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RESEARCH ARTICLE

CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE 21ST CENTURY TUTORS' INSTRUCTIONAL QUALITY: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW ARTICLE

Tiguryera Scholastica^{1,*}, Nabukeera Madinah (PhD)², Lunyolo Mary Wepukhulu³
and Ejuu Godfrey (PhD)⁴

¹PhD student, Kyambogo University, Faculty of Education, Department of Education Planning and Management

²Lecturer, Kyambogo University, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Department of History and Political Science

³PhD student, Kyambogo University, Faculty of Education, Department of Early Childhood Development

⁴Professor, Kyambogo University, Faculty of Education, Department of Early Childhood Development

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ABSTRACT

Background: Nations have engaged in reforms of their education systems to keep abreast of the current trends, responding to the demands of the 21st century characterized by rapid changes resulting from innovations, technology and massive information through advanced media. The classroom instruction of Tutors should reflect pertinent 21st century skills to keep pace with the current trends. It is widely believed that instructional quality can be improved through continuous professional development (CPD) activities, among other things. This review aimed to document the effect of (CPD) programs and activities on tutors' instructional quality. **Methods:** A meta-integration review approach was used to condense studies and synthesize them. The review encompasses nineteen articles published between 2015 and 2020. A search of databases including ERIC, SAGE Google Scholar, SAGE via Hinari, Wiley and reference tracking yielded several articles which were screened; and 19 met the eligibility criteria. **Results:** Results from the review indicate a variety of (CPD) activities that enhance practitioners' knowledge and improve the quality of instruction, especially in subjects of specialization. The review revealed some CPD activities that Ugandan tutors do not commonly engage in such as quality teaching rounds (Gore *et al*, 2017) and collaborative reflections through online journals (Elhussain & Arabia 2020). **Conclusion:** The findings are significant for developing appropriate (CPD) programs for Ugandan Tutors. The authors recommend institutionalization of CPD programs and activities that incorporate some of the novel activities, to improve Ugandan Tutors' instructional quality.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is dynamic and a cornerstone for all developments in all developing and even developed countries. Correspondingly, there is increasing recognition that teaching is undergoing tremendous transformation in several countries (Bicaj, 2017). Moreover, there is a growing realization that for teacher educators to continue acting as professionals, they should participate in activities related to education matters throughout their career (Klink, Van Der, Kools, Avissar & White, 2017). Instructional quality is the backbone of all education institutions (Kurzweil, 2018) so, teacher educators' instruction should be of high quality because the students emulate their tutors during teaching practice and when they qualify.

***Corresponding author:** Tiguryera Scholastica, PhD student, Kyambogo University, Faculty of Education, Department of Education Planning and Management.

Classroom instruction has evolved from the traditional chalk and talk teacher-centered methods through learner centered methods that do not involve modern technology, to the 21st century instruction that is expected to manifest blending face-to-face participatory approaches with modern technological content knowledge (Willermark, 2018) and technology enhanced instruction (Hämäläinen, Kiili & Smith, 2017). The instruction considered to be of high quality and relevant to the 21st century, should be related to students' prospects, how they learn and should arouse and maintain interest in learning (Olusegun, 2017). Additionally, teaching should mirror advanced skills like creativity, collaboration, reflection, communication, open-mindedness, ethics, accountability and goal-setting (Ball, Joyce & Anderson-Butcher, 2016). Instructional quality has been a concern in education arena; many agree that with the advancement of ICT and high-tech pedagogical instructional arena, every tutor comes across a number of instructional issues. It is important therefore, to consider these issues throughout the tutors' journey of modern

educational innovations (Paul, 2020) and identify strategies to address them such as Continuous Professional development (CPD). Continuous professional development commenced many years ago within medicine to keep medical professionals up-to-date and professionally competent (Khan, 2012). Medical professionals engaged in discussions on the latest information and innovations in the field of medicine, networked with other professionals and agreed that CPD was worth upholding so as to excel. Around the 1920s CPC emerged in the teaching professions to address a need for structured learning after formal qualification (Savage, 2018). This was intended to enable teachers to keep pace with the rapid technological and pedagogical changes in education (Asmari, 2016). CPD is conceived differently but in related ways bearing in mind that it is a core aspect in the teachers' professional process (Colan, Raducan, Beatrice & Lang (2018); it is a personal life-long commitment of teaching professionals towards knowledge, skills and competencies.

