

## **A STUDY OF TEACHERS' CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD) PRACTICES AT THE BASIC EDUCATION SCHOOLS IN GYOBINGAUK TOWNSHIP**

Thinn Thiri<sup>1</sup>, Lily Myint<sup>2</sup>, Theingi Nwe Oo<sup>3</sup>

### **Abstract**

The main aim of this study is to study the continuous professional development (CPD) practices of teachers at the Basic Education Schools in Gyobingauk Township. Quantitative and qualitative methods were used. Two hundred and ninety four teachers were selected by using simple random sampling method. The questionnaire was developed by researcher based on the literature. The reliability coefficient was 0.9. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the quantitative data. Teachers' practices are moderately high on the continuous professional development according to the mean values. There were significant differences in the continuous professional development practices of teachers grouped by gender and type of school. But there were no significant differences in the continuous professional development practices of teachers according to age, position, teaching service and qualification.

**Keyword:** Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

### **Introduction**

Teacher professional development refers to a long term, context-based process that involves opportunities and experiences for promoting the growth and development of teachers (Little, 1994). Quality education by itself largely depends on the magnitude of teachers' continuous professional development in improving learners' achievement (Kokebe, 2013). Continuous professional development is a lifelong education in which teachers not only learn themselves but also teach each other to update and add value to their profession. The teachers' effective participation in the CPD program causes the changes of teachers in teaching, learning and professional ethics. Qualified teacher development does not take place by an accident. It needs well planned and continuous implementation of teachers' professional enhancement (Fraser, 2005). Continuous professional development is crucial for organizational growth and school improvement (Bubb & Earley, 2004). In our country, the responsible persons poorly practiced the clear, transparent and self-monitoring CPD structure at the various levels. So, there can be the absence of clearly defined objectives, shared vision and common understanding among partners on CPD. This created ambiguity for teachers' practices on CPD. There should be needed collaboration in monitoring CPD and evaluation system. Also, teachers should have the adequate awareness for CPD.

Continuous professional development aims at conveying an activity that should be thought of as an ongoing process instead of someone's achievement. It entails that people or individuals develop themselves (Gulston, 2010). The development is also likely to affect attitudes and approaches and they can contribute to the development of the quality of the teaching-learning process (Day & Sachs, 2004). Teaching is a dynamic profession with ever changing and emerging knowledge. In order to cope with the ever changing environment, progressively improving and updating teachers' professional skill and knowledge is needed with the rising technology (Hayes, 1999). Without trying to develop continuously, teachers would not keep up with the new curriculum reform. The concept of continuing professional development (CPD) in education is often ill-defined, with the separate notions of formal training and on-the job learning. Continuous

---

<sup>1</sup>. Senior Teacher, Basic Education High School, Ledi, Gyobingauk Township, Bago Region

<sup>2</sup>. Dr, Lecturer, Department of Educational Theory, Yangon University of Education

<sup>3</sup>. Dr, Lecturer, Department of Educational Theory, Yangon University of Education

professional development encompasses all behaviors which are intended to make change and improvement in the classroom. Professional development consists of all individuals, groups or school and which can contribute to the improvement of quality education in the classroom. It is the process by which, alone and with others, teachers review, renew and extend their commitment as change agents to acquire and improve the knowledge, skills and emotional intelligence essential to good professional thinking, planning and practice with children, young people and colleagues throughout their teaching lives (Day, 1999). Teachers' perceptions of what activities constitute continuous professional development is frequently limited to attend courses and conferences, often to meet national requirements. Effective continuous professional development far removed from the commonly-held perceptions of continuous professional development as one-off events.

So, in this study, the kind and level of the continuous professional development practices that the teachers performed are examined. The result of this study may help all responsible persons such as teachers and principals to be aware of the extent to which continuous professional development is being implemented. It might contribute to one's understanding of what educators experienced in terms of continuous professional development. It is also hoped that this study may contribute to quality education improvement. Finally, this study may provide valuable information to the national and local policy makers and program designers in order that they will further revise and develop appropriate programs.

## **Objectives**

### ***General Objective***

To study the continuous professional development (CPD) practices of teachers at the Basic Education Schools in Gyobingauk Township

### ***Specific Objectives***

- To study the levels of continuous professional development practices of teachers
- To study the variations of continuous professional development practices of teachers according to their personal factors
- To study the variations of continuous professional development practices of teachers according to type of school

## **Research Questions**

This research deals with the following questions concerning the continuous professional development practices of teachers. This research questions guided the study.

- What are the levels of continuous professional development practices of teachers?
- Are there any significant differences in the continuous professional development practices of teachers according to their personal factors?
- Are there any significant differences in the continuous professional development practices of teachers according to type of school?

