062	102	60.883		
	Total	7047.541	121			

Faculty members' level of satisfaction on the existing professional development endeavor was encouraging. Along with this finding respondents' satisfaction level across variables sex, academic rank, and experience in teaching was also investigated. The result uncovers the fact that there was no significant difference in faculty members' satisfaction at 0.05 level of significance. Moreover,

respondents' satisfaction on the implementation of PDP was consistent across academic colleges. This refers to the satisfaction level of faculty members was almost identical in Haramaya University when college was considered as variable.

More importantly, the findings in Table 7 affirmed that although the college of agriculture has relatively long experience in teaching, research and extension services than other colleges, this has not bring difference in the responses of faculty members. Similarly, although it is assumed that respondents in the college of education and behavioral sciences have more acquaintance of the professional development practices than other colleges in the university; this did not bring difference on the level faculty members' satisfaction.

In relation to the above findings, Mosha(2006) substantiated that faculty members' satisfaction is the most important of all factors that affect practitioners' endeavor and commitment for academics development activities. Faculty members' intrinsic drive towards self improvement cannot be matched with any amount of pressure from the educational managers. To this end, for real development to take place, the academic herself/himself has to perceive it positively. Briefly, the academic has to recognize the need to grow professionally. In other words, PD is an inherent process and is strongly connected to the practitioners' desire for growth and change. An imposed or top down PD effort cannot bring contentment and may be a failure if the practitioner has not naturally a positive emotion for it (Payne, 2010).

Contributions of Professional Development to Practice

Professional development influence on the standards of education

Table 8: Professional development influence on the standards of education

To what extent over the last 5 years PDPs have improved standards of educational activities

	N	Mean	SD
The standard of teaching in your college	122	2.93	1.40
The standard of student learning in your college	122	2.82	1.32
The level of commitment to the teaching profession	122	2.84	1.31
The Level of skills and knowledge amongst academics	122	3.12	1.36
Learning improvement generally	122	3.03	1.45

*Minimum point is 1 & Maximum point is 5

As clearly put it in Table 8, faculty members felt that professional development had significantly increased the standard of teaching in their colleges and the standard of students learning, but had least impact on commitment to academic development generally. In open ended items, respondents articulated that professional development had given them increased confidence and particularly cherished the opportunity to exchange ideas with each other. Moreover, respondents' perceptions on the implementation of existing professional development to improve the standard of educational

activities were encouraging. This indicates how faculty members' level of motivation raised as a result of the professional development training in their respective institutions.

A parallel study conducted by Lessing & Marike (2007) found that the workshop had had personal value for practitioners and it helped them to improve their work, provided knowledge, developed excellence and efficiency, and contributed to a change in existing teaching habits. Faculty members indicated that the workshop had enhanced their critical thinking about their teaching methods, developed competence and made them aware of whole institutional development. Faculty members agreed with the significance of professional development and felt that the commitments they had made were worthwhile.

Table 9: Summary of ANOVA-Mean differences of faculty members' perceptions

Respondents attributes	Source of variations	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Sex	Between Groups	4.749	26	.183	1.449	.100
	Within Groups	11.973	95	.126		
	Total	16.721	121			
Academic Rank	Between Groups	31.044	26	1.194	1.409	.118
	Within Groups	80.530	95	.848		
	Total	111.574	121			
College	Between Groups	239.892	26	9.227	1.135	.320
	Within Groups	772.404	95	8.131		
	Total	1012.295	121			
Teaching Experience	Between Groups	1504.628	26	57.870	.992	.487
	Within Groups	5542.913	95	58.346		
	Total	7047.541	121			

In general, faculty members' perceptions of PDPs to augment the level of educational activities were positive. The perceptions of respondents across variables sex, academic rank, and teaching experience was also examined. The result indicated that there was no significant difference in the perceptions of respondents at 0.05 level of significance. Moreover, it is found that the perceptions of respondents to augment the level of educational activities were consistent across academic colleges in Haramaya University.

