

# The Implementation of School-Based Teacher Professional Development in a Selected South African Rural Context: A Need for Change to Deal with Crises



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## ABSTRACT

This paper examines the dynamics experienced by teachers, school principals and the circuit manager in implementing school-based teacher professional development (SBTPD) in a selected South African rural context in dealing with crises such as COVID-19. Teachers, school principals and the circuit manager are not appropriately equipped to meet the challenges and needs of this developing country through the accurate implementation of school-based teacher professional development. The advent of COVID-19 has compounded such challenges, particularly in rural schools. Underpinned in the qualitative interpretive approach and using a multiple case study as a mode of inquiry, this paper employed four schools in one education circuit. It generated data through interviews with the circuit manager and each of the four school principals as well as focus group discussions with all teachers in each school. Data were analysed using thematic analysis. The findings revealed that the researched schools solely relied on the cascade model to implement SBTPD and that there was a lack of collaborative practices among teachers. Considering the findings, this paper suggests that schools initiate their school-based programmes designed to accommodate crises and that teachers, school principals and the circuit manager (CM) undergo capacity-building in appropriately implementing SBTPD, particularly during crises.

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## INTRODUCTION

Teachers in schools need to continually work on their competencies through school-based teacher professional development (SBTPD) in dealing with different crises; therefore, teachers need to keep up with the latest developments in their own field. The advent of COVID-19 has exposed the failure of the South African (SA) government to step up to new and uncharted territories in teaching and learning. This led to some schools suspending teaching and learning, with teachers and learners having

to stay at home without any form of teaching and learning taking place.<sup>1</sup> The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted educational activities across the globe, negatively affecting the teaching-learning processes of different schools, particularly in developing countries.<sup>2</sup> The purpose of any teacher professional development (TPD) is to develop and enhance teaching and learning, leading to improved learning outcomes for students. In SBTPD, knowledge, attitudes and skills are constantly shaped to promote quality teaching practice. SBTPD is about teachers in schools continuously learning to learn and how they use their learning in their everyday teaching practice, as well as becoming effective in their job. In crises like COVID-19, which pose a threat to the teaching and learning process, appropriately implemented SBTPD programmes may provide potential improvement opportunities that may offer a more viable, all-inclusive, and impartial education even after the crises.

The implementation of SBTPD is guided and supported by several policies.<sup>3</sup> These policies are Continuing Professional Teacher Development (CPTD), 2014; The National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development (NPFTED), 2007; The Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development (ISPFTED), 2011 and the Quality Management System (QMS), 2020, which was previously called the Integrated Quality Management Systems (2003). Through the appropriate implementation of SBTPD, teachers and learners continually master the art of teaching and learning and can withstand unexpected crises. The post-apartheid government of 1994 inherited a society fraught with huge inequalities.<sup>4</sup> In judging the achievements of the present-day government, it is necessary to note that literature on education transformation has exposed definite differences between schools concerning their location and SBTPD. Islam, for example, asserts that schools in rural contexts frequently use the traditional models of TPD, which cannot produce globally competitive teachers and therefore are unable to withstand unexpected crises that might disrupt the execution of teaching and learning.<sup>5</sup>

Thus, it is important to briefly describe and explain some of the policies that characterise the professional development of teachers in SA. CPTD as a policy was first announced in 2007 and introduced in 2014 to the Department of Education (DoE) to properly implement the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) and improve teacher practice and professionalism, thus leading towards improved learner performance.<sup>6</sup> The dominant aim of the NPFTED was to appropriately prepare teachers to carry out their critical and challenging tasks and to empower them to improve their professional proficiency and performance incessantly. The primary objective of the ISPFTED was to enhance the quality of teacher education and development to improve the quality of teachers and

<sup>1</sup> Ngogi E. Mahaye, "The Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Education: Navigating forward the Pedagogy of Blended Learning." (2020). [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/340899662\\_The\\_Impact\\_of\\_COVID-19\\_Pandemic\\_on\\_South\\_African\\_Education\\_Navigating\\_Forward\\_the\\_Pedagogy\\_of\\_Blended\\_Learning](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/340899662_The_Impact_of_COVID-19_Pandemic_on_South_African_Education_Navigating_Forward_the_Pedagogy_of_Blended_Learning); Makinde V.