## **Theoretical Framework**

This research work was guided by following theoretical framework. According to Alwan (2000), David (2006) and TALIS (the OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey, 2009), this study scoped CPD practices as follows.

- Courses/workshops on subject matter, methods and/or other education-related topics;

- Education conferences or seminar at which teachers and researchers present their research results and discuss current education problems;
- Qualification programme, e.g. a degree program;
- Participation in a network of teachers formed especially for the professional development of teachers;
- Collaborative research on a topic of professional interest;
- Mentoring, peer observation and coaching, as part of a formal school arrangement;
- Induction;
- Building professional learning teams;
- Engaging in informal dialogue with peers on how to improve teaching;
- Observation visits to other schools;
- Individual research on a topic of professional interest;
- Developing teachers' professional portfolios;
- Conducting action research;
- Reading professional literature such as journals, evidence-based papers, thesis papers; and
- Online professional development, keeping journal and self-appraisal activities.

Teachers can be given three categories of CPD such as Transmission, Transition and Transformation for their continuous improvement. In the first **Transmission** method, the activities that have the training, award bearing, deficit and cascade nature are involved. It is delivered to the teacher by an expert, supports a high degree of central control and teachers have little opportunity to take control on their own learning. So, the teachers' practices in courses or workshops, education conferences or seminars and qualification programs are concerned with this method.

The second method, **Transition** has the nature of standard based, coaching/mentoring and community of practice. These activities make easier for teachers to engage in dialogue about their professional practice. It has both the characteristics of one-to-one relationship between two teachers and relationship among more than two people. These relationships can be collegiate where the collective knowledge of dominant members of the group shapes other individual members' understanding of the community and their roles. Thus, the teachers' practices in participation in a network of teachers, collaborative research on a topic of professional interest, mentoring and/or peer observation and coaching, induction, building professional learning teams, engaging in informal dialogue with peers on how to improve teaching and observation visits to other schools are included in this method.

The last **Transformation** method involves the activities that give the teachers an increasing capacity for professional autonomy, and also provide the teachers the power to determine their own learning pathways. This method prefers more active and practical styles of learning. So, the teachers' practices in individual research on a topic of professional interest, developing professional portfolios, conducting action research, reading professional literature, online professional development, keeping journal and self-appraisal activities are involved in this method.

### **Definition of Key Term**

In order to understand the concept clearly, important term is carefully defined for readers as follows.

**Continuous Professional Development (CPD)** is a lifelong learning process that has the nature of individuals' aim for continuous improvement in their skills and knowledge, in addition to the basic training that are initially required to carry out the job (Gray, 2005).

### **Operational Definition**

**Continuous Professional Development** refers to updating of teachers' knowledge and skills throughout their teaching life. In this study, teachers' continuous professional development practices are determined by mean value responses to the questionnaire items and variables of continuous professional development practices. The greater mean values indicate the higher level of teachers' practices in continuous professional development.

### **Methodology**

Both the quantitative and qualitative research methods were used in this study. Questionnaire was used to collect the quantitative data and this questionnaire was developed by the researcher based on the related literature of this study and it included demographic information such as gender, age, teaching service, qualification, position and type of school. There were altogether 31 items to collect data on the continuous professional development practices of teachers based on three variable; Transmission, Transition and Transformation. These items were rated on four-point Likert scales (1=never, 2=sometimes, 3=often, 4=always). The reliability coefficient (Cronbach  $\alpha$ ) was 0.9.

Two hundred and ninety four teachers from sixteen Basic Education Schools of Gyobingauk Township were selected as sample by using simple random sampling method. The descriptive statistics was used to analyze the quantitative data. The level of continuous professional development practices of teachers were determined by mean values and standard deviations. Moreover, Independent Sample *t* Test, One-Way ANOVA and Tukey HSD multiple comparison test were also used to find the significant differences between personal factors and type of school. In continuous professional development practices of teachers, the mean values were assigned as: 1.00-1.75= low, 1.76-2.50= moderately low, 2.51-3.25= moderately high and 3.26-4.00= high. Qualitative data obtained from open-ended questions and interviews were analyzed according to the knowledge obtained from the related literature by categorizing the similar ideas and contents.

### **Findings**

#### **Quantitative Findings**

Findings for research question (1) are described in the following Tables.

