An Insight into Professional Development Obstacles Facing Ethiopian Primary School EFL Teachers

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Abstract

This study was conducted to identify self-directed and external professional development obstacles facing primary school EFL teachers in Southern Zone of Tigray Region in Ethiopia. The participants of the study were 63 primary school EFL teachers, 10 school principals and 2 clusters of supervisors. School teachers were selected using random sampling technique whereas school principals and cluster supervisors were selected by using purposive sampling. To gather data for the study, questionnaires and semi-structured interview were used. The results of the study revealed that lack of interest, having dissatisfaction in their job, unattractive salary, lack of knowledge and skills in doing action research and misunderstanding of the concept of CPD and how to do it were the major self-directed obstacles of professional development activities. The study also revealed that in adequate in-service training, supervisors' lack of knowledge, skills and expertise in teaching English as a foreign language, work load, and lack of support and recognition from stakeholders were the major external obstacles of professional development.

Keywords: external professional development obstacles, primary school EFL teachers, self-directed professional development obstacles

Introduction

The needs and requirements of a communication skills classroom is constantly changing as per the requirements of the industry and society. To meet these mercurial demands and ensure quality teaching is a challenging task to the present English teacher. The challenge is intensified when the teacher has to shoulder the responsibility of shaping a student's career added to the academic achievement. Such dynamic classrooms need teachers who are equally dynamic and keen on professional development. Teacher quality alone is not the sole factor responsible for students acquiring communicative competence. There are other variables like parental involvement, peer pressure, self-motivation, medium of instruction during schooling, exposure to the language, etc. However, teacher quality is definitely one of the strong influencing factors on learner's outcomes.

Successful teaching depends on many factors, including the level of instructional resources available, staffing levels, continuing professional development, and support from administrators and parents (Wallace, 1991).

The research conducted across the globe highlights the positive impact of the teacher quality on student's achievement. In Ethiopian context of teaching English as a foreign language, a progressive shift from viewing teacher as deliverer of the text to teacher as a facilitator, someone who can actually motivate and facilitate language acquisition, has begun. This transformation to realize its objective completely needs teachers who raise up to the challenge of constantly updating themselves and promoting qualitative teaching.

The diversity in students needs today demands teachers to be multifaceted, constantly honing their skills. In a nutshell, in today's context, teacher quality defines the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that teachers should demonstrate. If knowledge, skills and dispositions are the

three aspects that determine a teacher quality, the next question would be how can a teacher acquire this teacher quality and maintain it? Do we have any sure means to achieve this?

One of the means to ensure teacher quality is to engage in lifelong learning. Teacher as a lifelong learner seems to be the best way to ensure ongoing professional development. This continuous professional development is key to students' achievement. Self motivation, willingness to learn, and constant practice are the characteristics of a successful language learner. An intellectually engaged teacher can inculcate these characteristics in students and guide the students better through the process of acquiring language (Richards & Randaya, 2002)

To ensure long term and ongoing professional development, we as teachers have many opportunities like attending trainings, participating in workshops, presenting at seminars and conferences, updating oneself with the new techniques and practices, reading journals, conducting classroom research, discussing with colleagues, becoming member of teaching communities, etc.

One of the excellent ways for a language teacher to update oneself is in-service teacher training. No matter how qualified and knowledgeable a teacher is, he/she becomes stagnant if the desire to update oneself is lacking. It is mandatory for today's language teachers to not only develop knowledge of the subject but also to assess themselves and develop skills for a flexible teaching style adapted to the needs of the students.

Training involves understanding of basic concepts and principles as a prerequisite for applying them to teaching and the ability to demonstrate practices and principles in the classroom (Ricahrds, 2005). This kind of teacher training is more useful than pre service training as the teachers would be fully aware of the realities and problems in second language teaching. They can select trainings that suit their purpose. The experience and expertise they already have in teaching can be further deepened and broadened. The expertise gained will be shared with colleagues and thus an ongoing professional environment can be ensured.

Teacher support groups are another wonderful means of collaborative learning. Though unofficially support groups are part of any institution where teachers often discuss and share aspects of subject they are teaching, teacher support groups should be made more systematic streamlined. In the place of vague discussions and probable ideas, a well-planned support group with clear goals and constructive agenda helps a lot in professional development of a teacher. The peer support and advice extended in such groups helps teachers in resolving issues smoothly and updating regularly. In a situation where a student needs guidance and a single teacher cannot completely handle, she/he can take the help of the support groups to resolve. Hence, these support groups indirectly extend support to students and influence them.