Ibitola, Ogunlade J.Olurotimi and Omotoyinbo M.Oluwatoyin "Relative effect of COVID-19 on teaching and learning in Higher Institutions in Ekiti State, Nigeria." *American Journal of Education and Practice*, 5 no.1, (2021):10-21.

<sup>2</sup> Maryam Salami, "Curriculum restructuring and the future of higher education in Nigeria post COVID -19 era." *The International Seminar on Regional Politics, Administration and Development* (2020): 418-432.

<sup>3</sup> Trudie Steyn, "Effective Implementation of Continuing Professional Development for South African Teachers," *Acta Academia* 43, no. 1 (2009): 211–33.

<sup>4</sup> Jonathan Jansen and Nick Taylor, *Educational Change in South Africa 1994-2003: Case Studies in Large-Scale Education Reform*, vol. 2 (Washington DC: World Bank, 2003), [https://www.jet.org.za/resources/Jansen\\_and\\_Taylor\\_World\\_Bank\\_report.pdf/view](https://www.jet.org.za/resources/Jansen_and_Taylor_World_Bank_report.pdf/view).

<sup>5</sup> Faisal Islam, "Understanding Pre-Service Teacher Education Discourses in <em>Communities of Practice</em>: A Reflection from an Intervention in Rural South Africa," *Perspectives in Education* 30, no. 1 (May 25, 2012): 19–29, <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/pie/article/view/77007>.

<sup>6</sup> Benedicta A Ajibade, "Implementation of School-Based Continuing Professional Teacher Development Programmes in High Schools in the Fort Beaufort Education District, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa : Towards a Teacher Development Model" (University of Fort Hare, 2016); Lerato Irene Shelile and Dipane Hlalele, "Challenges of Continuing Professional Teacher Development in Inclusive Lesotho Schools," *International Journal of Educational Sciences* 7, no. 3 (November 25, 2014): 673–86, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09751122.2014.11890230>; Chinedu I.O. Okeke and N.E. Mpahla, "Continuing Professional Teacher Development: The Case of Junior Teachers in One Rural Education District in South Africa," *Studies of Tribes and Tribals* 14, no. 1 (July 3, 2016): 1–10, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0972639X.2016.11886726>.

teaching. The Integrated Quality Management Systems (IQMS) (2003) was established as another policy to endorse continuity in teacher professional development, which was an understanding reached by the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) in 2003 (Resolution 8 of 2003). The IQMS has since been replaced with the QMS of 2020.

Research has revealed that the plethora of challenges that rural contexts are confronted with makes it seem impossible for schools to implement and manage their TPD programmes effectively.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, teachers in rural contexts are often not motivated to implement development programmes since they do not seem to perceive the influence on their teaching practices.<sup>8</sup> Steyn, Pitsoe and Maila assert that teachers, particularly in rural contexts, are still practising old, outdated classroom teaching methods, which lead to little or no improvement in learner performance, further compounding this challenge.<sup>9</sup> The onset of crises has revealed a need for change in how SBTPD is practised in SA schools.

Despite the presence of a sound policy for SBTPD in SA, the PD of teachers in schools is still far from what it should be in terms of yielding the desired results.<sup>10</sup> Teachers' understandings and experiences as practitioners of SBTPD, particularly in rural contexts, are still not adequately researched.<sup>11</sup> School leadership and circuit management are oblivious to the role they are supposed to play in managing the progress of teaching in learning in times of crisis. A change in the education system to improve the implementation of SBTPD is a matter of urgency. This paper acknowledges that in SA, most schools, particularly in rural contexts, have not been able to procure pedagogical technological devices that might be beneficial in times of crisis due to bureaucratic and political procedures that precede such expenditure. However, it is argued that even the pedagogical content and methods have not yet been developed and aligned to new approaches to teaching and learning, which may include online learning for both teachers and learners. Given this entire predicament regarding SBTPD, the study sought to investigate the need for change in dealing with crises in the implementation of SBTPD in rural schools.