Students perceptions of faculty members 's classroom practice

In order to look at the level of students' satisfaction on faculty members who participated in professional development training, students' questionnaire that constitutes alternative responses that range from "Very good" to "Very poor" were adapted. In this instrument, appropriate statement on five-point scale from five for 'very good' to one for 'very poor' was constructed.

Table 10: Students perceptions of faculty members' classroom practices

Dimension	Mean	SD	Remark
Lesson preparations	4.01	1.192	
Lesson presentations	4.16	1.205	
Classroom management	3.89	1.314	
Assessment /evaluation	3.73	1.416	
Overall	3.94	1.115	

*Minimum and maximum points of the measurement scale are 1 and 5 respectively

Table 10 clearly designated that overall the average point assigned for faculty members was 3.94 out of the maximum (5 point). This means, the average perceptions score of students regarding faculty members' competencies was very good. Moreover, the table value (SD= 1.1) again, tells us how much respondents vary among each other in their perceptions. It tells us the respondents' variation in terms of perceptions of faculty members' classroom practice was very small or negligible. Overall, students' perceptions pertaining to the faculty members' ability to deliver classroom session was up to the expectation. Hence, it can be concluded that faculty members who in one way or another involved in professional development trainings were perceived as very good which also indicates that the training was well-situated to classroom practices.

Moreover, the result in Table 10 also shows that faculty members' professional competencies as perceived by their students in the areas of lesson preparations (4.01) and lesson presentations (4.16) were better than classroom management (3.89) and assessment techniques (3.71). Specifically, the mean value of faculty members' competency in the area of student assessment was lower than the mean values of the three dimensions of teaching competencies specified in Table 10. Accordingly, the result obtained can be taken as indicator for future emphasis of the professional development training endeavors. Meaning, although faculty members who are involved in professional development training demonstrated better result in professional competencies, they need area specific training like techniques of students' assessment as an essential dimension of classroom instruction.

Table 11: Summary of ANOVA-Mean differences of students perceptions

Respondents attributes	Source of variations	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square		Sig.
Sex	Between Groups	5.651	41	.138	1.105	.372
	Within Groups	5.361	43	.125		
	Total	11.012	84			
Year/grade level	Between Groups	14.610	41	.356	1.370	.113
	Within Groups	11.167	43	.260		
	Total	25.776	84			
CGPA	Between Groups	19.853	41	.484	.861	.685
	Within Groups	24.194	43	.563		
	Total	44.047	84			

The result in table 11 specifies that F values were not significant for any of respondent variable considered. Meaning, all students, irrespective of their year/grade level, sex and scholastic achievement rated consistently the teaching competencies of faculty members in Haramaya University.

Contributions of professional development to individuals

Regarding the contribution of professional development to the faculty members and the institution, respondents were asked by means of interview guides. To this end, discourses with purposefully selected individuals at the research sites were conducted. Along with this, one discussant explained about the contribution of professional development:

> In this regard there is some optimism. A number of higher officials including the university's top managements have recently taken the initiatives to participate in training through PGDHET. The fact that these officials are from the non-teaching background may promote the idea and importance being certified faculty members. This would definitely improve individual performance, faculty members practice and contribute a lot in providing quality education (MH: March, 2011).

Another respondent in similar way emphasized that:

> At the idea level, the trainings through these programs were very helpful. However, in practice I am skeptical whether these professional trainings brought some difference on faculty members' competencies, institutional improvement and on the way of students learning. It is my experience to discern that many faculty members still using the traditional types of teaching and learning including those who had participated in professional development training(YA: March, 2011).

From the above interview outcomes, one can learn that different individuals could reflect their satisfaction level differently in the range of professional development trainings. Essentially, the training is for adult; and adults vary in their motivation and feeling since they have diverse experiences (Glickman *et al.*, 2007).