Many scholars stated that English language teachers' professional development is the backbone of successful language teaching. For example, Kathleen, Baily, Curtis and Nunan (2004), suggest that there are five reasons why teachers should engage in, and take control of their own ongoing professional development: to acquire new knowledge and skills, to cope with and keep up with the pace of change, to increase one's professionalism, status, and even, possibly, income, to empower oneself through increasing one's knowledge base, and to combat negativity and burnout.

Ur (1996) also sets this sense by defining the concept of professionalism in the context of English language teachers. After discusing the notion of professionalism, she asks if we English teachers can be professionals like this:

►Do we belong to a community of professionals who interact and exchange ideas from the purpose of developing our professionalism?

►Are we a learning community which is interested in acquiring new knowledge and experimenting with new ideas?

► Are we committed to achieving certain desirable standard in our profession?

►Are we autonomous enough to set professional standard so as to make sure that only meeting the standards can take part in educating our students?

Unfortunately, the answers to those questions are not always in the complete affirmative. Ur (1996) asserts that although we have seen a lot of progress, we have not yet reached a satisfactory level of professionalism.

Ethiopia has made extraordinary achievements in expanding education at all levels of the organization. However, this achievement seems in terms of students' enrollment but not in meeting quality standards. Currently quality of education has become a serious concern among all stakeholders. According to MOE (2007, 2008) in many schools, children were not mastering the basic skills including the EFL. Although the government made a huge effort, improving quality of education, at the same time keeping the expansion of the education program has become a challenge.

A review of the performance reports of Teacher Professional Development program I and II showed tangible results and shortcomings both at policy making and implementation levels. Evidence documented from research studies conducted by universities, reports complied from field visits, and impact studies by the Ministry of Education showed that the TDP program has brought promising changes in terms of targets set for the projects' life span. Achievement registered and problems encountered are linked to organizational arrangements and readiness to implement the program by all stakeholders. In response to those problems, the MOE has worked out a new toolkit for effective implementation of school based Continuous Professional Development (CPD) at school level and particularly, School Based English mentoring to advance and improve primary and secondary schools EFL teachers' professional development (Desta, Chalchisa, & Lemma, 2013).

Though those and other conditions were available for EFLT, having taught English for around seven years, the researcher observed that primary school English language teachers are not effectively undertaking professional development activities. Based on the researcher's observation and the report of MOE, there are muti-faceted problems among primary school teachers who teach English. Thus, the present study tried to answer the following research questions:

Q1. What are the self-directed continuous professional development obstacles primary school English language teachers face?

Q2. What are the external professional development obstacles facing primary school English language teachers?

Methodology

The purpose of the research was to investigate the major professional obstacles in Southern Zone in Tigray Region of two woredas Primary schools English language teachers. Therefore, to accomplish this task, the researcher used mixed-method research design. The descriptive analytical methodology was adopted to describe and analyze the information taken from the questionnaires and the interviews to explore the teachers' professional development obstacles.

Subjects

The data for this study were obtained from primary school English language teachers, school administrators, and cluster supervisors of Southern Zone of Tigray region. The subjects were selected from primary school English language teachers, school principals and district level supervisors. The researcher used random sampling for selecting English teachers and purposive sampling techniques to select the schools, administrators, and cluster supervisors. There were 8 schools in Maychew town and 14 schools in the rural woreda (Enda Mohoni). Then the researcher selected 4 schools from the town and 6 from the rural district. Totally 10 primary schools were selected. In those schools there were 143 teachers: among them 61 teach in the town and 82 teach in the rural district. Among 143 English teachers, 22 teachers were selected from the town and 41 teachers were selected from rural district randomly. In short, the subjects of the study were 63 primary school English language teachers who were randomly selected from 22 schools. Among the subject teachers selected for the study, 21 were females and 42 were males. Ten school principals and two cluster supervisors also participated in the study.