**Table 1 Mean Values and Standard Deviations of Continuous Professional Development Practices of Teachers in terms of Transmission (N=294)**

No.	Transmission Items	Mean (SD)
1.	I attend workshops to improve my teaching skills.	2.56 (0.61)
2.	I attend workshops that are related to education.	2.51 (0.64)
3.	I attend teaching subject professional development courses held by MOE.	2.68 (0.79)
4.	I attend courses which assist to my teaching.	2.65 (0.89)
5.	I attend education conferences or seminars.	<b>1.39 (0.61)</b>
6.	I attend conferences or seminars that discuss education problems.	1.50 (0.69)
7.	I apply the knowledge that are obtained from the workshops and seminars.	<b>2.85 (1.00)</b>
8.	I attend post-graduate degree program and diploma program offered by Universities or College.	1.40 (0.78)
9.	I attend teaching certificate classes on holidays.	1.66 (0.72)
	<b>Overall</b>	<b>2.13 (0.42)</b>

**Scoring Direction:** 1.00-1.75=Low 1.76-2.50=Moderately Low 2.51-3.25=Moderately High 3.26-4.00=High

According to the Table 1, the mean value for the item “I apply the knowledge that are obtained from the workshops and seminars” was highest (2.85) and teachers’ practices are moderately high on this item. The mean value of the item “I attend education conferences or seminars” was lowest (1.39). Thus, teachers’ practices on this item is low. And then the overall mean value for the continuous professional development practices of teachers in terms of Transmission was 2.13. So, teachers’ practices are moderately low on Transmission.

**Table 2 Mean Values and Standard Deviations of Continuous Professional Development Practices of Teachers in terms of Transition (N=294)**

No.	Transition Items	Mean (SD)
1.	I participate in a network of teachers.	3.09 (0.64)
2.	I participate in a collaborative research on a topic of professional interest.	2.09 (0.82)
3.	I obey the guidance and direction of more experienced teachers.	<b>3.45 (0.66)</b>
4.	I give the teaching advice to the less experienced teachers and peers.	3.00 (0.80)
5.	I discuss with the peers and expert teachers to solve the difficulties in my teaching.	3.17 (0.82)
6.	I exchange experiences, solve problems and learn together with my peers.	3.14 (0.81)
7.	I observe the other teachers' teaching.	2.41 (0.73)
8.	I facilitate the new teachers in their adaptation with new situation.	3.27 (0.79)
9.	I guide the new teachers on the school's procedures, responsibilities and rights.	3.12 (0.85)
10.	I participate in professional learning teams.	3.04 (0.70)
11.	I engage in informal dialogue with peers on how to improve teaching.	2.84 (0.72)
12.	I visit to other schools on the content of discipline and teaching strategies.	<b>1.87 (0.65)</b>
	<b>Overall</b>	<b>2.87 (0.48)</b>

**Scoring Direction:** 1.00-1.75=Low 1.76-2.50=Moderately Low 2.51-3.25=Moderately High 3.26-4.00=High

In Table 2, the item “I obey the guidance and direction of more experienced teachers” has the highest mean value (3.45). So, teachers’ practices are high on this item. And the item “I visit to other schools on the content of discipline and teaching strategies” had the lowest mean value (1.87). Therefore, teachers’ practices are moderately low on this item. The overall mean value for

the continuous professional development practices of teachers in terms of Transition was 2.87. Thus, teachers' practices are moderately high on Transition.

**Table 3 Mean Values and Standard Deviations of Continuous Professional Development Practices of Teachers in terms of Transformation (N=294)**

No.	Transformation Items	Mean (SD)
1.	I conduct a research on a topic of professional interest.	2.22 (0.97)
2.	I keep the record of the portfolios for any professional development plan.	2.74 (0.97)
3.	I keep the record of the portfolios for any professional development activities.	3.03 (0.82)
4.	I do action research on the effectiveness of already used or newly adopted teaching techniques.	3.08 (0.74)
5.	I do action research on searching for solutions to every problem rising in classrooms.	<b>3.20 (0.76)</b>
6.	I read the thesis papers regarding the professional development of teachers.	2.19 (0.88)
7.	I read professional literatures such as journals and evidence-based papers.	2.90 (0.78)
8.	I study professional development programmes from online forums and websites.	2.20 (0.90)
9.	I do journal writing based on my teaching experience.	<b>1.33 (0.77)</b>
10.	I do self-assessment by using self-appraisal checklist.	3.13 (0.80)
	<b>Overall</b>	<b>2.60 (0.53)</b>

**Scoring Direction:** 1.00-1.75=Low 1.76-2.50=Moderately Low 2.51-3.25=Moderately High 3.26-4.00=High

According to the Table 3, the item "I do action research on searching for solutions to every problem rising in classrooms" had the highest mean value of 3.20. So, teachers' practices are moderately high on this item. And the item "I do journal writing based on my teaching experience" had the lowest mean value of 1.33. So, teachers' practices on this item is low. And then, the overall mean value for the continuous professional development practices of teachers in terms of Transformation was 2.60. Thus, teachers' practices are moderately high on Transformation.

