World Voices Nexus
The WCCES Chronicle
ISSN: 2522-7483
Vol. 3 No. 1, Feb. 2019
Article 2 by Kambona

A Review of Teacher's Professional Development in China: A Lesson to Tanzanian Teachers for 21st Century Skills

3/26/2019 0 Comments

ABSTRACT

This paper seeks to review teachers' professional development in China. Specifically the paper aiming at identifying major professional development programs that Chinese teachers are engaging

INTRODUCTION

Professional development refers to any activity or training that teachers engaged following their initial professional certification so as to improve their professional knowledge, competencies, attitudes and skills (Qi, 2012). The main purpose of engaging in professional development programs is to increase efficiency, competencies and a wide range of skills and knowledge that develop teachers' capacities to facilitate effective teaching and learning practices.

In the current years demand for quality teachers has been increasing from different education stakeholders such as parents, governments, education institutions and society in general (Chambulila, 2013; Nzima, 2016). This is because the welfare of people and society is greatly relying on skills, knowledge and capacities that they are put unto them by teachers (Chambulila, 2013). It is clearly shown that teachers are the hub of the social-economic development in any society (URT, 2014). In the light of this statement teachers need to be well knowledgeable so as to be able inculcate appropriate skills to the people. Therefore, there is a need to ensure teachers are engaging in professional development programs in order to provide up-to-date and apposite skills to students and society in general. Additionally, the increasing demand for 21st century skills teachers with ability to cope with the current situation has gained a paramount interest in the latest education transformation in China and Tanzania (Kayange & Msiska, 2016; URT, 2014). This necessitated the provision of frequent professional development programs to teachers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Education for 21st century Skills

Professional development and educational for 21st century skills are two faces on the same coin. This means that professional development programs plays a big part in ensuring teachers are fitting in the 21st century skills (Pacific Policy Research Centre, 2010). 21st skills comprise a variety of competencies such as Information and Communication Technology (ICT), environmental awareness, critical thinking, health awareness, financial and entrepreneurship literacy, problem-solving literacy, multicultural, humanitarian, creativity and innovative, social-justice and ethical awareness (Pešikan & Lalović, 2017).

Education for 21st century is aiming at ensuring teachers become more competent in social, political, cultural and economic aspects (Tan, Choo, Kang & Liem, 2017). This is influenced by the massive integration of people due to globalization. Globalization has made the world to become a single village via technology advancement, therefore this demands teachers to upgrade their professional skills so as to cope with the global society as well as to improve their classroom instructions (Tan, Choo, Kang & Liem, 2017).

Education for 21st century is also looking to make teachers flexible and adaptive to any

teacher-centred approach. Education for 21st century skills provides room for teachers to enhance students' ability to solve problems on their own (OECD, 2013). This is important in the contemporary society where students are prepared to be independent and critical thinkers. Critical mind and self dependence promote a sense of creativity and innovative which are key features in the 21st century. These two key features are also important for the social-economic development for any society in the globe (American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education, 2010).

Teacher Professional Development in China

Curriculum reform in China has put teacher professional development in a new face (Wang, 2012). This means that teacher professional development has given more emphasis and become part and parcel of teachers' practices.

Chinese teachers' professional development is a good model to Tanzania in terms of policy formulation and its implementation. Teachers' professional development programs in China are featured and centred on 21st century skills since it focuses on improving competencies through inquiry based learning (Kayange & Msiska, 2016). Chinese teachers are required to engage in professional development programs that are research oriented (Wang, Lavonen & Tirri, 2018).

Teachers' professional development is also managed and supervised by the government (OECD, 2016). The government plays a big role in making sure that the policy is friend by providing incentives that may attract teachers to participate in professional development programs (OECD, 2016; Zhu & Han, 2006).

Teachers' professional development in Tanzania

Teachers' professional development in Tanzania is not impressive in terms of availability and accessibility (Chilumika, 2013; Dadi, 2015). However, even those available one are of what Chilumika (2013) said as non-continuous. Many teachers' professional development are not concurred with teacher working environment, not taking part in working areas as well as not continuous (Dadi, 2015). Despite all these limitations the current Tanzania education policy insists teachers to engage in professional development programs (URT, 1995). The programs available are seminars, workshops and trainings which basically are not 21st century oriented. Additionally, these programs are not inquiry based kind of trainings which may make teachers to discover knowledge for better facilitation of meaningful learning in classrooms.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research paper used a variety of literature particularly research based materials like journal articles, papers presented in different conferences, dissertations and books. Materials were acquired via internet sources such as Google and Google scholar and university library. However, some few journal articles and books were obtained manually by consulting classmates and course instructors.

opportunity for Tanzania teachers to gain knowledge from Chinese teachers.