A multiple case study grounded in the qualitative interpretive paradigm was used for the study. Semi-structured face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions were used to gather qualitative data for this study. A small number of closed questions were asked to gather background and demographic information, such as the highest qualification and teaching experience. However, most of the questions were open-ended in order that the participants could talk freely and share their experiences. This study used multiple data sources, namely interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs), as the main sources of data generation. After obtaining permission from the school principals as gatekeepers and detailing the study, the researcher depended on them to assemble groups of seven teachers to form focus group discussions. The participants comprised 28 teachers, four principals from

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<sup>7</sup> Shelile and Hlalele, "Challenges of Continuing Professional Teacher Development in Inclusive Lesotho Schools"; Ajibade, "Implementation of School-Based Continuing Professional Teacher Development Programmes in High Schools in the Fort Beaufort Education District, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa : Towards a Teacher Development Model."

<sup>8</sup> Okeke and Mpahla, "Continuing Professional Teacher Development: The Case of Junior Teachers in One Rural Education District in South Africa."

<sup>9</sup> Steyn, "Effective Implementation of Continuing Professional Development for South African Teachers"; V. J. Pitsoe and W. M. Maila, "Towards Constructivist Teacher Professional Development," *Journal of Social Sciences* 8, no. 3 (March 26, 2012): 318–24, <https://doi.org/10.3844/JSSP.2012.318.324>.

<sup>10</sup> Emmanuel N. Mpahla and Chinedu I.O. Okeke, "The Rurality of Continuing Professional Teacher Development (CPTD)," *Studies of Tribes and Tribals* 13, no. 1 (July 3, 2015): 22–33, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0972639X.2015.11886708>; F de Clercq and R Phiri, "The Challenges of School-Based Teacher Development Initiatives in South Africa and the Potential of Cluster Teaching," *Perspectives in Education* 31, no. 1 (April 29, 2013): 77–86, <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/pie/article/view/87997>; Francine de Clercq, "Professionalism in SA Education: The Challenges of Developing Professional Knowledge, Practice, Identity and Voices," *Journal of Education* 57 (2013): 1–24, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/263465491\\_Professionalism\\_in\\_SA\\_Education\\_the\\_challenges\\_of\\_developing\\_professional\\_knowledge\\_practice\\_identity\\_and\\_voices](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/263465491_Professionalism_in_SA_Education_the_challenges_of_developing_professional_knowledge_practice_identity_and_voices).

<sup>11</sup> Okeke and Mpahla, "Continuing Professional Teacher Development: The Case of Junior Teachers in One Rural Education District in South Africa."

four purposively selected primary schools and one circuit manager, all from one selected rural education circuit. Teachers were purposively selected as participants because they are the implementers and practitioners of SBTPD in their respective schools. The school principals were participants due to their function as custodians and managers of programmes designed to enhance teachers' professional competence in their respective schools. The purpose of including the circuit manager as a participant was due to his responsibility to ensure that SBTPD is taking place in schools under his supervision and bearing the necessary fruit.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### The Rural Dimension of SBTPD

Schools in rural contexts are confronted with numerous challenges which are associated with the failure to implement and manage SBTPD programmes effectively. The severity of challenges, including low pass rate, poor quality in teaching and learning and lack of adequate support for vulnerable school communities, all point to the need for SBTPD.<sup>12</sup> Large class sizes, student discipline problems, and inadequate resources and facilities are some of the overarching factors that negatively influence teachers' efforts to translate SBTPD programmes into practice, particularly in rural schools.<sup>13</sup> Owing to schools being ill-resourced, in their study on teacher professional development in South African rural schools, Kempen and Steyn argue that TPD should be localised and contextualised.<sup>14</sup>

### The State of Teacher Professional Development in South Africa

Serious challenges remain to be present in the level and quality of teachers' work and attitudes regarding the state of teacher professional development. Quality leadership demands that school principals and education managers become involved in the implementation of teacher development to effectively manage the TPD process. Shelile and Hlalele mention the lack of quality leadership in SA schools for the challenges of teacher professional development.<sup>15</sup> Liu and Hallinger corroborated this statement by finding that school principals are often ignorant about their role in TPD, often lack the necessary skills and knowledge and are ill-prepared for the responsibilities accompanying the implementation and management of TPD in their respective schools.<sup>16</sup>

### The School as a Learning Organisation

The school as an organisation is conceptualised by Subitha, implying that all members of the school community are involved in learning.<sup>17</sup> Yuen asserts that even after teachers have qualified, they need to continuously learn to keep up with the ever-changing circumstances that affect teaching and learning, such as curriculum changes and crises such as the pandemic of COVID-19.<sup>18</sup> The outbreak of crises requires a need for innovative approaches and renewed mindsets. Therefore, in this context, the school should provide a platform where teachers continue to learn new skills so they can put up

<sup>12</sup> Buhle Stella Nhlumayo, "The Dynamics of Implementing School-Based Teacher Professional Development in South Africa: A Case Study of One Rural Education Circuit in KwaZulu-Natal." (University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2020).