Instruments

In this study, questionnaire and interview were used to collect data. Close- and open-ended questionnaires were used as the main tools to gather the data. Here, the four point scale: strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree was used. The questionnaire included three different domains of professional development obstacles:

A. Self-directed professional development obstacles,

B. Professional development obstacles from the nature of the work (Environment),

C. Organizational professional development obstacles.

Likert scale was mainly adapted to analyze quantitative data. A numerical value wasassigned to each potential choice and a mean figure for all the responses was computed at the end of the evaluation or survey. Likert scales usually have five potential choices (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree) but sometimes go up or less. This way, the researcher used four potential choices only in order to condense the options for it was not expected that the subjects were going to say "I have no idea" since the subjects of the study were EFL teachers. The final average score represents overall level of accomplishment or attitude toward the subject matter.

The four scales: strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree, shown to what extent the respondents had positive or negative opinions about the professional development obstacles. And the researcher analyzed the data in two ways. The first one, sum (% of strongly agree + % of agree = Positive sum and % of strongly disagree + disagree = Negative sum) in percent can help to decide which of those items were the major obstacles and were not obstacles. So the three tables below show the major obstacles in each domain according to the data collected from the questionnaires. The second and the main way of analyzing data were by calculating the weighted average.

A weighted average is an average in which each quantity to be averaged is assigned a weight. These weightings determine the relative importance of each quantity on the average. Weightings are the equivalent of having that many like items with the same value involved in the average.

There are two main cases where you will generally use a weighted average instead of a traditional average. The first is when you want to calculate an average that is based on different percentage values for several categories.

The second case is when you have a group of items that each has a frequency associated with it. In these types of situations, using a weighted average can be much quicker and easier than the traditional method of adding up each individual value and dividing by the total. This is especially useful when we are dealing with large data sets that may contain hundreds or even thousands of items but only a finite number of choices. Rating scale questions calculate a weighted average based on the weight assigned to each answer choice.

Interview was also used to collect qualitative data. Five purposely selected teachers, four school directors, and one cluster supervisor were interviewed to triangulate teachers' responses to the questionnaire and to find out more information which was not possible in the questionnaire. In the same way as questionnaire, interview questions were directed to:

I: Self-directed professional development obstacles
II: Professional development obstacles from the nature of the work
III: Institutional professional development obstacles

Results and Discussion

The study was aimed at investigating the professional development obstacles facing primary school English language teachers. Here, the major research question is "what are the professional development obstacles facing primary English language teachers in Southern Zone of Tigray region?" To answer the major and specific research questions, three types of questionnaire and interview were used. The researcher distributed 63 questionnaires to 63 primary school English language teachers and all the questionnaires were properly filled in and returned.

Table 1. *Weighted Average of the item of the domain (Self- directed PD Obstacles)*

No	Items(opinions)	Alternative responses				
		Strongly agree/4/	Agree /3/	Disagree /2/	Strongly disagree /1/	Weighted average
1	Primary school English teachers are interested in their job	-	4	24	33	1.52
2	Primary English teachers are dissatisfied with& dislike their profession.	32	26	3	-	3.4
3	English language teachers think professional development is unimportant.	-	3	37	21	1.70
4	English language teachers are interested in sharing experiences with others.	1	3	30	27	1.63
5	EFL teachers have poor computer skills and limited internet access to update their profession.	10	19	24	28	2.83
6	English language teachers have technology phobia/ frustration/ to use internet	13	29	9	10	2.26

7	English language teachers don't have good relationship with colleagues	5	11	28	17	2.06
8	Traveling to attend professional training is difficult and costly.	10	20	27	3	2.57
9	English language teachers want to change/shift/their profession/job	40	13	8	-	3.52
1 0	English language teachers have negative attitudes towards lifelong learning.	14	15	29	3	2.65
1 1	English language teachers have lack of skills and knowledge to conduct action research.	20	17	15	9	2.78
1 2	English language teachers do not do Action research (CPD) about their profession.	25	29	6	1	3.27
1 3	English Language teachers don't like to participate in peer coaching	20	28	9	4	3.04
1 4	Some colleagues find errors in peer coaching	19	28	9	5	3.00
1 5	Talking about profession with colleagues is limited.	17	19	21	4	2.8
1 6	English Language teachers prefer to keep their classroom experiences private.	21	29	11	-	3.16

The formula used to calculate weighted average is $\dfrac{X_1W_1 + X_2W_2 + X_3w_3 - - - X_nW_n}{Total}$

Based on the table above, the most self- directed professional development obstacles are; low interest of teachers towards their profession and lack of doing action research. With regard to attitude, the weighted average for item 1, 2, 9 are 1.52, 3.4, 3.52 and 2.65 respectively. This indicated that English teachers are not interested in their profession and they are dissatisfied. As a result, they want to change their profession rather than striving to be professionally competent teachers.