Moreover, China has the largest education system in the world (OECD, 2016). By having the largest education it will provide Tanzanian teachers with a big number of experiences that will enable Tanzanian teachers to familiarize with the 21st century skills. Finally, from the literature that I have reviewed it is clearly shown in new education policy that teachers' engagement in professional development programs is a compulsory activity (Neuhaus, 2014). This provides an opportunity to study how country with big number of teachers has managed to apply and implement such policy.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Professional Development in China

The nature of teachers' professional development programs in China

The findings from the reviewed literature showed that professional development programs in China are more based on teachers' working environment, meet teachers' interests, continuous in nature and cope with the current period of science and technology (Guo, 2012). According to (Guo, 2012), these types of professional development programs are suitable in the 21st century because of being able to promote enquiry-based learning, critical mind, self-motivation behaviour and collaboration among teachers in school.

Moreover, curriculum reform made professional development as a core element for Chinese teachers (Zhou, 2014). This shows that professional development has become a compulsory part of teachers' daily practices.

The Available Professional Development Programs

Publications

According to Zhao (2013), publications are one of the teacher professional development programs in China. Chinese teachers are required to publish journal articles as one of the mechanism to improve their classroom practices. Publications enable teachers not only to reflect their practices but also to explore more issues and problems in education (Zhao, 2013). Moreover, publications enable teachers to expose solutions for improvement (Zhao, 2013). Therefore, education system needs frequent solutions and innovations in order to ensure provision of appropriate and relevant education for better future.

School-universities partnership

The school-universities collaboration is one of the professional development programs for teachers in China (Zhou, 2014). Zhou (2014) revealed that policy emphasis the strengthening of school-universities cooperation in order to uplift teachers' instructional competencies. Lesson study-based action education is a good example of the professional development programs under school-university collaboration (Zhou, 2014). Under this program teachers need to take part in planning and teaching lesson in different three (3) rounds by being observed by external researchers (Zhou, 2014).

Collaborative lesson planning

Lam (2015) pointed collaborative lesson planning as one of the method that enables teachers in China especially in Hong Kong to improve their professional skills. It was further observed that during lesson planning teachers are able to share experiences and make reflections on their daily practices. Lam (2015) added that collaborative lesson planning has helped Hong Kong teachers to strengthening their classroom practices since teachers are getting opportunity to share skills and knowledge among themselves.

Sharing sessions

The findings from the reviewed literature showed that teachers in China have sharing sessions (Lam, 2015). Sharing sessions are activities that teachers that gathered "teachers from multiple schools will present sharing sessions on specific themes to inform fellow teachers about their own practices" (Lam, 2015, p. 299). The aim is to expose teachers with different teaching and learning techniques so as to improve their professional skills. It is further elucidated by Lam (2015) that sharing lessons has enabled to strengthening the network among the Hong Kong teachers where exchanging of the day to day experiences become easily (Lam, 2015).

Exchange program

Another professional development program that exists in China is exchange program among teachers in Hong Kong (Lam, 2015). Teachers in Hong Kong are either sent to teach in other schools within Hong Kong or in mainland China (Lam, 2015). The intention is to expose teachers in different education systems and teaching techniques that will widen their professional competencies (Lam, 2015). The program has enable teachers to develop their professional skills in terms of understanding subject matter, acquiring variety of teaching and learning methods, obtaining skills of dealing with students' diverse learning needs and improve their effectiveness in facilitating teaching and learning activities in classrooms (Lam, 2015).

Secondary continuing education

The findings showed that secondary continuing education is one of the professional development programs that intend to improve teachers' professional skills (Guo, 2012). It is purposely provide to the early childhood teachers who did not get opportunity to attend formal early childhood education (Guo, 2013). Additionally, Guo (2012) pointed out that the training comprises of variety of learning activities such as teaching competitions and open class demonstration, online and correspondence classes as well as workshops and research projects.

Peer coaching

Meng, Tajaroensuk and Seepho (2013) observed that peer coaching is one of the professional development programs among Chinese teachers where teachers tend to learn from one another. Peer coaching improves teachers' professional skills in schools since it brings teachers who have unique and experience background together (Meng, Tajaroensuk & Seepho, 2013). It also promotes

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Looking upon the above findings it shows that China has succeeded to build a strong professional development programs to its teachers. The following part examines and analyse the emerging themes on teachers' professional development programs in China.

Self-directed professional development programs

It has been observed that most of the existing professional development programs in China are self-directed oriented (Zhou, 2014). A good example of self-directed professional development programs are like publications, action research and reflections. This means that teachers have self-motivation to engage in professional development programs. This is concurred to the findings by Mushayikwa and Lubben (2009) that self-directed professional development programs are the key ingredient on development teachers professionally particularly in this era of globalization. Advantages of having self-directed professional development is the fact of being endless and align with teachers' working environment.