**Table 4 Mean Values and Standard Deviations of Continuous Professional Development Practices of Teachers at the Basic Education Schools (N=294)**

No.	Variables	Mean (SD)
1.	Transmission	2.13 (0.42)
2.	Transition	2.87 (0.48)
3.	Transformation	2.60 (0.53)
	<b>Continuous Professional Development Practices</b>	<b>2.57 (0.39)</b>

**Scoring Direction:** 1.00-1.75=Low 1.76-2.50=Moderately Low 2.51-3.25=Moderately High 3.26-4.00=High

According to the results, the mean value for the overall area of continuous professional development practices was 2.57. So, it was found that all participant teachers' practices are moderately high on the continuous professional development.

Findings for research question (2) are presented in the following Tables.

**Table 5 The Results of Independent Sample *t* Test for Continuous Professional Development Practices of Teachers Grouped by Gender**

Variable	Mean (SD)		<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
	Male	Female			
Transmission	2.00 (0.38)	2.15 (0.42)	-2.178	292	0.03*
Transition	2.75 (0.51)	2.89 (0.47)	-1.763	292	ns
Transformation	2.47 (0.50)	2.62 (0.53)	-1.734	292	ns
<b>CPD Practices</b>	<b>2.44 (0.38)</b>	<b>2.59 (0.38)</b>	<b>-2.292</b>	<b>292</b>	<b>0.02*</b>

Note: \* $p < 0.05$

Significant differences was found at  $p < 0.05$  level in the area of Transmission and overall continuous professional development practices. Moreover, no significant differences were found in the area of Transition and Transformation.

**Table 6 One-Way ANOVA Results of Continuous Professional Development Practices of Teachers Grouped by Position**

Variable	Mean (SD)			F	p
	ST	JT	PT		
Transmission	2.12 (0.36)	2.12 (0.42)	2.16 (0.47)	0.29	ns
Transition	2.93 (0.52)	2.83 (0.43)	2.86 (0.48)	1.05	ns
Transformation	2.65 (0.53)	2.52 (0.46)	2.65 (0.57)	2.04	ns
<b>CPD Practices</b>	<b>2.60 (0.40)</b>	<b>2.53 (0.34)</b>	<b>2.59 (0.41)</b>	<b>1.12</b>	<b>ns</b>

Note: ns=no significance

According to the ANOVA results in Table 4.8, there were no significant difference for the continuous professional development practices of teachers among their position.

**Table 7 One-Way ANOVA Results of Continuous Professional Development Practices of Teachers Grouped by Age**

Variable	Mean (SD)				F	p
	20-30 years	31-40 years	41-50 years	51 years and above		
Transmission	2.06 (0.39)	2.11 (0.37)	2.18 (0.42)	2.15 (0.46)	0.9	ns
Transition	2.89 (0.47)	2.87 (0.46)	2.95 (0.48)	2.84 (0.49)	1	ns
Transformation	2.61 (0.49)	2.50 (0.49)	2.69 (0.57)	2.62 (0.53)	1.7	ns
<b>CPD Practices</b>	<b>2.56 (0.38)</b>	<b>2.52 (0.36)</b>	<b>2.64 (0.40)</b>	<b>2.57 (0.40)</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>ns</b>

Note: ns=no significance

As shown in Table 7, the continuous professional development practices of teachers among four groups of age were not significantly different.

**Table 8 One-Way ANOVA Results of Continuous Professional Development Practices of Teachers Grouped by Teaching Service**

Variable	Mean (SD)				F	p
	<10 years	10-20 years	21-30 years	31 years and above		
Transmission	2.06 (0.39)	2.13 (0.35)	2.16 (0.43)	2.17 (0.49)	0.97	ns
Transition	2.92 (0.45)	2.86 (0.49)	2.92 (0.49)	2.82 (0.48)	0.72	ns
Transformation	2.58 (0.50)	2.57 (0.50)	2.70 (0.60)	2.60 (0.53)	0.77	ns
<b>CPD Practices</b>	<b>2.56 (0.38)</b>	<b>2.56 (0.37)</b>	<b>2.63 (0.42)</b>	<b>2.56 (0.39)</b>	<b>0.48</b>	<b>ns</b>

Note: ns=no significance

As presented in Table 8, there were no significant differences for the continuous professional development practices of teachers among the four groups of their teaching service.

**Table 9 The Results of Independent Sample t Test for Continuous Professional Development Practices of Teachers Grouped by Qualification**

Variable	Mean (SD)		t	df	p
	Educational Qualification	Other Qualification			
Transmission	2.13 (0.36)	2.14 (0.44)	-.212	195.747	ns
Transition	2.93 (0.53)	2.85 (0.45)	1.445	292	ns
Transformation	2.65 (0.52)	2.58 (0.53)	.982	292	ns
<b>CPD Practices</b>	<b>2.61 (0.40)</b>	<b>2.56 (0.38)</b>	<b>1.058</b>	<b>292</b>	<b>ns</b>

Findings for research question (3) are presented in the following Tables.