In addition to the attitude of the teachers towards their profession, the data in item 7 with weighed average of 1.63, 8 (2.05), 13 (3.04), 14 (3.00), 15 (2.8) and 16 (3.16), clearly revealed that there is a huge gap in the conceptual understanding of the purpose of continuous professional development. If teachers do not share experience, if they do not do peer coaching, if they are not interested in observing colleagues and being observed by their colleagues, the purpose and the way of carrying out CPD are totally misunderstood.

The other major factor that got in the way of teachers' professional development is lack of knowledge and skills in conducting action research. The data in item 11 with the weighted average of 2.78 indicated that teachers do not have the required skill and knowledge of doing action research. As a result, teachers rated their not doing action research with the weighted average of 3.27. The data above clearly indicated that lack of interest, having dissatisfaction in their job, lack of knowledge and skill in researching and mainly misunderstanding of the concept of CPD and how to do it are the major self-directed obstacles of professional development activities.

Interview data also revealed the magnitude of the problems. Teachers interviewed explained

that they were not happy with their teaching profession; for example, one of the teachers said:
I teach students simply to make my living. I am not happy with the teaching profession because the society gives less value. Moreover, it is a tiresome job and you never end your work even after finishing your daily teaching load. I have to prepare lesson plans, I have to check students' test papers and also I have to read for the next class. Having done all these activities throughout the year, you never get rewards, the salary is not attractive and even it is not adequate to educate my children and fulfill their basic needs. Sometimes, I feel that we, teachers are being exploited by the government.

But one of them said that she reads sometimes, and she participated in an action research. Teachers do not read because they are busy, she added. She also said teachers lack the computer skills needed for researching and using internet. Moreover, since reading by its nature is a culture, but we (teachers) do not have reading culture.

Maybe they [teachers] are busy and don't have enough time. Anyway, reading is a culture and we do not have the culture of reading. I have once participated in an action research done by one teacher from another woreda .They [teachers] do not know what action research is, or they may not be good at researching and computer skills.

Other respondents also raised other PD obstacles. They said that, they did not like to share experience with each other and they did not believe peer- coaching was good PD activity. That is because teachers show off and undervalue what they have seen when observing other teachers' class. They also explained that they observe their colleagues for the purpose of filling in the appraisal form rather than helping others develop their teaching skills. They added, most of the time teachers focus on errors and leave good points. For instance, one of them said that: "Personally, I don't like teachers t o come to my class. Colleagues focus on errors and leave all good things." "I don't think peer-coaching is a professional development activity. Each teacher should feel and solve his problems alone"

On the other hand, one respondent sow that peer-coaching is very helpful and helps teachers' professional development. However, she said some teachers do not practice peer coaching because of the negative comments. "Peer coaching is very useful. It helps teachers learn from each others. "but Some teachers do not practice peer coaching because they don't like criticizing comments or they don't want others to see the way of teaching she uses."

With regard to the self-directed professional development obstacles teachers facing, district level supervisors and school principals were asked for their contribution in identifying and empowering teachers with necessary knowledge and skills. They reported that they carry out class observation twice a year to fill in teachers appraisal form. The purpose of doing so is to evaluate teachers' efficiency in knowledge and skills of delivering the lessons. They mentioned that there is shortage of budget to conduct workshops and trainings. They also witnessed that they did not have knowledge and expertise to train teachers how to conduct action research. They believed that continuous professional development is only the business of teachers.

When they were asked about the activities in observing lessons such as pre-observation, while- observation and post-observation, they replied that they never did such kinds of activities rather they focused on how the lesson plans were written, the participation of students and time and class management of the teacher. This clearly showed that school principals and supervisors had limited understanding of how to carry out lesson observation.

They also mentioned that coaching and mentoring were not in place to help novice or less experienced teachers. The said critical friends who observe the lessons of others and being observed by others are not the culture of the schools. Even they did not have understandings of tools for continuous professional development.