Life-long learning is the roadmap by which professionals can maintain, sustain, update and practice the acquired skills, blended with their professional dome (4). Across several places of work, people understand CPD as a process of getting information and skills for a person's growth and improvement of a profession (Bautista, 2015). Other researchers argue that CPD embraces both formal and informal programmes and activities that professionals undertake right from pre-service training, throughout their career (Day 1999; Rasul, Moghdam, Karim, & Cheraghi 2019). Continuous professional development enhances tutors' instructional abilities so as to improve learners' achievement (Mung, 2019). Since teachers are assets of educational organizations in which they work, they need to operate in conducive atmosphere that allows them to develop professionally and continuously and enables them to respond appropriately to the demands associated with the vast changes in modern life (Chaudhary, 2019). Underlining the significance of CPD, Desjardins and Bullock (2019) observe that high-quality CPD improves education greatly. In this review CPD refers to all forms of facilitated learning opportunities ranging from college and university certificates/diplomas/degrees and formal coursework (Rasul, Moghdam, Karim, & Cheraghi, 2019) to conferences and informal learning activities that Tutors have engaged in after the initial training (Asmari, 2016). Against this background, there is limited literature about how CPD programs and activities' impact the instructional quality of tutors in Uganda. This review therefore, sought to document the impact of CPD on instructional quality from peer reviewed articles of relevant studies from which Ugandan teachers' colleges can draw learnings to improve their CPD strategies and ultimately, instructional quality.

METHOD

Process of Literature Search: The meta-integration approach employed in this paper is an adaptation of what Frantzen and Fetters (2016) used. The process included formulating the aim of the review; determining search terms and developing criteria for inclusion and exclusion. Then the authors searched for articles, screened them following a set criteria and categorized them according to the research the approach. Thereafter the researchers condensed the findings, drew conclusions and made recommendations.

Literature Search Terms, Data bases and Rationale: The data bases used in this review are ERIC, Google Scholar, SAGE via Hinari and Wiley. These were selected because they have various educational research studies. Other articles were obtained through reference tracking. The search terms were instructional quality, teaching quality, continuous professional development and teacher education. Since there was need to include recent research in the review, the search focused on studies of 2015 -2020. Conference papers, books and book chapters were excluded, only articles written in English, totaling to 523, were initially identified by reading titles.

Process of Selection: The researchers then read the abstracts of the 523, selected studies conducted in 2015-2020 in the context of colleges, universities, secondary and primary schools which contained some aspects of instructional/teaching quality, teacher education, continuous professional development. This yielded 60 articles for quality check.

First Level of Data Extraction and Quality Check

The researchers read full texts of the 60 articles to check quality according to the following aspects:

- General Information: Study title, name of author, publication year, context of reach and journal
- Research Topic: Variables of research and purpose.
- Study design: Research purpose, questions, description, approach, data collection and analysis methods.
- Population of Research: Method of sampling, number of participants and their teaching experience.
- Research Results: In line with one or the two variables of the review.

After considering the above aspects,30 articles passed.

Second level of Extraction and Quality Check: The researchers evaluated the 30 articles and finally selected 15 articles using the criteria in the table below- adapted from Petticrew and Roberts (2006), cited in Gast & van der Veen, (2017). The authors later added 4 other articles through reference tracking to make 19 in total.

Quality Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the research aim or objective clear? • Would the methodology yield results related to the question questions?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the researcher (s) ensured validity? • Is the context of the study properly explained?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the methods used specified? • Do the researchers state the rationale for using the selected methods? • Do the researchers consider other factors of influence?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the data analysed precisely, and adequately and results presented clearly? • Do the authors state how they ensured validity and reliability?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the authors answer the research questions based on evidence from the research conducted?

Data analysis and synthesis: Following the extraction of the 19 articles, the authors categorised them according to the research methods used. This resulted in 4 qualitative studies, 7 quantitative studies, 2 case studies and 6 mixed methods

studies. Later, they used meta integration (mixed meta-synthesis) to synthesise findings from qualitative, quantitative, case studies and mixed methods.