**Table 10 One-Way ANOVA Results of Continuous Professional Development Practices of Teachers Grouped by Type of School**

Variable	Mean (SD)			F	p
	High School	Middle School	Primary School		
Transmission	2.11 (0.41)	2.32 (0.41)	2.18 (0.46)	3.85	0.022*
Transition	2.87 (0.48)	3.00 (0.47)	2.62 (0.40)	3.60	0.028*
Transformation	2.56 (0.50)	2.79 (0.65)	2.80 (0.58)	4.05	0.018*
<b>CPD Practices</b>	<b>2.55 (0.38)</b>	<b>2.73 (0.44)</b>	<b>2.55 (0.27)</b>	<b>3.29</b>	<b>0.039*</b>

Note: \* $p < 0.05$

**Table 11 The Results of Tukey HSD Multiple Comparisons for Continuous Professional Development Practices of Teachers Grouped by Type of School**

Variable	(I) School	(J) School	Mean Difference (I-J)	p
Transmission	High School	Middle School	-.213*	.018*
Transition	Middle School	Primary School	.380*	.021*
CPD Practices	High School	Middle School	-.184*	.030*

Note: \* $p < 0.05$

According to the above Table 7, it could be analyzed that there were significant differences between high school and middle school in Transmission and overall continuous professional development practices. And it could also be found that there were significant difference between middle school and primary school in Transition.

## Qualitative Findings

### (i) Open-ended Questions

- The most prioritized practices was Transformation. (n=124, 42.18%)
- The teachers' feelings in performing the continuous professional development practices are enthusiastic, enjoy, satisfied, happy, active and proud. (n=133, 45.23%)
- The common challenges encountered in participating and collaborating the continuous professional development activities with principals and colleagues together are no enough time (n=92, 31.29%) and no available resources (time, places for discussion, classrooms, teaching aids, real objects and illustrations) (n=69, 23.47%).
- The continuous professional development activities that were performed in their schools were helpful to improve their teaching skills (n=261, 88.78%).
- The continuous professional development activities were needed to be done (n=270, 91.83%).

### (ii) Interview Questions

When the teachers were interviewed about **the difficulties or challenges they encounter to do continuous professional development practices concerned with teacher associated challenges**, all teachers said that teacher-pupil ratio and teacher-classroom ratio were not balanced. So, they could not do action research and innovative changes in their classroom and they can't give enough time for professional development activities. They had no skill to use the technology well. So, they were not able to study the professional development activities from online forums and websites. They can sometimes surf internet for professional development because of insufficient time, heavy workload, deficiency in eye health and poor internet connection. Although they had

the commitment and will to improve their teaching skills by attending English and computer classes, they could not give enough time because of their so many difficulties (socioeconomic, family and transportation). In the case of CPD recording, two teachers said that they had some difficulty. Therefore, they needed to obey the guidance of more experienced teachers and discussed with expert teachers. But they could rarely have chances to discuss with peer and expert teachers due to heavy workload and time constraints.

When the teachers were interviewed about **the difficulties or challenges they encountered to do continuous professional development activities with respect to the support of leaders**, five teachers said that since the professional development training were mostly derived, the trainers' delivery of teaching were not effective as intended. The trainers were skillful but the training periods were short and they could not teach completely and carefully. According to the timetable, they could give one teaching period for one subject. Only one teacher said that the trainers perceived that the teachers were already skillful and they did not train carefully. So, there were some difficulties in practice teaching of some subjects such as music. One teacher said that the training periods were enough and convenient for her. In primary school and middle school, the principal sometimes participated in subject discussions because of their heavy workload and time constraints. In high school, the principal participated in subject discussions regularly in his free time such as lunch time. Two teachers said that the principals did not give directions intentionally on teachers' professional development because of workload. But the principals provided only if the teachers asked for something necessary. All teachers said that the principals' visit to classrooms were rare. The school principal did not have the opportunities to organize the school visit program because of heavy workload. Resources for professional development (budget, teaching aids, textbooks and journals) were not sufficiently provided. Two teachers said that the Township Education Officers gave directions and suggestions on teachers' needs only when they came to schools. Three teachers said that responsible persons did not organize for teachers to attend conferences and seminars.

When the teachers were interviewed about **the difficulties or challenges they encounter to do continuous professional development practices according to the school system**, four teachers from middle school and high school said that the school systems were ineffective in building the sense of collective capacity. Two teachers from primary school said that their school system was effective in building the sense of collective capacity. In their school systems, teachers conceptualized staff development activities well. All teachers said that the schools' professional development activities met the teachers' needs to improve teaching skill. A teacher said that only teachers who were not in good health could not participate in professional development activities.