Table 2. Weighted *Average of items of the domain (PD Obstacles from the nature of the work)*

No	Items(opinions)	Alternative responses				
		Strongly agree/4/	Agree /3/	Disagree /2/	Strongly disagree/ 1/	Weighted average
1	English language teachers are assigned to teach other subjects in order to complete their load.	23	28	6	4	3.14
2	Teaching profession by its nature is exhausting	13	20	18	10	2.29
3	There are extra tasks given to English teachers.	18	25	12	6	2.90
4	Elementary English language teachers training in Ethiopia are rare.	18	27	8	7	2.88
5	The working environment inside the school is uncomfortable for teaching and learning process.	8	14	23	16	2.22
6	The community discourages primary school teachers.	13	18	19	11	2.54
7	In primary school English language teaching materials are difficult to find.	8	18	20	15	2.31
8	The two-shift school timing stands as an obstacle towards working to improve their profession.	-	15	25	21	1.9
9	The heavy teaching load makes teachers very busy during the working days.	23	26	8	4	3.11
10	The academic year is too short to cover the assigned content /text book/.	9	19	24	9	2.45
11	Elementary classes are more crowded than others.	12	24	14	11	2.60
12	These days teaching is becoming boring profession	21	27	9	4	3.06

The formula used to calculate weighted average is $\dfrac{X_1W_1 + X_2W_2 + X_3W_3 - - - X_nW_n}{Total}$

The result from Table 2 shows that the first four major professional development obstacles which are raised from the nature of the work that resulted in ineffective professional development activities are English language teachers are assigned to teach other subjects in order to complete their load which consists weighted average of 3.14, the heavy teaching load makes

teachers very busy during the working days (3.11), extra tasks given to English teachers (2.9) and teaching is becoming boring profession (3.06).

As the respondents' calculated weighted average indicate many primary school English language teachers agreed that Primary school English language teachers are assigned(EFLT) to teach other subjects is the most obstacle of primary school EFL teachers' PD. This indicates that since the ''Ahadawi'' or self- contained program made primary school teachers teach all subjects (Mathematics, Language, Environmental Science, sport & esthetics), they cannot give emphasis separately for English language professional development rather they have to think about teaching all the subjects. The heavy teaching load makes teachers very busy during the working days is also another professional development obstacle from the nature of the work. This also indicates that, due to a teacher is assigned to teach all subjects to one class/section/, he/she is loaded because he/she spends all day (6 periods) per a day and has weekly 30 periods.

The other professional development obstacle from the nature of the work is that these days the teaching profession becomes boring due to different factors such as the low salary & status. So it is clear to understand that no one wants to continue teaching and stay in teaching profession. According to the result, this is one of the major primary school EFLT professional development obstacles which hindered them not to be committed to their profession.

On the other hand, the least professional development obstacles from the work nature are the one that weighted 1.9 is the two-shift school timing stands as an obstacle towards working to improve their profession and the uncomfortable school environment which weighted (2.22) may not hinder the professional development activities. 50.8% of the respondents did not agree that the working environment inside the school is uncomfortable for teaching and learning process. This means that this is not a great factor for professional development.

The data from the interview yielded the same result as questionnaire. The interviewees explained that teaching load, co-curricular activities, and overcrowded classes are the major professional obstacles. For example, one of the respondents said teaching is a routine work that makes teachers g e t bored. She added, teaching English to young learners in particular is extremely exhausting. She also stated the busy working day for the primary EFL teachers prevent teachers from thinking about development.

Primary teachers are busy by extracurricular activities such as giving tutorial & network support to students. Participating in club, pedagogy center& CPD (even it is for nothing). And they write monthly reports. This made teachers get bored by those routine activities. I don't think only about EFLT because a primary school teacher is expected to teach all subjects. So Primary EFLT usually are assigned to teach Mathematics, Amharic, Tigrgna and other sciences.

Another teacher also complained about teaching in general because it is a routine work. He said teachers are given too many written tasks, and EFL teacher are given extra periods to teach other subjects to complete the load." In general t eaching is a repetition of similar actions and that is boring and teaching English to elementary boys in particular is very tiresome I can't think of any professional development activities during the work day because I am always busy."

Furthermore, some other respondents complained about the work load and attributed their not reading and updating themselves and engaging in continuous professional development to it. They mentioned that they are not good readers and writers. For example one of them said that, he reads very rarely and never thought of writing a paper for professional development. He said he had no time or no reason to read or write.

There is no time to read since I am occupied all the day. He went on mentioning the scarcity of books to read for carrying out action research and other components of professional development activities. Teachers don't read because they don't know what to read, and because good books are not available. Again there is no time and no reason to write.