For Griffin (1983), cited in Guskey (1986), the main aim of professional development program is to alter the professional practices, beliefs and understanding of institutional personnel toward an articulated end, and the ultimate result of that should be improvement of student learning (Louks-Horsley, 1998). At this junction, an interviewee in a face-to-face discussion substantiated the above argument by making the following assertions:

> Professional development informs faculty members. Informed faculty members know how to do things even in changing situations effectively. They know their own limitations, the limitations of their working contexts and what they can do within these limitations. Through professional development, faculty members learn how to become professional practitioners. They stop (reduce) doing things by impulse and prefer to do things in a professionally plausible or sensible manner. On the whole, professional development fosters academics understanding and practice and my experience in this regard reveals the same (GR: March, 2011).

As opposed to the above idea, another respondent commented:

> The current professional development impact on my ability to manage institution's performance and the classroom learning is inconsequential. This is because there are quite a number of innovations at a time. We are always in trouble to prioritize the most useful one. If things happen in the future in this way, it is really a waste of time rather than using our time considerately (MA: March, 2011).

Overall, from the above responses, it is quite obvious that one respondent out of two rejected and/or deny the contribution of professional development experiences for institutional development. The experience of some respondents, however, asserts the positive contributions of the current practices toward the improvement of the institution as well as individual professional competencies. This could arise from the respondents varied experiences in their schools or departments settings.

A similar study conducted by Riding (2001) identify the following constraints of professional development trainings: 'traditional'-fragmented, unproductive, inefficient, unregulated ... and lacking in intensity and follow-up. As a result, the quality of professional development courses can be extremely variable, regardless of cost, a fact that is heavily criticized by faculty members. Substantiating these comments, one interviewee expressed his views in the following way:

> The training was all very posh. We had little notepads and pencils, and bottles of water on the tables. But I could have delivered a better course myself. It did not tell me anything I did not know already (BK: March, 2011).

Overall, from the discourses labeled in the above, respondents feeling regarding to the contributions of the professional development trainings in Haramaya University could be seen from two conflicting directions. Some reacted favorably and others felt negatively on the contributions of the professional development programs in place. Of course, comments may arise from the mismatch between the trainee's previous background and his/her contemporary expectations in the professional development training.

Conclusions

It has been pinpointed out that the purpose of this study was to analyze the existing teachers' professional development practices at Haramaya University. Specifically, it was targeted to seek answers to the following basic questions:

- To what extent does the implementation of academic development materialized?

- To what extent do the provision of facilities and resources facilitate the implementation of professional development programs?

- To what extent do faculty members satisfied with the existing professional development initiatives?

- What contributions to the professional competencies of faculty members and institutional culture were made as a result of professional development opportunities?

To this end, on the basis of these leading questions and the information procured from research audiences, the following findings were secured.

Regarding to the condition of PDP in HU

Briefly, the findings in relation to the implementation of PDPs in Haramaya University affirmed that there was no context specific institutional policy except guideline developed at national level. Moreover, it was found that there were attempts to develop professional development training modules in the university. However, except little efforts in the case of PGDHET, the professional development trainings manual were attributed by generic than field specific. The university started to allocate constant budget for the purpose of faculty members' professional development programs. As the current PDP coordinator clearly put, the money budgeted for the purpose of faculty members PD training is sufficient. However, only 107 academic staff members had participated in the recent training programs organized by PGDHET. Overall, the number of trainees involved in the recent PDP was very small as compared to the existing academic staff members in place.

On the actual implementation of the professional development program

Although respondents recognized the contributions of professional development endeavors to improve their teaching awareness and skills, other important professional needs were not included due to lack of need assessment. Moreover, pertaining to the appropriateness of professional development programs, respondents have mixed feelings: some have favorable feelings and other felt unfavorably. This difference could arise due to the variability of respondents' school/college settings. The findings in relation to this study showed that there was a considerable gap between the plan and implementation practices of the professional development programs in place. As result, it is suggested that there should be an urgent measure from the concerned bodies in the allocation of necessary resources, provision of enough time and arrangement of necessary professional support to the implementation of professional development programs.