<sup>13</sup> Titien Soebari and Jill M. Aldridge, "Investigating the Differential Effectiveness of a Teacher Professional Development Programme for Rural and Urban Classrooms in Indonesia," *Teacher Development* 20, no. 5 (October 19, 2016): 701–22, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13664530.2016.1185031>.

<sup>14</sup> Maria Elizabeth Kempen and Gertruida Maria Steyn, "An Investigation of Teachers' Collaborative Learning in a Continuous Professional Development Programme in South African Special Schools," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 52, no. 2 (March 27, 2017): 157–71, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021909615570950>.

<sup>15</sup> Shelile and Hlalele, "Challenges of Continuing Professional Teacher Development in Inclusive Lesotho Schools."

<sup>16</sup> Shengnan Liu and Philip Hallinger, "Teacher Development in Rural China: How Ineffective School Leadership Fails to Make a Difference," *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, March 9, 2017, 1–18, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2017.1294266>.

<sup>17</sup> G. V. Subitha, "Re-Conceptualizing Teachers' Continuous Professional Development within a New Paradigm of Change in the Indian Context: An Analysis of Literature and Policy Documents," *Professional Development in Education* 44, no. 1 (January 7, 2018): 76–91, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2017.1299029>.

<sup>18</sup> Lik Hang Yuen, "The Impact of Continuing Professional Development on a Novice Teacher," *Teacher Development* 16, no. 3 (August 2012): 387–98, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13664530.2012.722440>.

with any disruption to teaching and learning. Within the learning process, teachers should adopt the practice of collaboration, described as professional partnerships and collective responsibility for learners' achievement. The collaboration may be intra-school or inter-school collaboration. When teachers continually learn, they develop a collaborative culture and collaborative practices, which are necessary tools for the collective competence of their learners. The ability to withstand unprecedented situations, such as COVID-19, calls for teachers to continue learning and collaborate to improve their practice and advance learners' academic performance.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

An eclectic blend of a trinity of theories was utilised with the perception that they would be useful to grasp the dynamics of implementing SBTPD in schools as learning organisations for teachers. The theories include Wenger's social learning theory (SLT), Speck's and Knowles' adult learning theory (ALT), and the theory of learning-centred leadership (LCL).<sup>19</sup> Wenger's social learning theory focuses on learning as a form of effective and collective participation.<sup>20</sup> This theory argues that learning is situated in social contexts involving groups of people referred to as communities of practice. The adult learning theories developed by Speck and Knowles emphasise that adults learn differently from children; they want to shape how they learn and that their day-to-day activities must be linked to how they learn.<sup>21</sup>

Learning-centred leadership (LCL) can be defined as a practice whereby school leaders are involved in deliberate efforts to lead, direct, support, contribute to teacher learning and development with the objective of expanding their professional knowledge and eventually increasing learner performance and school effectiveness. The LCL is based on these assumptions: self-concept, adult learner experience, readiness to learn, orientation to learning and motivation to learn. The three mentioned theories were used in combination as a lens for this study to mirror how rural schools could change the way they implement SBTPD to accommodate crisis situations in their teaching and learning.

## **FINDINGS**

The findings revealed two critical themes emerging from participants. Firstly, the use of the cascade model to facilitate SBTPD. The DoE employs the cascade model to facilitate SBTPD; thus, schools follow suit to the detriment of SBTPD. Secondly, the lack of collaborative practices among teachers. SBTPD thrives under collaboration and the lack of results in teachers having to continue working in isolation in their practice, which does little to improve their teaching practice and learners' academic performance. The identification of participants for this study is as follows:

**School** – School A to School D

**Focus Group Discussions** – Group A to Group D

**School principals** – Pa to Pd

**Circuit manager** – CM

It is worth explaining that the data presented for groups A to D was a collective voice of the group participants and acknowledgement was made where there were differing voices.

The findings are explained in detail below, followed by a discussion and interpretation of the data.