In short, the majority complained about the heavy teaching load, the overcrowded extracurricular activities in school prevent them from thinking about their profession. Even the frequently meetings are also considered by the teachers as a work load.

With regard to the obstacles of continuous professional development because of the nature of the work, principals and supervisors said that teachers are made to teach different subjects and they are expected to take up the minimum of 25 periods a week in addition to other co-curricular activities. Teachers are also supposed to work in two shifts. The reason for coming in both shifts was teachers should focus on academic activities and develop teaching aids and give tutorial classes for struggling students.

The principals and supervisors also mentioned that some teachers are not interested in teaching profession for the small amount of money being paid and the work they are supposed to do. They said that there are a lot of complaints when teachers are asked and assigned to do other related school activities.

Table 3 . *Weighted averagefor each item of the domain (Organizational PD Obstacles)*

No	Items(opinions)	Alternative responses				Weighted average
		Strongly agree/4/	Agree/3/	Disagree /2/	Strongly disagree/ 1/	
1	Supervisors' supports are rare	14	20	21	5	2.67
2	Supervisors are only fault finders.	21	27	9	4	3.06
3	Supervisors don't respect teachers' opinion.	13	12	17	19	2.31
4	Supervisors lack experience in primary English teaching	23	34	4	-	3.31
5	Supervisors often visit suddenly	18	27	3	9	2.75
6	English Language Teachers, administrators& counselors don't work together.	11	21	18	10	2.50
7	There is enough in -service training.	15	20	15	10	2.62
8	In-service training is specialized in primary English teaching.	4	12	38	7	2.21
9	School administrations consider English subject is less important than other subjects.	3	25	31	2	2.47
10	English language teachers' professional development efforts	24	31	5	-	3.26

	are unrewarded					
11	School administration has no interest to facilitate English language teaching materials.	18	32	7	4	3.04
12	School administrations do not support EFL teachers' action to improve their profession.	23	26	9	3	3.13

The formula used to cumulate weighted average is $\dfrac{x_1w_1 + x_2w_2 + x_3w_3 \text{ --- } x_nw_n}{Total}$

The data in Table 3 indicated that the most serious organizational professional development obstacle is the unspecialized in-service training in primary English language teaching with weighted average of 2.21 and the second major professional development obstacle is supervisors' lack of specializing in primary English language teaching with weighted average (3.31). The third major obstacle is the practice of supervisors which is being fault finders with the average weight of 3.06.

Based on the data it is possible to conclude that when teachers attend In-service trainings which do not focus on specific specialization such as receiving diploma in English or Mathematics they will not have adequate knowledge, skills and expertise in the subject. The truth on the ground in Ethiopian Education policy is elementary teachers' training is on the bases of streams such as language stream, social sciences stream and so on. The major objective of the training is to produce teachers who can teach different subjects in a self-contained classroom from grade 1-4 which is labeled as first Cycle primary school. Because of the policy when English language teachers are trained in colleges and universities, in diploma or in certificate level, they are trained in general teaching language (Tigrigna Amharic & English). This means like three in one. So this indicates that there is no specialization for English language teachers. As a result, the policy has contributed its share for teachers in effective practice of professional development.

The second major problem is quality of supervisors which weighted   3.31. The data revealed that supervisors lack experience in primary English language teaching. Here, most of primary school supervisors have not good experience in English language teaching. Supervisors from district level have different backgrounds as teachers. Most of them are from general education background and others have background of teaching mathematics and science. These supervisors cannot support English language teachers since they do not have the knowledge and skills in teaching English. However, the prime objectives of supervision are capacity building. Supervisors are required to support teachers by giving trainings and workshops with regard to bridging the knowledge and skill gaps. Further more, they don't have knowledge & skill of how to supervise primary EFL teachers because they are not well trained in supervision. However, teachers must be helped to enhance quality of English education and supervisors should support novice teachers. The mismatch of the objective of supervision and lack of knowledge of supervisors contributed much for the second major professional development obstacle.

The other organizational PD obstacles are not rewarding English language teachers' professional development efforts with weighted average (3.26) and lack of support from school administrations for EFL teachers' action to improve their profession(3.13). This shows that EFL teachers are not supported morally and financially by the educational bureau, wereda or school administrations. In principle, when people are encouraged and rewarded, they become energetic and do their level best to accomplish their jobs. The opposite is true when their efforts are not valued and overlooked.