How does the present PDP relevant or appropriate to need of the staff members?

The result shows that most respondents were satisfied with their professional development experience. On the other hand, although some faculty members recognized the importance of keeping on top of new development through professional development programs, they adversely felt that professional development programs had least impact on their promotion prospects and leadership development practices. From the reflections on the professional development training conducted at HU, the trainees felt positively about the PDP. In the discussions conducted with some of the trainees, they need more time to assimilate initiatives and implement new theories into their classroom practices and to share good practices with colleagues. Suggestions for improving PD focused on the necessity to prioritize individual needs, and improving quality of the training modules. More importantly, time to reflect, follow up on the outcome of the training and resources for implementation of the PD trainings found in short supply and in need of systematic attention.

Contributions of the professional development initiatives to practices

From the findings, it can also be traced that faculty members feeling regarding to the contributions of the PD trainings in Haramaya University has two incompatible observations. Some reacted favorably and others felt negatively on the benefits of the various PD trainings. The above difference in faculty members' feeling may arise from the mismatch between the trainee's previous background and his/her contemporary expectations in the PD training milieu. Comments could also emanate in the discrepancy of the demands between individuals interest and an institution demands.

Students indicated that the existing professional development has contributed to improve faculty members' competencies in the areas of lesson preparations and lesson presentations. However, PDPs contributions in the dimension of classroom management and assessment techniques were not good enough as compared to the dimensions of lesson preparations and lesson presentations. Consequently, the result obtained can be taken as an indicator that although faculty members who are involved in professional development training demonstrated difference in overall professional competencies, they need area specific training like techniques of students' assessment as the component of teaching learning.

To conclude, the subjects of the study in an extended type of response stated that the existing system of professional development was a top-down approach, which was dominantly characterized by *donor driven* than *demand driven.* The place of faculty members to develop, and fully participate in preparation of materials and institutionalization of the professional development program was totally non-existent. Hence, from the expressions of the audience of the study, it is not difficult to infer that there was a gap between what is expected from PDPs and what was actualized in practices. Most faculty members disliked INSET where they felt they were the main contributors. To sum up, respondents expressed their concern on the lack of certain prerequisites in the practices of professional development (facilities, enough time allocation, and leaders and colleagues support) perhaps, the most important element to widen the gap between aspiration and reality in the implementation of the existing professional development.

Suggestions for Future Practices

Overall, from the findings traced and the conclusions drawn from this investigation, one can suggest an alternative, appropriate and agreed model that fit to the present Ethiopian Universities

PDP. The respondents in this study commented that the present PDPs didn't have a system to know the need of the customers, thus, a need assessment practice has to be in place. Respondents also repeatedly stated that there has to be system to make a follow up to have adequate and reliable knowledge on the effect of the professional development initiatives. Moreover, respondents enthusiastically forwarded that one problem associated to the present system of academic professional development was the lack of common vision. Thus the need to have PD policy is a prerequisite.

Academics need considerably more access to professional development if they are to contribute to noteworthy improvements in student achievement and institutional advancement, especially because they come into the field without adequate and formal training in teaching. The research is unequivocal that professional development is more effective in changing faculty members 's practice when it is of longer duration, variety, allows for the collective participation, and includes opportunities for follow-up activities that make a strong connection between what is learned and its application to the faculty members own perspectives.

This means that the field needs well-resourced systems at institution and programs level to provide professional development opportunities with these features, and those faculty members should be recognized and accredited for their attendance in PDP for longer periods of time. Meanwhile, the scope of knowledge and skills that higher education educators need, for example, a wide range of professional development offerings with well-institutionalized programs made accessible to academic staff throughout their lives as practitioners as a means to their career improvement.

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