Findings on the impact of CPD programs or activities on instructional quality

Findings from qualitative studies: Findings from a narrative study on collaboration (Dochy, F., Vangrieken, K., Dochy, F., Raes, E., & Kyndt, E. 2015) revealed that working together can improve instructional quality for example tutors can critically think of the best student-centred methods and instructional materials to use. This study also revealed other benefits of collaboration such as enhanced motivation; professionals learning from each other because alienation has been reduced; there is increased opportunities for professionals to dialogue on the quality of instruction and a feeling that work has been reduced when professionals plan together and co-teach.

A qualitative explorative international study on professional development for experienced teacher educators (experience of 5-20 years) was conducted through interviews with 25 participants from 10 countries (Klink, Kools, Avissar & White, 2017). The countries were Japan, Netherlands and Israel (5 participants from each country); others were Turkey, Spain and Slovenia (2 participants each) as well as United Kingdom, Belgium, Australia and The Czech Republic (1 participant each). The study aimed at finding out the similarities and differences in the professional development of teacher educators across the countries in the study focusing on the teacher educators' concerns, development goals and professional activities. Findings indicated no country specific differences but showed that the main portion of the teacher educators' work was on pedagogy or teaching methods, ranging from 10% to 90% of the teacher educators' time. In terms of professional development, participants pointed out various activities which they had undertaken and valued because they enhanced their teaching skills. These included participating in workshops, conferences and courses or training. Others were those that were part of their routine work like collaboration and consultation with colleagues; team meetings and research which they deemed as helping them to keep informed about the most recent developments in the teaching profession.

Elhussain & Arabia (2020) carried out a research about collaborative reflection on shared journal writing to foster English as a foreign language (EFL) CPD for teachers in Saudi Arabia and find out the efficacy of teachers' reflection, enriched by joint written exploration of practice through online teacher journal. Findings from the interviews revealed that all participants appreciated the reflection journal entries that they shared online because they enabled them to identify what they needed to rethink and modify in their teaching. Through the online reflections, several participants modified some parts of their classroom instruction and pledged to maintain the practice of reflection and sharing teaching experiences online because they had seen the benefits. One of the conclusions of the study was that their reflective model of training teachers empowers them with skills, capacity and confidence to critique their practice and other contextual factors related to teaching so as to improve instructional quality.

Findings from quantitative studies: A small scale study survey, conducted in United Kingdom (UK) about professional development (PD) in Higher Education (King 2015) drew 192 Earth science academics from 31 institutions. The researchers asked respondents to tick from a given list of CDP activities, those they had undertaken during the previous twelve months and any other activity they had participated in. Findings showed that there were several forms of CPD, but the participants had most frequently engaged in discussions with fellow academics. Other activities were peer review, responding to students' feedback, external examining, hosting a teaching and learning conference and reflecting on own experiences. Besides enhancing instruction, eleven respondents pointed out that their inspiration to participate in continuous professional development was to ensure up-to-date subject content.

A cross-sectional research on monitoring staff performance and quality teaching (Atwebembeire, Musaaazi, Sentamu & Malunda, 2018) revealed that there was a significant impact of performance tracking, consequence management and performance dialogue on teaching quality and that when all staff monitoring practices were put together, performance dialogues impacted the teaching quality most. However, the study concluded that performance monitoring practices in Ugandan private universities were implemented by force thus, not viable in enhancing quality teaching and research. This finding is important when considering how leaders of institutions implement CPD activities. Staff in educational institutions should willingly allow supervisors and peers to monitor their teaching and give them objective feedback to improve their instructional quality. If institutions implement CPDs forcefully this is likely to have a negative impact.