The interview data also support the results of the questionnaire. Almost all the respondents expressed the importance of educational supervision. However, most of them agreed that they are suffering from the less support or miss guide of their supervisors. For example, one the respondents said that:

Most of the time supervisors concentrate in general teaching methodologies. They have specific point they always focus and give similar suggestions. In fact, I only see the supervisor as an inspector. I also believe supervisors judge in advance, and I do think that they don't respect teachers. However, my supervisor this year has helped me when he suggested using a poster when writing evaluation tasks. Although supervision is sometimes helpful especially for newly appointed teachers, it is more directive than supporting in my case.

This means he believed educational supervision is a way for evaluation and he saw the supervisor as an inspector. He also said his supervisor repeats the comments every time. However, he did not deny the supervisor who has helped him though the help was general rather than specialized in EFL teaching to young learners.

The other interviewee believed the advantage of educational supervision towards professional development. He said that   "I think if supervision is practiced on the right way, it can help teachers in developing their knowledge and skills. He also added that the supervisor visited him once in this year and the supervisor raised different issues such as writing good objectives, evaluating textbooks, recording students' marks and application of a revision material. He believed educational supervision is an important activity and plays a big role in improving teacher's professional development. *However,* he commented that teachers should not be visited only once in a year for the purpose of filling in their appraisal form. He further mentioned that supervisors and head teachers should organize trainings and workshops to build teachers' capacity to deliver quality language education.

Another respondent also said that:

Supervisors give comments in everything in general but they do not focus on certain points I don't think they are practicing supervisor correctly. I think nowadays educational supervision is meaningless. It is neither being a way of helping teachers nor evaluating them. They come suddenly to school and class room and they want to see something special and unique because the usually visit a teacher once or twice per year. She also mentioned that the supervision being made are more of judgmental than supportive. She added that supervisors never carry out pre-lesson and post-lesson discussion with teachers. That is why I say, Nowadays supervision is meaningless.

The respondents also gave different response regarding to the in- service training. Three interviewee believed that the ineffectiveness of in-service training due to different reasons. For example one of the respondents said that *"*Trainers are either supervisors or psychology experts. None is specialized in teaching English to primary learners" "I can say trainers are inexperienced and unqualified to train teachers of English. All trainers I have met till now only speak about the problem and never provide practical solutions to EFL teachers in particular."

Another respondent explained that she has been attending five years summer course in Debre Birhan University. She said that: "The way how we were trained is not very helpful. I wanted something about teaching vocabulary for children, but still I didn't understand what the best technique is in teaching vocabulary? ". This implies that the training they receive in Colleagues and Universities do not help them grow professionally since the trainers are qualified in education not in English language teaching.

The interviewees also addressed the role of school administration to improve EFL

teachers. One of them said:

that in his school no one has conducted action research and no one has given us orientation about how to plan continuous professional development activities. He was asked about his professional development needs before three years, and the survey was general and not focused on EFL.

He further mentioned the school administration as well as district level supervisors did not help them to carryout action research. He explained that school principals and supervisors never give attention to problems teachers in the school are facing.
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Another interviewee explained that she has been asked about her professional development needs. However, the school administration role in EFL teachers' professional development is "very low". She also mentioned that teachers' good performances are not rewarded. She personally did not receive any support from the administration."The role of administration is very low. I mean they are supposed to make much effort to improve EFL teachers teaching capacity. Teachers' good works are not appreciated, and I feel bad about the negligence of school administration."

The result of the interview with supervisors and principals were concurrent with teachers' interview and questionnaire results. They reported that they are not from English language teaching profession rather they were trained in general supervision. They did not have the knowledge, expertise and skills in helping English language teachers. They reported that teachers in the same field help them when they supervise English teachers.

They also witnessed that they never arrange supervision schedule rather they suddenly observe teachers who teach in different grade levels. Their sudden visit of schools as to them is that teachers should always be ready and there is no need to fix schedule. The question of incentive and recognition were never entertained in the schools for financial constraints.

Discussion

The research was conducted mainly to seek possible answers to the two major research questions. "Why primary English language teachers do not engage themselves in professional development activities?" This mostly refers to the factors/ reasons/ from the teachers themselves, their work nature. The result revealed that the most self-directed professional development obstacles are lack of intrinsic motivation and interest towards their profession, limited skill and knowledge of professional development activities such as conducting action research, computer skill, and lack of the culture of reading and writing. The lack of intrinsic motivation and interest are associated with unattractive salary paid for teachers. Teaching profession is also not respected and socially accepted as an important profession. This is associated with the standard of living of people in other professions who have alternative means of income.