When the teachers were interviewed **about the suggestions in order to be more effective in the current continuous professional development activities**, all teachers said that they might study and learn more seriously, read more and learn more such as books and online forums. If more time could be given, the professional development activities could be more effective. The books that could be benefit for them should be provided sufficiently. It could be more effective if much more teachers would collaborate actively in professional development activities. Training should be given more times and should take more training periods for teachers to understand completely. It could be more effective if the trainers explained all chapters that were contained in one subject as a summarized pattern. Colleagues should be cooperated more flexibly in a group work to be more effective. During a training period, the lodging for teachers should be provided.

### Summary of Research Findings

This research aimed to investigate the continuous professional development practices of teachers in Gyobingauk Township. Continuous professional development practices were examined according to the personal factors such as gender, position, age, teaching service and qualification and type of school.

There were 294 teachers were included as samples in this study. In this study, teachers' continuous professional development practices were determined according to the mean values of teachers' responses to the questionnaire items by using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 22. The Independent Samples *t* Test was used to find the significant differences between teachers grouped by gender and qualification. And also, One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Tukey Post-Hoc test were used to examine the differences of continuous professional development practices of teachers according to their age, teaching service, position and type of school. Findings could be summarized as follows.

- Regarding to the continuous professional development practices of teachers, the mean values for the overall continuous professional development of teachers was 2.57. So, it could be found that teachers' practices are moderately high on continuous professional development. The mean values for three variables such as Transmission, Transition, and Transformation were 2.13, 2.87 and 2.60 respectively. Therefore, it could be said that teachers' practices are moderately low on Transmission and moderately high on Transition and Transformation.
- With regard to the gender, the mean value of male teachers for the continuous professional development was 2.44 and that of female teachers was 2.59. So, it could be concluded that male teachers' practices are moderately low on continuous professional development and female teachers' practices are moderately high on continuous professional development. The result of Independent Samples *t* Test showed that there were significant differences in the area of Transmission and overall continuous professional development practices.
- Regarding to their positions, three groups of teachers (senior teacher, junior teacher and primary teachers) practiced continuous professional development in a moderately high level. And also, it was found that there were no significant differences among three groups of teachers.
- Regarding to their age groups (20-30 years, 31-40 years, 41-50 years and 51 years and above), all the four groups of teachers practiced continuous professional development in a moderately high level. The result of ANOVA showed that there were no significant differences among four groups of age.
- With regard to their teaching service, there were no significant differences in performing continuous professional development practices among four groups such as less than 10 years, 10-20 years, 21-30 years and 31 years and above and all groups of teachers practiced continuous professional development in a moderately high level.
- Regarding to type of school, all three types of school (high school, middle school and primary school) practiced continuous professional development in a moderately high level. The ANOVA results showed that significant differences were found among three types of schools in all three variables and overall continuous professional development practices. Tukey results showed that mean values of middle schools were high in the area of Transmission, Transition and overall continuous professional development practices.
- With regard to the qualification, educational qualification group had higher mean value than other qualification group and these two groups practiced continuous professional

development in a moderately high level. And also there were no significant differences were found between these two groups.

- As the result of the qualitative study, some important findings from open-ended questions and interview questions were noted and summarized. In open-ended responses, teachers who practiced Transformation is the most. Most teachers felt very satisfied in practicing continuous professional development and expressed that these programs were helpful for them and needed to be done. They also mentioned that the inadequate resources (time, places, classrooms, teaching aids) in their schools to perform continuous professional development practices. There were no enough time for principals in participating continuous professional development practices of teachers. Some teachers expressed that there were some difficulties in negotiation. In interview results, the common challenges encountered by teachers to perform continuous professional development practices were lack of skill, insufficient time and over workload of teachers and principals and inadequate resources.
- To sum up, according to the quantitative and qualitative results, it could be concluded that teachers' continuous professional development practices depended on the challenges encountered and also be notable that teachers' continuous professional development practices differed depending on the opportunities that the teachers' could have.

## **Discussion**

Continuous professional development encompasses the formal and informal learning that make individuals to enhance their own performances. Teachers' abilities could be improved by participating in formal experiences such as attending workshops, courses, professional meetings, mentoring, etc. as well as by performing informal activities such as reading professional publications, watching television related to their respective disciplines, studying the academic online forums and websites etc., (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). In these ways, teachers can improve their instructional abilities continuously by applying transmission methods, by transiting their own abilities each other and by having strong awareness of themselves in their abilities and autonomously perform to improve their abilities. In this study, the teachers' continuous professional development practices are not the same because of their various background situations such as their personal factors, school factors, opportunities and challenges encountered.