### **The Cascade Model**

When asked about the strategy of implementing SBTPD in their schools, it emerged that the cascade model had become the regularly used model for SBTPD. Participants revealed that when a teacher

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<sup>19</sup> Liu and Hallinger, "Teacher Development in Rural China: How Ineffective School Leadership Fails to Make a Difference."

<sup>20</sup> Etienne Wenger, "The Impact of Continuing Professional Development on a Novice Educator," *Teacher Development* 16, no. 3 (2012): 387–98.

<sup>21</sup> Marsha Speck, "Best Practice in Professional Development for Sustained Educational Change.," *ERS Spectrum* 14, no. 2 (1996): 33–41.

attended a workshop, they returned to school and cascaded the information to other staff members. This was the view of group A about the cascade model:

*Usually, when one of us has attended a workshop, they report to all of us in the staff meeting about what was said in the workshop. They cascade that information so we would all be on the same page. (Group A)*

Group B revealed that cascading workshop information was not the same as attending the workshop itself. This is the view they shared:

*When some teachers cascade information from a workshop they attended, it is not the same as when it was given by subject advisors or facilitators of the workshop. They tend to forget some information or just skip it on purpose, but it is not the same; it is better if subject advisors could just workshop teachers in their schools. (Group B)*

In school C, they added that if one teacher is invited to a particular workshop, all the teachers for that subject would attend as a group because they want first-hand information from the facilitators themselves:

*We attend workshops as a group of teachers who teach the same subjects even though we may be in different grades, we started last year to attend as a group so that we all receive the same first-hand information from the subject advisors as it is delivered in the workshop, and it works for us because we are a small school. (Group C)*

In school D, they said they attended workshops organised by the Department of Education and gave feedback to all who did not attend. This was their view:

*After someone has attended a particular workshop, they cascade information to those who did not attend and the next stage is implementation. (Group D)*

Pa revealed that after the feedback, their responsibility was to monitor if the teachers implemented what they had been taught at the workshop. He said:

*Based on what I have observed, when a teacher attends a workshop, they come back and cascade to all other teachers what was said in the workshop and, as SMT, we follow that teacher to check whether they are improving from what transpired at the workshops. (Pa)*

From Pb, it emerged that there would be fear of distortion and misrepresentation of information as it was being cascaded. He said:

*I set up a platform where the teacher will have to give feedback, conduct a workshop for all the teachers concerned, and tell them what transpired in the workshop. Depending on what the attending educator cascades, I sometimes confirm with the subject advisors. Then strictly monitor the implementation. (Pb)*

From Pc, it emerged that the cascading made SBTPD easier for all in the school. He said:

*After one has attended the workshop, one has to cascade to the relevant people depending on the type of workshop that was attended. After the relevant people have been given feedback and are now at par with what transpired in the workshop, it is time to implement. Well, it makes things easier for all teachers to be on par with what was said at the workshop. (Pc)*

The same process of the cascade model was used in school D and this was how Pd put it:

*But internally as well, all teachers are supposed to attend workshops as per the departmental circular; all teachers who have attended must come back and give feedback to the whole staff after attending the workshop. Although there is always the danger of distortion of information, we are used to this method and it is working for us. (Pd)*

However, the CM acknowledged that the system of training teachers was outdated and that it was still used in present times.

*For now, the programme is outlined in the form of workshops and seminars where the teachers are called to a central venue and then will be expected to disseminate or cascade the information to all relevant parties in the school. So, that's the basic form where principals, Deputy Principals (DPs), Departmental Heads (DHs) and teachers are called to workshops and seminars. Though this method is outdated, for now, as the system is, we use it. (CM)*

The cascade approach could have been used to enhance SBTPD since it involved specific teachers going out of class and attending training and workshops and then assembling meetings at their schools with the aim of conducting the same workshops for their colleagues.<sup>22</sup> Not all participants seemed to be in favour of the cascade model in SBTPD. The use of this model posed a danger of distortion, dilution and misinterpretation of information, rendering the entire SBTPD programme ineffective. There was also the danger of loss of information as it was cascaded from one level to another. Reich et al. recommend remote or online learning to facilitate the learning of larger groups and the provision of learning support during school closures.<sup>23</sup> Since the cascade model assembled many teachers at a central venue, the authors further indicate that remote or online learning would promote social distancing, a requirement in the fight against COVID-19.

