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Continuous Professional Development Practices and Learning Action Cell Implementation in SOCCSKSARGEN Region

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Abstract

Aim: This study examined the implementation of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) practices and Learning Action Cell (LAC) programs among public central elementary school teachers in South Cotabato, Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani and General Santos City (SOCCSKSARGEN) Region. It aimed to determine the levels of implementation, capture teacher experiences, and identify the perceived impact of these programs.

Methodology: The study adopted an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design. Quantitative data were gathered from 250 teachers using a validated researcher-made questionnaire, while qualitative insights were drawn from interviews with ten selected participants. Descriptive statistics, Kruskal-Wallis, and Dunn's tests were used to analyze the quantitative data, and thematic coding with Quirkos software was applied to interpret the qualitative data.

Results: CPD practices were rated at a High Level ($M = 4.09$), while LAC implementation reached a Very High Level ($M = 4.50$). Statistically significant differences were found across schools in both CPD ($p = 0.0139$) and LAC ($p = 0.0003$) implementation levels. Qualitative findings revealed enhanced teaching strategies, reflective practice, and collaborative growth, though challenges such as internet limitations, low peer motivation, and time constraints were noted.

Conclusion: The CPD and LAC programs significantly contributed to teacher development in the region, offering both professional and instructional benefits. This study presents a localized model of teacher learning that integrates structured training and peer-led development. Its findings hold practical value for education leaders and policymakers in similar contexts, highlighting scalable approaches for strengthening school-based professional development.

Keywords: Continuous Professional Development, Learning Action Cell, Level of Implementation, Experiences, Selected Public Central Elementary School, SOCCSKSARGEN Region

INTRODUCTION

Professional development is a central element of education systems, ensuring that teachers continuously strengthen their instructional competencies to meet evolving demands in the classroom. Across many contexts, teachers actively seek learning opportunities despite the rising costs associated with professional training. In the Philippines, this commitment to career growth is evident in the increasing engagement of teachers in various capacity-building activities, particularly those aimed at improving teaching methods (Pasilan & Galicia, 2022). To support these efforts, the Department of Education (DepEd) introduces the Learning Action Cell (LAC) as a school-based strategy for continuous professional development within the K–12 Basic Education Program. This initiative aims to enhance instructional delivery and improve student learning through structured collaboration among teachers. The implementation of the LAC framework aligns with the requirements of Republic Act No. 10912, or the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Act of 2016. This law mandates all professionals under the regulation of the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) to acquire CPD units as a condition for license renewal (PRC, 2016).

Despite its intent, the CPD law receives criticism from education stakeholders. Concerns raised include the claim that the law adds unnecessary costs, causes delays in processing at the PRC central office, and requires expensive accreditation procedures for self-directed CPD activities (Casayuran & Terrazola, 2018). LAC sessions are intended to create opportunities for collegial engagement, professional growth, and improved instructional performance. They also

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serve to prepare teachers in delivering curriculum, instruction, and assessment effectively across schools (Gamboa, 2023). However, many public school teachers continue to report difficulties in implementing active professional learning through LAC. Since its establishment in 2016, there remains a lack of comprehensive studies that examine both the challenges and perceived benefits of LAC as well as the specific implementation practices adopted by schools (Vega, 2020).

Research findings from Abakah et. al. (2022), as cited in Tribunalo and Ortizo (2023), indicate a relatively low level of teacher engagement in CPD programs. Similarly, Melesse and Gulie (2019) report perceived weaknesses in the relevance and design of professional development activities, citing limited institutional support, lack of accessible CPD information, and a narrow selection of program options. In light of these concerns, this research aims to assess the level of CPD implementation, determine the level of LAC application, examine teachers' experiences, and identify the perceived impact of both programs in public central elementary schools in SOCCSKSARGEN. The findings are expected to provide context-specific evidence that may inform professional development practices and support targeted improvements in educational policy and implementation strategies.

Objectives

The primary objective of this research is to evaluate the level of continuous professional development practices in schools, the level of implementation of LAC, the experiences encountered by teachers in implementing the LAC, and the impact of CPD and LAC in Region XII. The findings served as the foundation for crafting the enhanced LAC Policy Framework.

Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is the level of implementation of the Continuous Professional Development practices among the public central elementary schools across the selected divisions in SOCCSKSARGEN in terms of:
 - 1.1 Formal Learning;
 - 1.2 Non-Formal Learning;
 - 1.3 Self-Directed Learning;
 - 1.4 Online Learning Activity; and
 - 1.5 Professional Work Experience?
2. What is the level of implementation of the Learning Action Cell among the public central elementary schools across the selected divisions in SOCCSKSARGEN in terms of:
 - 2.1 Learner Diversity and Student Inclusion;
 - 2.2 Content & Pedagogy of the K to 12 Basic Education Program;
 - 2.3 Assessment & Reporting of the K to 12 Basic Education Program;
 - 2.4 21st Century Skills: ICT Integration in Instruction and Assessment; and
 - 2.5 Curriculum Contextualization, Localization, and Indigenization?
3. Is there a significant difference in the level of implementation of Continuous Professional Development practices among the selected public central elementary schools in SOCCSKSARGEN?
4. Is there a significant difference in the level of implementation of Learning Action Cell among the selected public elementary central schools in SOCCSKSARGEN?
5. What experiences do the elementary school teachers encounter in implementing the Continuous Professional Development in selected public central elementary schools across SOCCSKSARGEN?
6. What experiences do the elementary school teachers encounter in implementing the Learning Action Cell in selected public central elementary schools across SOCCSKSARGEN?
7. What significant impact did elementary school teachers experience in implementing the Continuous Professional Development across SOCCSKSARGEN?
8. What significant impact did elementary teachers experience in implementing the Learning Action Cell across SOCCSKSARGEN?

Hypothesis

This research tested the following hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance.

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the level of implementation of Continuous Professional Development practices among the selected public central schools in SOCCSKSARGEN.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the level of implementation of Learning Action Cell among the selected public central schools in SOCCSKSARGEN.



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METHODS

Research Design

This study utilized an explanatory sequential mixed-methods approach, which involved gathering and examining data using both numerical and descriptive research methods. The initial stage of the explanatory sequential mixed-methods approach involved a Quantitative Phase, during which survey data were collected and analyzed. Questionnaires assessing the level of CPD practices and the level of LAC implementation in selected central elementary schools within the SOCCSKSARGEN region were administered to the participants. A cross-sectional survey was conducted to determine the prevalence of implementation practices for both CPD and LAC across the different divisions within the SOCCSKSARGEN Region, specifically in South Cotabato, Koronadal, Sarangani Province, and General Santos City. In addition, the Qualitative Phase was the second step of the explanatory sequential mixed-methods approach wherein it involved gathering and analyzing qualitative data in order to understand the quantitative findings proficiently. Qualitative data was collected through the use of interview techniques.

Population and Sampling

This investigation involved a total of 250 teachers drawn from ten public elementary schools situated in SOCCSKSARGEN region during the academic year 2024–2025. These individuals were involved in the execution of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and Learning Action Cell (LAC) initiatives. Stratified random sampling was utilized to guarantee equitable representation from each school. Participants were eligible if they had served in the teaching profession for no less than three years, ensuring that their responses were grounded in substantial teaching experience. For the qualitative segment, ten teachers were chosen to serve as key informants. These participants were selected based on their consistent participation in CPD and LAC programs, with an additional requirement of at least five years in service and an existing leadership role—either as a LAC Facilitator or LAC Leader. The informants were identified through a lot-drawing procedure conducted among the initial 250 survey respondents, with one representative chosen from each participating school. This approach supported a fair and diverse representation of perspectives across sites.

Instruments

The data-gathering tool was a structured questionnaire specifically designed for this research. It underwent content and face validation by a panel of experts using criteria aligned with the guidelines adapted from Robles (2019). To determine its reliability, the questionnaire was pre-tested among 30 public school teachers from the Schools Division of Tacurong City. Analysis revealed a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.973, indicating a very high level of internal consistency. An accredited statistician confirmed the reliability results, ensuring the instrument's robustness for full-scale deployment. The quantitative instrument consisted of two parts. The first section explored the level of implementation of CPD practices in central public elementary schools within the SOCCSKSARGEN region. This included dimensions such as Formal Learning, Non-Formal Learning, Self-Directed Learning, Online Learning Activities, and Professional Work Experience. The second section assessed the level of LAC implementation, encompassing areas like Learner Diversity and Inclusion, Instructional Content and Pedagogy under the K to 12 Basic Education Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting, ICT-based 21st Century Skills, and Curriculum Adaptation through Contextualization, Localization, and Indigenization. Meanwhile, the qualitative instrument captured the professional experiences of teachers regarding their engagement in CPD and the impact of LAC initiatives. The questionnaire underwent thorough reviewed and validation by the content experts to ensure clarity, relevance, and appropriateness for the target respondents which are tailored to the notable results, both high and low, derived from the quantitative findings.