According to the results, teachers' practices are moderately low on the Transmission. The mean values of teachers' practices in attending conferences or seminars, post-graduate degree programs and holiday classes were lowest and their practices are low on these items. And the mean values of attending courses and workshops were high and they practiced moderately high on this item. Bell and Day (2001) stated that courses are the most common and widely accepted approach to the development of educators. The result findings of OECD 2009 mentioned that the least common type of professional development was "Qualification programmes" and the most frequently performed activity was "Courses and workshops". They also mentioned that qualification program was least performed because this program is the most time-intensive program. And also, the qualitative findings investigated that teachers could not give enough time to attend qualification programs and holiday classes and they also had no opportunities to attend conferences or seminars. But they attended teaching subject professional development courses held by MOE and applied knowledge that are obtained from these workshops and courses. So, findings of this study was consistent with the above findings of OECD.

In the dimension of Transition, the teachers' practices are moderately high on this. Hord (1997) pointed out that effective teachers can be fostered by grounding professional development in collaborative learning communities that appear teachers' mutual engagement in action, make

them feel valued, and encourage them to talk about their different experiences and understandings. The results of the study indicated that the teachers' practices in mentoring, coaching, induction and engaging in informal dialogue with peers were high and that of collaborative research, peer observation and school visits were low. In the findings of OECD (2009), it was found that teachers' participation in collaborative research, peer observation and school visit programs were less. They mentioned that collaborative research is the activity that require more time than other activities. Seo (2009) noted that classrooms are very isolated places and there is resistance from teachers against having peers in their classroom. Thus, peer observation is rarely practiced. Little (1982) stated that collegial relationships is important in collaborative teacher learning. But, in open-ended findings, there were some misconceptions and arguments in subject discussions. The interview results also indicated that the principals did not have opportunities to arrange school visit programs because of their time constraints and heavy workload. Thus, principals and colleagues need to nurture collegial learning culture for improving teachers' abilities through collaborative learning communities.

According to the mean values, teachers' practices are moderately high on Transformation. Mujis et al., 2004 stated that an awareness of less formal and traditional forms of CPD is slowly growing, which calls for teachers to become more creative in their approaches to their own professional development, and move away from more traditional transmission-based methods. But, in this study, it was found that they could not conduct individual research for their benefits and could not do journal writing on their teaching experiences according to the mean values. And also they could not study professional development programmes from online forums and websites and rarely had chances to read thesis papers and journals. The finding of OECD stated that individual research is the more time taken activity that is the teachers least participated. In the qualitative study of this research, it was found that teachers had not enough time and journals and the supportive papers were not easily available in their schools. This result support the finding of OECD.

Finding from analyzing the three elements of teachers' continuous professional development practices, teachers' practices are moderately low on Transmission and moderately high on Transition and Transformation. According the mean values, Transition was the most practiced. This finding supports the finding of Van Eekelen et al., (2005), in their study of teacher learning, revealed that learning in interaction and learning by doing was the most important factor in professional development. But, the open-ended finding of this study investigated that Transformation is the most practiced activity for professional development. So, the result of quantitative finding does not consistent with the qualitative results. The researcher is aware of the fact that professional learning is not viewed as an isolated individual journey, but an ongoing process which involves other members of the professional community. Therefore, it could be interpreted that teachers practice not only Transition but also Transformation.

So, in this study, teachers' practices are moderately high on the continuous professional development. Based on the quantitative and qualitative findings of this study, it can be concluded that teachers' continuous professional development practices varies according to the challenges or difficulties they encountered.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the quantitative and qualitative findings of this study, the following suggestions can be given.

- Teachers should get the opportunities to attend conferences or seminars.
- Thesis paper and other supportive journals that are concerned with the professional development of teachers should be available.
- Teachers should set aside time for their own professional development.
- Teachers should learn to improve technological skills to keep up with the changing world and to study for improving their abilities on their own.
- It should be reduced non-instructional workload of teachers and principals that are not related to improving skills.
- Teacher-pupil ratios and teacher-classroom ratios should be balanced.
- Professional development training should include skillful trainers, adequate summarized explanations, enough times and should be held frequently within one year.
- Peer and principal collaboration for professional development should be flexible.
- Principals should arrange the school visiting programs for teachers to observe other teachers' experiences.
- Professional training should emphasize on the needs of the teachers to overcome the barriers in their teaching.
- Adequate resources such as time and budget should be provided for teachers' professional development.