### **Lack of collaborative practices among teachers**

Collaboration is an enabler of effective SBTPD. When participants were asked about the practices that they employ to enable SBTPD in their schools, it merged that some teachers were not keen on working with other teachers, but they were satisfied with the work they did using the resources they had within their school. This is the view they shared:

*Some people do not like to work with others; sometimes, it feels like a waste of time because you know the methods, you attended the workshops, and when you have all the material that you need for the subjects, and then you are good to go. (Group A)*

Group B indicated that the lack of collaborative practices was usually caused by the lack of time as well as the distance between schools, particularly in rural schools. Their perspective was this:

*With other schools, it is the distance and time factors. We are far away from each other. Also, the reason for not showing up for cluster meetings. (Group B)*

Participants from school C revealed that the non-participative disposition of teachers during cluster meetings was a measure of how much they were willing to collaborate. Their view was as follows:

*Sometimes we meet as professional learning communities (PLCs) and people just keep quiet and do not say anything, the DH will then keep talking just to keep the session going, and sometimes I feel sorry for her. People just do not participate in any activity, as if they do not want to be there. (Group C)*

In school D, group participants indicated that a culture of isolation contributed significantly to the lack of collaboration between teachers.

*Most of the time it's just that we are not used to this collaboration concept; it is a new thing. (Group D)*

From the school principals, it emerged that teachers were not inclined to work together, which posed a challenge for the effective implementation of SBTPD. Teachers seemed not to be used to the culture of collaboration. Pa revealed that there were problems with collaboration. He said:

*So, the problem we face is that other schools do not want to collaborate but would rather work on their own; they just want to teach and go back home. When there are arranged cluster meetings, you find that some educators just do not show up. So those are the problems with collaboration. (Pa)*

Pb revealed that time constraints mainly caused the challenges of lack of collaboration. He said:

*Time constraint is one major challenge because people are willing but most people are not willing to sacrifice their time and remain after school hours and discuss work matters. Also, the lack of facilities and resources is another challenge. (Pb)*

Pc reiterated that the lack of collaboration was because some teachers were comfortable working independently.

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<sup>22</sup> Aileen Kennedy, "Understanding Continuing Professional Development: The Need for Theory to Impact on Policy and Practice," *Professional Development in Education* 40, no. 5 (October 20, 2014): 688–97, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2014.955122>.

<sup>23</sup> Justin Reich et al., *Remote Learning Guidance From State Education Agencies During the COVID-19 Pandemic: A First Look* (EdArXiv, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.35542/OSF.IO/437E2>.

*Some schools and teachers are not keen on collaboration; they just want to work alone. Some collaborative meetings are planned and people do not show up. (Pc)*

Pd indicated that collaboration only became important when learners' outcomes did not match the input. He said:

*The most significant challenge is that some schools here do not want to collaborate; they just want to work alone. This becomes evident when we must meet as a cluster, and some teachers just do not show up and no valid reason is provided. You see, sometimes, when you have all the materials you need, you think you do not need people because you have everything. It is only when that doesn't translate into enhanced learners' marks that you feel you need to collaborate with someone. (Pd)*

The CM shared similar sentiments with the school principals; although he revealed that there were activities that compelled school principals to work together, it was not at the level that he would have appreciated. He said:

*During the year, there is very little collaboration and engagement. My task as CM is to encourage them to communicate and learn from each other. Collaboration seems to be working effectively as well at the cluster moderation level, although its impact is not quite exactly at the level I expect. (CM)*

The data revealed that teachers were not used to the culture of collaborative practice and leaned toward the traditional practices of working in isolation. The data showed that teacher practices did not involve inter-school and intra-school collaboration. Though teachers succeeded while working independently but with collaboration, there was a greater chance of improvement for both teacher and learner. Kafyulilo maintains that for the success of the collaboration process, teachers needed not be forced to collaborate, but a change in the education system should compel school leadership to teach and motivate teachers about the importance of collaboration for SBTPD.<sup>24</sup> On the one hand, Musanti and Pence acknowledge that teacher growth and development do not happen in isolation,<sup>25</sup> on the other hand, Coimbra et al. assert that a collaborative culture should not change the traditional dynamics of individual operation but, there must be dialogue and reflection among colleagues.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study reached the following conclusions regarding the implementation of SBTPD in the selected rural circuit with a need for change to deal with crises. Drawing from teachers, school principals, and the CM's understanding and experiences of SBTPD, one gets the impression that SBTPD in the schools under study was almost non-existent since there were no activities that schools had initiated on their own. One learnt that teachers had become complacent with leaving their classes and going out for DoE-organised workshops. A lack of leadership on the part of the school principals is noted since schools seemed comfortable with being caged within the DoE formula of teacher development, which involved off-site workshops and tampered with the funds the school had budgeted for SBTPD. One of the reasons participant teachers and school principals implemented little or no SBTPD was that they were neither supported nor followed up and monitored. Thus, these schools seemed to be captured in a transactional style of leadership, in the sense that if the DoE did not do a follow-up, there would be no implementation. Thus, this paper argues that there is a need for systemic change in how SBTPD is implemented so that teachers and school principals can deal with whatever crisis arises.