Teachers' involvement kind professional development programs

It is shown that one thing that has enabled China to achieve goals in teachers' professional development programs is the ability to involve teachers in training (Guo, 2012). It is imperative to ensure teachers' involvement is highly considered in planning and implementing any professional development program since are the key implementers of any education policy (Guo, 2012). The consideration of teachers' involvement not only improves teaching abilities but also ensure the sustainability of the program.

Availability of enough resources

The ability to put more resources has enabled effective implementation of different professional development programs in the country (OECD, 2016). The availability of enough resources to run these projects such as seminars, workshops and publications attract more teachers to engage in the professional development programs. For example, Archibald, Coggshall, Croft and Goe (2011) once argued that fiscal resources are crucial in implementing professional development since are the one used to buy training materials. Considering this factor it is vividly shown that Chinese government has put in place teachers' professional development programs as priority to ensure teachers' classroom instructions are improved every day.

Consideration of teachers' needs

One of the emerging themes from the findings showed that teachers' interests are highly observed in planning and implementing professional development programs (Feng, 2010). In setting the goals teachers' interests are the key factors to consider in order to ensure the intended goals are attained. The importance of considering teachers' needs is the fact that the program provides wide opportunities for teachers to develop their professional practices and make reflection easier.

are highly observed when planning any professional development program (OECD, 2016). Therefore, in order to make Tanzanian teachers' professional development programs sustainable their interests are supposed to be highly observed. For example, Kennedy (2016) pointed out that consideration of teachers' interests and needs in professional development program provide possibilities to change and affect positively teachers' behaviours.

More emphasis should be put in research based professional development programs. Under 21st century skills the emphasis is on continuous professional development programs. Action research for example, acts as a device for teachers to reflect their own practices (Meng, Tajaroensuk & Seepho, 2013). Moreover, continuous professional development programs like collaborative teaching, peer coaching and publications enabled teachers to acquire confidence and up-to-date skills. Continuous professional development programs enable teachers to become more aware of the changing trends and directions in their profession (Hathorn & Dillon, 2018). It is very important for Tanzanian teachers to engage in continuous professional development so as to upgrade themselves professionally.

More resources need to put in place so that more teachers can access professional development programs. Professional development programs need adequate resources in terms of fiscal, physical and human resources for operation (Archibald, Coggshall, Croft & Goe, 2011). Resources ensure smooth operations of training as well as availability of man power to run the program.

Strong policy needs to be established to enforce teachers to engage in professional development programs. It has been observed that China has strong policy to motivate and enforce teachers to engage themselves in different professional development programs (Steyn, 2005). It is high time for Tanzania ministry of education to put in place strong policy to ensure many teachers are engaged in professional development programs. By having strong policies on teachers' professional development it will be easier to coordinate and organize different professional development programs.

The ministry for education should establish a mechanism to ensure teachers are sharing experiences among themselves. It can be done either by sending teachers to other schools for a certain period of time or by gathering them and present their classroom practices to other teachers. Exchange of skills and knowledge among teachers themselves is more practical since are the one facilitate teaching and learning activities in classrooms.

CONCLUSION

It is clearly shown that Tanzanian teachers are facing shortage of professional development programs. This situation can bring poor classroom instruction and deteriorate Tanzania education system. Therefore, more resources need to be invested to ensure teachers' professional development programs are conducted frequently. Moreover, strong policy needs to be established

American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education. (2010). *21st century knowledge and skills in educator preparation.* New York: American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education.

Archibald, S., Coggshall, J. G., Croft, A. & Goe, L. (2011). *High-quality professional development for all teachers: Effectively allocating resources.* Washington, D.C.: National Comprehensive Centre for Teacher Quality.

Chambulila, C. (2013). *Quality enhancement in teacher education: Tanzanian teacher educators' conceptions and experiences*. (Published PhD in education thesis). ÅBO, ÅBO Akademis.

Chilumika, N. (2013). *Teacher educators' professional development for implementing competence based curriculum: A case of teachers' colleges in Tanzania.* (Unpublished master of art in education thesis). Changchun, Jilin, Northeast Normal University.

Dadi, H. (2015).Teacher professional development: Experiences of three selected African countries and the lessons based Chinese practices. *International Journal of African and Asian Studies, 6,* 63-72.

Feng, Y. (2010). Teacher career motivation and professional development in special and inclusive education in China. *Studies in Inclusive Education, 8*, 1-25.

Guo, K. L. & Yong, Y. (2013). Policies and practices of professional development in China: What do early childhood teachers think? *Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 38*(6), 88-102.