Data Collection

The data collection process began with the preparation of official request letters addressed to the Regional Director, Schools Division Superintendents, and School Heads of selected institutions within SOCCSKSARGEN. These letters sought formal approval to conduct the study to the selected elementary teachers currently teaching in the selected elementary schools in the region during the school year 2024–2025. Once clearance was granted, the researcher briefed the participants on the objectives and procedures of the research, after which informed consent was secured. The survey phase was then carried out, allowing participants adequate time to complete the questionnaire with the presence of the researchers to clarify any items as needed. All completed forms were reviewed for accuracy and completeness.



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The subsequent phase involved conducting in-depth Key Informant Interviews to the ten (10) informants drawn from the initial 250 survey respondents. The researchers had to make an appointment with the informants prior to the conduct of the interview on their time availability in which they have usually set in the afternoon after their classes to avoid class disruption. Upon the conduct of the interview, the informants were informed on the proceedings of the interview and with their permission audio recordings were used to document the discussion for later transcription and analysis. Informants were given the opportunity to elaborate on their viewpoints and experiences in response to open-ended questions.

Data Analysis

To ascertain the degree to which Continuous Professional Development practices and Learning Action Cell were implemented in public central elementary schools across the chosen divisions within SOCCSKSARGEN, the weighted mean was used. Moreover, to determine whether a statistically significant difference existed in the extent to which Continuous Professional Development practices and Learning Action Cell were implemented across the selected central public elementary schools in SOCCSKSARGEN, the Kruskal-Wallis Test was applied. Following this, Dunn's Test (a pairwise Mann-Whitney U-test) was performed as a post-hoc analysis. All tests were done at $\alpha = 0.05$ level of significance. The resulting data were systematically presented through tables to enhance clarity and emphasize the importance of the findings. Meanwhile, to find out the experiences of selected teachers in CPD practices and impact of LAC implementation, thematic coding with Quirkos software was applied to interpret the qualitative data. The emergent themes were presented through concept map and word cloud.

Ethical Considerations

This study adhered strictly to established ethical standards in the conduct of research involving human participants. Before data collection, informed consent was secured from all respondents after a thorough explanation of the study's purpose, procedures, and their voluntary participation. Participants were assured that their identities would remain anonymous and that all responses would be treated with strict confidentiality. Data were used solely for academic purposes, and measures were taken to safeguard personal information throughout all stages of the research process. Throughout the entire process, ethical research protocols were strictly observed to ensure data integrity, participant confidentiality, and respect for individual rights.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

This section presents, analyzes, and interprets the data gathered in the study. The findings are organized in tables aligned with the sub-problems outlined in Chapter 1, focusing on the levels of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) practices in schools, the implementation status of Learning Action Cells (LAC), teachers' experiences in applying LAC, and the influence of CPD and LAC within Region XII. The detailed results are displayed in the following tables.

Level of Implementation of the Continuous Professional Development Practices among the Public Central Elementary Schools across the selected divisions in SOCCSKSARGEN

This section examined the extent to which teachers and school administrators are engaging in and benefiting from ongoing learning and development activities aimed at enhancing their skills and improving educational outcomes. Ultimately, the findings could provide valuable insights into the strengths and areas for improvement in CPD implementation within the region's public elementary education system. The table below will show how these professional developments have been practiced in the region.

Table 1
OVERALL LEVEL OF CPD PRACTICES

INDICATOR		Mean	Description
1	Formal Learning	4.17	High Level
2	Non-Formal Learning	4.31	High Level
3	Self-Directed Learning	4.02	High Level
4	Online Learning Activity	3.83	High Level
5	Professional Work Experience	4.12	High Level
Overall Mean		4.09	High Level

Legend: 4.50-5.00-Very High 3.50-4.49-High 2.50-3.49-Moderate 1.50-2.49-Low 1.00-1.49-Very Low



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The calculated overall mean of 4.09 is categorized as High Level and indicates a sustained and effective application of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) practices across all areas examined. This finding further suggests that professionals within this field are actively participating in a diverse range of learning opportunities aimed at the ongoing improvement of their skills and knowledge base. This result is parallel to the study of Rafiq et. al., (2016) which espoused that continuing professional development (CPD) encompasses all formal and informal activities and endeavors made by an individual to enhance their knowledge, skills, and competencies in order to become more competent professionals throughout their working lives.