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<sup>24</sup> Ayoub Cherd Kafyulilo, "Professional Development through Teacher Collaboration: An Approach to Enhance Teaching and Learning in Science and Mathematics in Tanzania," *Africa Education Review* 10, no. 4 (December 2013): 671–88, <https://doi.org/10.1080/18146627.2013.853560>.

<sup>25</sup> Sandra I. Musanti and Lucretia Pence, "Collaboration and Teacher Development: Unpacking Resistance, Constructing Knowledge, and Navigating Identities.," *Teacher Education Quarterly* 37, no. 1 (2010): 73–89; Maria de Nazaré Coimbra et al., "Pedagogical Supervision and Change: Dynamics of Collaboration and Teacher Development," *International Journal of Management Science and Business Administration* 6, no. 4 (2020): 55–62, <https://doi.org/10.18775/ijmsba.1849-5664-5419.2014.64.1005>.



The findings further reveal that the CM understood that his role in the implementation of SBTPD was more inspectoral than developmental. This points to another key need, that of structural changes within the DoE. The current operations within the DoE suggest that to get things done, schools must be inspected. If there is no follow-up, support, monitoring and inspection, nothing gets done.

The findings show a lack of collaborative learning practices in the researched schools. The lack of intra-school and inter-school collaborative practices suggests that the schools in question did not utilise all the assets at their disposal to achieve SBTPD. Human resources and people sharing ideas in the school and with other schools can have a constructive effect on the implementation of SBTPD. Assets do not only refer to infrastructure and physical resources but also to people sharing ideas in a social context, particularly in a community of practice, as the social learning theory advocates. The DoE has a role in inducing collaborative practices within schools as a form of bringing about change to deal with inevitable crises that disrupt the teaching and learning process.

Evidence from the researched schools suggests that in the context of the implementation of SBTPD, the cascade model of TPD has been the commonly used method of cascading off-site workshop information to individual schools. The DoE currently provides workshops for teachers that are usually off-site with the aim of facilitating SBTPD. The findings reveal that schools did not use the cascade model to stimulate, promote and accelerate their own SBTPD programmes. What was noted is that these role players accused the model of the distortion, loss, dilution and misinterpretation of content as information was cascaded from one to another. In judgement, the cascade model was being abused by people who needed a change of attitude and were obviously in need of capacity-building at the school level regarding its potential benefits.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper explored the implementation of SBTPD in a selected rural context to denote the need for change to deal with crises. It was found that the limited understanding of SBTPD on the part of the teachers, school principals and the CM resulted in rural schools' failure to initiate their own school-based TPD programmes. On the one hand, teacher quality can affect learner achievement. On the other hand, it can further equip teachers with skills they can employ during crises that interrupt and disrupt the teaching and learning processes. Therefore, improving teacher quality through SBTPD is one of the techniques education systems can employ as a strategy to withstand crises such as COVID-19, particularly in rural schools. Relevant systemic changes applied toward the appropriate implementation of SBTPD should result in schools being able to withstand crises that might disrupt the teaching and learning process. This will result in teachers developing apt pedagogical and content knowledge, resulting in increased learner achievement. Further research could be conducted on how the urban counterparts implement SBTPD to deal with crises. This paper recommends capacity-building for teachers, school principals and circuit management in learning to implement SBTPD appropriately, improving the school's ability to launch their own TPD programmes and not relying on the cascade model. Schools, particularly in rural contexts, need strong school leadership to guide and motivate teachers to learn to collaborate with one another to enhance the implementation of SBTPD to counter the advent of crises that disrupt teaching and learning in schools.

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