Mulunda (2018), conducted a descriptive cross sectional survey on CPC and quality of pedagogical practices in government secondary schools that involved 934,000 teachers, 76 head teachers and 2 Directorate of Education Standards officials. According to the findings, professional development for teachers has a significant contribution to the quality of instructional practices. Furthermore, the findings revealed that although teacher professional development contributed significantly to teachers' instructional quality, schools generally lacked institutionalized CPD systems to address current needs of teachers. In their cluster randomized controlled trial, Gore, Lloyd, Smith, Bowe, Ellis & Lubans (2017) focused on quality teaching rounds in Australia- News South Wales. The study found out that the teachers who went through quality teaching rounds improved their instructional quality significantly between baseline and the post intervention period of 6 months. The reverse was true in the control group. After 12 months, the researchers conducted a follow up-observation and findings revealed that the improvement observed after six months was sustained. The findings from the follow up observation indicate sustainability of instructional quality and most likely, the mentors who took the teachers through the quality teaching rounds did their mentoring effectively. A survey about students' academic satisfaction showed a relationship between instructional quality and students' feelings of academic satisfaction (13). It is important to think about instructional quality in terms of the beneficiaries (students), otherwise there may not be a strong justification for studying it.

When students are satisfied academically because of tutors' instructional quality, the tutors know that they are doing part of what is expected of them as professionals. This is likely to motivate them to maintain the good practice or even strive to get more creative ways of teaching. Ndugu 2015 cited by (14) underscored the impact of instructional leadership on instructional quality in particular, monitoring and evaluating teaching and giving feedback about the strong points and areas that need improvement. When tutors get objective feedback from principals, deputy principals and heads of department, after they have observed their lessons, most likely, they will improve their instructional quality. However, the study on instructional leadership (Namutebi, 2019) revealed that university lecturers' instructional quality did not measure to the expectation and recommended enhancement of instructional leadership as a continuous professional development activity. Findings from a study about patterns of university teachers' approaches to teaching, professional development and perceived departmental cultures in Finland and Hungary indicated that the most pertinent departmental components of professional culture were working in teams, supporting teaching and taking training...as vital (Kálmán, O., Tynjälä, P., & Skaniakos, T. 2019). Supporting teaching is crucial for improving instructional quality. This study is related to Namutebi (2019) on instructional leadership; before supporting teaching, among other things, one needs to observe lessons, evaluate them and identify the aspects that need support.

Findings from Case Studies: In a small scale case study of 30 participants in West Midlands, Bartleton (2018) explored teachers' opinions on how their participation in CPD influenced their teaching, using a questionnaire. The model of CPD found in the institution comprised staff participating in obligatory CPD at the close of the summer term. This institutionalised opportunity for staff to participate in CPD programmes and reflect together on good practice and personal learning, helped to improve instructional quality. Using semi-structured interviews and document review, researchers in Eritrea (Tsegay, Zegegerish, & Ashraf, 2018) analysed pedagogical practices and students' experiences in higher education institutions, focusing on Eriteria Institution of Technology (EIT) as their case.

While some instructors used participatory approaches, others employed semi-interactive methods and yet others completely ignored interactive pedagogy and used the lecture method. One instructor said he was in a dilemma of being a lecturer or a co-learner. If he totally became a co-learner, he would engage his students and they would become independent learners. However, he had to manage the big class size and complete the content of the course. Findings from students showed that they accepted whatever methodology the instructors used because they had no choice. When some instructors lectured completely the students followed that path; when they used participatory methodology, they enjoyed the teaching. One student commented that he loved lessons where lecturers used participatory methods that provoked his thinking to contribute to the best of his capacity. On the other hand, he was disappointed and lost interest when the lecturers talked throughout the lesson but just crammed facts so as to pass exams. It is important to reflect on the instructional practices of Eriterian instructors and their related challenges as well as the experiences, feelings and challenges of students.

Most likely, when they graduated, some students used the same methods that the lecturers used to teach them.

Findings from mixed studies: In South Africa, (16) focused on how teachers perceived CPD and instructional quality. They used a questionnaire to collect quantitative data from 200 teachers, who they got through simple random sampling and interviewed teachers. Outcomes of the study indicated that professional development programs were useful in improving instructional quality. Specifically, 95% agreed that CPD workshops for teachers enhanced their knowledge to teach participatory lessons; 92% indicated that CPD programs expanded their pedagogical knowledge; 95% stated that from CPD workshops, they derived ways to help students learn better. More findings revealed that upgrading, for example, from a diploma to a degree in subjects of specialization enabled teachers to improve their instructional quality. One hundred twenty-four Graduate students of a Central Connecticut State University-New Britain, holding a Bachelor' degree or its equivalent, participated in a study by Sogunro, (2017), about quality education in higher education. They completed all an open-ended questionnaire that had 8 motivating factors. The study concluded by pointing out that quality instruction plays a vital role in motivating students to engage in learning.