This finding is in concurrent with a study by Workneh and Tassew (2013). Their study revealed that one of the major challenges of teachers' PD was community perceptions of teaching profession and in adequacy of teachers' salary and their choice of career. Many of teachers and head teachers from those who had been interviewed believed that teachers needed to love their job. And in principle, teaching profession is not inferior to any other field of endeavor and also considered that teaching is the basis of all disciplines. But in practice, many teachers wanted to move away from teaching saying that their perception of profession had changed over time. The main reason which was given for their dissatisfaction was their perception that the Government and the society at large did not value the contribution of teachers and education to the country's

development. One teacher said parents looked down teachers and refused to take their advice about the importance of sending children to school.

The current finding is also similar *to* some previous research findings. Desta, Chalchisa and Lemma (2013) conducted a study entitled *School-based continuous teacher professional development in Addis Ababa: An investigation of practices, opportunities, and challenges* and found that the mentoring process stood as number one contributing factor for teacher professional development followed by action research and school in-house workshops. Lack of knowledge and experience on the theoretical underpinnings, implementation inconsistencies were obstacles for continuous professional development.

The study also revealed that the external professional development obstacles for EFL teachers' professional development are unspecialized in-service training, supervisors' lack of knowledge and skill in supervision practices, lack of reward, moral and practical support from school administrations. These findings are similar to Elyas and Hanaitem Al Grigri (2014) research entitled "obstacles to teaching English in Saudi Arabia public schools: teachers' and supervisors' perceptions" The results revealed that there was a scarcity of in-service training, weakness of in-service training programs. Weakness of the in-service training which was not effective to the EFL teachers.

The results of the study also revealed that heavy work load, additional curricular activities and large class size are the major obstacles. These findings are similar to the findings of Ahmed (2011). According to his research finding, the majority believed the unbearable heavy teaching load, lack of time, overcrowded classes, and absence of promotion are the most important professional development obstacles from the nature of the work.

The findings of the current research revealed that though the community's inferior view towards primary English language teachers is not a great obstacle towards professional development, it has a great contribution to teachers' professional development. Because if teachers feel nobody appreciates their work, they would not be enthusiastic to work hard to improve their teaching practice. On the other hand, if teachers knew their work is appreciated, they would think seriously about their professional development. This finding is similar to Tassew and Woldehanns (2013) study which showed that the major challenges for teachers professional development was community and parents perception of the teaching profession.

Conclusions

The results of the present study revealed that lack of interest, having dissatisfaction in their job, lack of knowledge and skill in researching and mainly misunderstanding of the concept of CPD and how to do it, lack of knowledge and skills in conducting action research are the major self-directed obstacles of professional development activities. Moreover, the burden of school activities, negative attitude of the community towards the teaching profession and unattractive salary force teachers to escape from the profession; instead of getting involved in different PD activities.

The major organizational obstacles teachers face are teachers attend in-service trainings which do not focus on specific specialization such as receiving diploma in English or Mathematics. Teachers in primary schools are expected to teach different school subjects in self-contained classroom. As a result, they received trainings   on the bases of streams such as language stream, social sciences stream and so on. Teachers complained that the training has not helped them to gain adequate knowledge, skills and expertise in the subjects. As a result, the policy has contributed its share for teachers in effective practice of professional development.

The study also revealed that supervisors lack skills, knowledge and expertise on how to supervise teachers and how to build their capacity. Supervisors lack experience in primary English language teaching since they are from different background such as general education, natural sciences and social sciences. These supervisors do not support English language teachers since they do not have the knowledge and skills in teaching English and also majority of them are not trained supervisors. However, the prime objectives of supervision are capacity building. Supervisors are required to support teachers by giving trainings and workshops with regard to bridging the knowledge and skill gaps. The mismatch of the objective of supervision and lack of knowledge of supervisors contributed much for the second major professional development obstacle. The study also revealed that EFL teachers are not supported morally and financially by the educational bureau, wereda or school administrations. In principle when people are encouraged and rewarded, they become energetic and strive their level best to accomplish their jobs. The opposite is true when their efforts are not valued and appreciated.

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