## **Need for Further Study**

This study was conducted to investigate the continuous professional development practices of teachers in Gyobingauk Township. Therefore, further study should be conducted in another township. And also, in this study, the practices were investigated in three areas in general. So, it should also be needed to study detail in teachers' role of continuous professional development with regard to school based CPD, leadership and supportive role in implementing continuous professional development and the contributions of school based continuous professional development practices for the staff development and school improvement.

## **Acknowledgements**

First of all, we would like to offer our gratitude to Dr. Pyone Pyone Aung (Pro-Rector, Yangon University of Education) and Dr. Kay Thwe Hlaing (Pro-Rector, Yangon University of Education) for providing permission, supports and valuable facilities to carry out this research. Then, we would like to express our respectful thanks to Dr. Khin Mar Ni (Head and Professor of Department of Educational Theory, Yangon University of Education) for her guidance and encouragement throughout this research. And also, we wish to extend our sincere thanks to Dr. Daw Mya Kywe for her special guidance, valuable advice and suggestions. Finally, we wish to acknowledge each and every one who were important for the successful completion of this thesis.

## References

- Alwan, F. (2000). *Towards Effective In-service Teacher Development in The United Arab Emirates: Getting Teachers to be in Charge of Their Own Professional Growth*. Unpublished PhD dissertation, University Of Bath, Bath.
- Bubb, S., & Earley, P. (2004). *Leading and Managing Continuing Professional Development. Developing People, Developing Schools*. London: Sage Publishing Company.
- David, R. (2006). *Teachers' Continuing Professional Development: A New Approach*. UK: Jo Rose, University of Exeter.
- Davidson, J., Hall, J., Lewin, J., & Wilson, V. (2006). Developing Teachers in Scotland: *A Review of Early Learning*, 3(1), p. 30.
- Day, C., & Sachs, J. (2004). Professionalism, Performativity and Empowerment: Discourses in the Politics, Policies and Purposes of Continuing Professional Development. In: Day, C and Sachs, J (Eds.). *International Handbook on the Continuing Professional Development of Teachers*. Ballmoor, Bucks: Open University Press.
- Day, C. (1999). *Developing Teachers: The Challenges of Lifelong Learning*. London: Falmer Press.
- Fraser, D. (2005). *Professional Learning in Effective Schools*. Victoria: Mc Lauren Press.
- Gaible, Edmon & Mary Burns. (2005). *Using Technology to Train Teachers: Appropriate Uses of ICT for Teacher Professional Development in Developing Countries*. Washington, DC: infoDev/ World Bank.
- Gray, S. L. (2005). *An Enquiry into Continuing Professional Development for teachers*. London: Esmee Fairbairn Foundation.
- Gulston, K. (2010). *The Challenges Experienced by Educators in Primary Schools Regarding Continuous Professional Development*. (M.Ed. thesis, University of Pretoria). Retrieved 20<sup>th</sup> December, 2019 from <https://repository.up.ac.za/bitstream/2263/28302/1/>
- Hammond, M. (2002). Two up: A Case Study Exploring New Information and Communications Technology Teachers Experiences of their Second Year of Teaching. *Journal of Teacher Development*, 6(2), pp. 39-71.
- Hayes, D. (1999). Opportunities and Obstacles in the Competence Based Training and Assessment of Primary School Teachers in England. *Harvard Education Review*, 1(1), p. 169.
- Johnson, C. (2011). School Administrators and the Importance of Utilizing Action Research. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 14(1), 78-84.
- Kennedy, A. (2005). Models of Continuing Professional Development: A Framework for Analysis. *Journal of In-Service Education*, 31 (2), 235-250.
- Kokebe, Y. M. (2013). *Practices and Challenges of Continuous Professional Development in Primary Schools of Metekel Zone* (Master of Art thesis, Jimma University). Retrieved 18<sup>th</sup> August, 2019 from <https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12413/5475>
- Kryvonis, M. (2013). *Models and Types of Continuing Professional Development of Foreign Languages Teachers in the USA*. Retrieved 24<sup>th</sup> November, 2019 from [https://www.vdu.lt/cris/bitstream/20.500.12259/99560/1/ISSN1822-7805\\_2013\\_T\\_15\\_N\\_1.PG\\_120-123.pdf](https://www.vdu.lt/cris/bitstream/20.500.12259/99560/1/ISSN1822-7805_2013_T_15_N_1.PG_120-123.pdf)
- Little, J. W. (1994). *Teachers' Professional Development in a Climate of Educational Reform*. London: Continuum.
- OECD. (2009). *Creating Effective Teaching and Learning Environment: First results from TALIS*. Paris: OECD.
- Villegas-Remers, E. (2003). *Teachers' Professional Development: An International Review Development & the Use of International Sources*. UNESCO.
- Westwind PD Committee (n.d.). *Professional Development Handbook for the Westwind ATA Local and the PD Council of Westwind School Division*.