Findings from the questionnaire and observation instruments of a study on student teachers who were on teaching practice in Indonesia (18) indicated that instructional quality of the students on school practice was low. Evidence indicate that the students did not structure lessons to engage all learners in group activities, did not process the group deliberations and wrap up the lessons. The researchers pointed out the most likely causes of this as insufficient training in instructional methods at the institutional level and nervousness because of the presence of an observer in the classroom. However, nervousness may be a result of inadequate training, where students were not fully prepared to teach with confidence whether there is an observer in the classroom or not. Trying to evaluate instructional quality Gitomer, (2019) pointed out dimensions that determine the quality of teaching when combined...as outlined by Bell, Gitomer, McCaffrey, Hamre, Pianta, & Qi, 2012. The outline consists of:

- involvement or motivation of students;
- conducive, motivating and safe learning environment;
- organization and management of classroom;
- content matter explanation;
- quality of content presentation;
- differentiated instruction;
- cognitive activation;
- assessment of learners; as well as
- teaching and learning and self-regulation.

While concluding the study, the researcher observed that one measure cannot capture all the teaching quality dimensions, just is it may not be possible to attain 100% of a combination of some dimensions in a lesson.

Whereas Gitomer, (2019) referred to study in 2012 that outlined dimensions of instructional quality, Bellens, Damme, Noortgate, Van Den, Wendt & Nilsen, (2019) referred to a 2015 Trends in Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) that concentrated on measuring three out of the nine dimensions that Bell, Gitomer, McCaffrey, Hnamre, Pianta, and Qi

outlined in 2012 namely classroom management (CM), cognitive activation (CA) and supportive climate (SC) in Belgium-Flanders, Norway and Germany. The study results indicated that instructional quality can spur students' achievement greatly but there is need for a common understanding of the related dimensions amongst the practitioners and across countries' education systems. This study agrees with Sogunro, (2017), where he concluded that instruction of good quality motivates students to engage in learning. This is true because all learners would like to go through instruction that is captivating so as to get the best out of what teachers teach them (20).

DISCUSSION

The review aimed to document, from relevant studies, the impact of continuous professional development initiatives to the Tutors' instructional quality. During the review of literature, it became necessary to include teachers, instructors and lecturers in searching for studies related to CPD activities and instructional quality because the term "tutors" limited the search. Looking at the aim of the review, this paper focuses the discussion of findings on two major folds including CPD initiatives and their impact on instructional quality.

CPD Activities: During this review, extant literature has shown a range of CPD initiatives that teachers, teacher educators, instructors, and lecturers have undertaken or would like to undertake and institutionalise including and workshops, conferences, seminars, courses or training, consultation with colleagues; team meetings and research (Klink *et al*, 2017; Ravhuhali; Kutame, 2015; Kasule, *et al* 2016; Ravhuhali & Kutame, 2015). Others include, performance dialogues, (Atwebembeire, Musaaazi, Sentamu & Malunda, 2018), collaborative reflections through online journals (Elhussain & Arabia 2020); discussions with fellow academics, peer review; responding to students' feedback, external examining and reflecting on own experiences (King 2015); performance monitoring (Atwebembeire *et al*, 2018); quality teaching rounds (Gore *et al*, 2017); industrial upskilling to observe innovations and get up-to-date knowledge and practice (Bartleton 2018); upgrading in subjects of specialization; (Ravhuhali, 2015) as well as robust and practical pre-service training in instructional methods (Azkiyah, 2017).