Guo, L. (2012). New curriculum reform in China and its impact on teachers. *Canadian and International Education*, *41*(2), 87-105.

Hathorn, C. & Dillon, A. M. (2018). Action research as professional development: Its role in education reform in the United Arab Emirates. *Issues in Educational Research, 28*(1), 99-119.

Kayange, J. J. & Msiska, M. (2016). Teacher education in China: Training teachers for the 21st century. *The Online Journal of New Horizons in Education 6*(4), 204-210.

Kennedy, M. M. (2016). How does professional development improve teaching? *Review of Educational Research, 20*(10), 1-36.

Lam, B. H. (2015). Teacher professional development in Hong Kong compared to anglosphere: The role of Confucian philosophy. *Psychology, Society and Education, 7*(3), 295-310.

Meng, J., Tajaroensuk, S. & Seepho, S. (2013). Recommendation for sustaining the in-service professional development of tertiary EFL teachers. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies, 3*(8), 1311-1321.

Mushayikwa, E. & Lubben, F. (2009). Self-directed professional development: Hope for teachers working in deprived environments? *Teaching and Teacher Education 25,* 375–382.

Neuhaus, T. E (2014). Education in modern China a case study: Teachers' attitudes of in-service/professional development in Guangzhou, China. (Unpublished doctor of philosophy in curriculum and instruction dissertation). Fayeteville, University of Arkansas.

Nzima, I. (2016). *Competence-based curriculum (cbc) in Tanzania: Tutors' understanding and their instructional practices*. (Unpublished doctor of philosophy in education dissertation). Växjö, Linnaeus University.

OECD. (2013), *Teachers for the 21st century: Using evaluation to improve teaching.* Paris: OECD Publishing.

OECD. (2016). *Education in China: A snapshot*. Retrieved on August, 9th 2018 from

Pešikan, A. & Lalović, Z. (2017). *Education for life: Key 21st century competencies in curricula in Montenegro.* Montenegro: UNICEF.

Qi, J. (2012). *The role of Chinese normal universities in the professional development of teachers.* (Unpublished PhD in theory and policy studies in education dissertation). Toronto, University of Toronto.

Steyn, G. M. (2005). Exploring factors that influence the effective implementation of professional development programmes on invitational education. *Journal of Invitational Theory and Practice, 11,* 7-34.

Tan, J. P. L., Choo, S. S. L., Kang, T., & Liem, G. A. D. (2017). Educating for twenty-first century competencies and future-ready learners: Research perspectives from Singapore.
Asia Pacific Journal of Education, *37*(4), 425-436.

URT. (1995). *Tanzania education and training policy.* Dar es Salaam: Ministry of Education and Culture.

URT. (2014*). Enhancing teacher education for bridging the education quality gap in Africa: The case of Tanzania*. Paris: UNESCO.

Wang, B. (2012). *School based curriculum development in China: A Chinese-Dutch cooperative pilot project.* Enschede: Netherlands Institute for Curriculum Development.

Wang, Y., Lavonen, J. & Tirri, K. (2017). *How aims for 21st century competencies are actualized in national primary science curricula in Finland and China*. Paper presented at European Science Education Research Association, Dublin, 21st - 25th August, 2017. Dublin: ESERA.

Wang, Y., Lavonen, J. & Tirri, K. (2018). Aims for learning 21st century competencies in national primary science curricula in China and Finland. *EURASIA Journal of Mathematics, Science and Technology Education, 14*(6), 2081-2095.

Zhao, Y. (2013). Professional learning community and college English teachers' professional development. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research, 4*(6), 1365-1370.

Zhou, J. (2014). Teacher education changes in China: 1974–2014. *Journal of Education for Teaching: International Research and Pedagogy, 40*(5), 507-523, DOI: 10.1080/02607476.2014.956543.

Zhu, X. & Han, X. (2006). Reconstruction of the teacher education system in China. *International Education Journal*, *7*(1), 66-73.

Like 0 Post

0 Comments

Author

Samson Fabian Kambona
Institute of International Comparative Education
Beijing Normal University
China

Archives

March 2019

Categories

All

RSS Feed

Maasai Land Tanzania Image Attribution: Michelle Maria [CC BY 3.0 (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0)]

WVN is an open-access journal published by WCCES and licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0

WORLD COUNCIL OF COMPARATIVE EDUCATION SOCIETIES
CONSEIL MONDIAL DES ASSOCIATIONS D'ÉDUCATION COMPARÉE
CONSEJO MUNDIAL DE SOCIEDADES DE EDUCACIÓN COMPARADA
Всемирного Совета Обществ Сравнительного Образования
世界比较教育学会联合会
المجلس العالمي لجمعيات التربية المقارنة