These activities are pertinent although the challenge is their effective implementation. Some of the activities relate to specific individuals for example, external examining. If one is not an examiner, she/he they will not get opportunity to learn from the activity. The CPD activities that this review has identified are pertinent to instructional quality, if individuals or institutions undertake the in a regular and coherent manner to achieve personal or institutional CPD objectives. Very often, some tutors' do not undertake CPD activities because colleges do not have CPD programmes for their Staff but also, this may be due to lack of tutors' interest in CPD. Moreover, some Colleges and tutors may not undertake CPD activities because they have limited knowledge of CPD activities, so this review has brought out a range of activities from which to select those that are applicable in their contexts. In line with a wide belief that good instructional quality is valuable to learners, a study revealed that instruction of high quality motivates university students to learn (Sogunro, 2017). Teachers whose instruction is of high quality are most likely,

products of tutors, whose instructional quality was high as well. Whereas, Bellens *et al*, (2019) indicated that instructional quality can spur students' achievement greatly, they contended that there was need for a common understanding of instructional quality dimensions amongst the practitioners and across countries' education systems. Higher Education Lecturers found such activities as discussion with fellow academics, peer reviews and reflecting on own experience very useful in improving instructional quality and ensuring up-to-date subject content and/or recommended other activities to be part of their CPD package (King 2015; Kasule, Wesselink, Mulder, Wilson, Wesselink, & Mulder, 2016). Workshops, conferences, quality teaching rounds and courses or training enhanced teacher educators' professional career and teaching while collaboration and consultation with colleagues, team meetings and research assisted them to keep informed about the most recent developments in the teaching profession (Klink, Kools, Avissar & White, 2017; Gore *et al*, 2017). Up-to-date content is crucial because instructional quality cannot be assessed in a vacuum; there should be relevant content, which helps in determining the instructional methods both of which are dimensions of instructional quality.

Teachers and teacher educators valued CPD activities that allowed them to collaborate, share experiences on good practice and reflect on personal learning so as to improve teaching (Bartleton 2018; Atwebembeire, Musaaazi, Sentamu & Malunda, 2018). This is related to collaborative online reflection journals that enabled teachers to identify areas they needed to rethink and modify in their teaching Elhussain & Arabia (2020). If tutors engage in critical reflection and challenge their current practice and think of better ways of teaching, their instructional quality is likely to improve. However, there may be a need to research more about collaborative online reflection in the Ugandan context, specifically about tutors.

Up-grading from one level of qualification to another, say, from a Diploma to a Degree in a subject of specialization plays an important role in refining instructional quality. Search findings revealed that teachers who followed that trend taught better (Ravhuhali & Kutame, 2015). In this scenario the teachers build on their past experiences, get more advanced content and are in position to challenge their practice and improve instructional quality. However, this depends on the instructional quality of the teacher tutors or lecturers of the institutions/universities in which teachers upgrade aware that, most likely, people will teach the way they were taught. Therefore pre-service training activities are significant in this review because the foundation the students get during the training, begins their professional journey and their initial instructional quality when qualify.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This review has highlighted a range of CPD activities for teacher educators, lecturers, instructors and teachers as well as their impact on instructional quality. The review further indicates that instructional quality has dimensions (Gitomer, 2019; Bellens, Damme, Noortgate, Van Den, Wendt & Nilsen, 2019) that all countries must have a common understanding of and it is worthy to consider the context of each country, region, district, college or even each school, when assessing instructional quality. It is not possible to assess, fully, all the instructional quality dimensions in one measure, therefore

there is need to assess a few at a time with different measures. The authors recommend institutionalize CPD mechanisms to enable tutors to address their ongoing instructional needs (Mulunda 2018; Bartleton 2018). In addition, the authors recommend that College administrators design a strategic plan that allows tutors to upgrade their subject knowledge and to refine instructional quality through higher studies. While some CPD activities such as conferences, workshops, seminars seemed to be common in Uganda, there are others that are a bit peculiar such as, quality teaching rounds (Gore *et al*, 2017 and collaborative reflections through online journals (Elhussain & Arabia 2020). Further research is needed in the above activities and dimensions of instructional quality in a Ugandan context. Although existing literature has revealed pertinent CPD activities and how they impact instructional quality, very little is specifically related to tutors in primary teachers Colleges (PTCs) in Uganda. This therefore, justifies a need for research on CPD and instructional quality in Uganda PTCs as they get ready to transition to universities.

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