Level of Implementation of the Learning Action Cell among the Public Central Elementary Schools across the Selected Divisions in SOCCSKSARGEN

This section likely discusses the extent to which these collaborative learning groups for teachers are being established, meeting regularly, and achieving their intended purpose of fostering professional growth and improving teaching practices. Nevertheless, the findings will likely shed light on the current status of LAC implementation and identify potential areas for strengthening their impact on teaching and learning in the region. Hence, the following tables will show how these topics have been included in the teaching practice.

Table 2

OVERALL LEVEL OF LEARNING ACTION CELL IMPLEMENTATION

INDICATOR		Mean	Description
1	Learner Diversity and Student Inclusion	4.48	High Level
2	Content & Pedagogy of the K to 12 Basic Education Program	4.55	Very High Level
3	Assessment & Reporting of the K to 12 Basic Education Program	4.58	Very High Level
4	21st Century Skills: ICT Integration in Instruction and Assessment	4.41	High Level
5	Curriculum Contextualization, Localization, and Indigenization	4.48	High Level
Overall Mean		4.50	Very High Level

Legend: 4.50-5.00-Very High 3.50-4.49-High 2.50-3.49-Moderate 1.50-2.49-Low 1.00-1.49-Very Low

The overall mean of 4.50 interpreted as Very High Level implies a very positive overall evaluation of the implementation of the Learning Action Cell program. Given that the LAC program is designed to improve teacher quality and student outcomes, these results indicate that the program is contributing positively to the educational landscape of the region. In addition, the data imply that the Learning Action Cell program in the SOCCSKSARGEN Region is highly effective in improving teacher practices and contributing to the overall quality of education. Vega (2020) confirmed that the SLAC is essential for professional development because it improved teachers' perspectives on teaching as a vocation and profession, as well as their educational philosophy.

Difference in the Level of Implementation of Continuous Professional Development Practices among the Selected Public Central Elementary Schools in SOCCSKSARGEN

The difference in the level of Practice in Continuous Professional Development among the selected Public Central Elementary Schools shows the varying approaches of every school as to how they give value to the professional growth of their employees. Factors such as the motivation of teachers to attend CPD programs, as well as the availability of technical aspects such as internet connectivity and gadgets, and the support coming from the administration, were some of the contributory factors why the CPD level of implementation is low in some schools. At the same time, there are schools whose implementation in terms of CPD is high. The following results explore how the level of CPD implementation varies among elementary institutions in the region and its potential impact on teachers' professional development.

Table 3. Significant Difference on the Level of Implementation of Continuous Professional Development Practices among the Selected Public Central Elementary Schools in SOCCSKSARGEN

School	n	Mean	H-critical	H-statistic	p-value	Remark
School A	15	4.33				
School B	20	4.30				
School C	36	4.15				
School D	21	3.64				
School E	35	4.20	16.919	20.7367	0.0139	Significant
School F	16	4.13				
School G	41	4.03				



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School H	24	4.05
School I	26	3.92
School J	16	4.28

**Tested at 0.05 level of significance*

The findings reveal notable differences in the implementation of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) practices among selected public central elementary schools in the SOCCSKSARGEN region. This conclusion is supported by the statistical result wherein the computed H-value (20.7367) exceeds the critical H-value (16.919), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in CPD implementation across schools. The result indicates that certain schools demonstrate more effective CPD practices than others. Schools with lower mean ratings, such as School D, may benefit from tailored interventions or additional support. In contrast, those with higher mean scores, such as Schools A and B, could be identified as benchmarks for replicable good practices. This disparity highlights the limitations of adopting a uniform approach to CPD and points to the need for school-specific strategies.

The differences in CPD implementation may be attributed to various contextual factors, including leadership commitment, resource availability, teacher motivation, and institutional culture. These findings align with Macheng (2019) identified several challenges to CPD, including insufficient funding, time constraints, limited administrative support, a lack of qualified personnel to manage CPD efforts, weak teacher engagement, and the absence of structured frameworks to sustain development initiatives. Addressing these barriers is essential to ensure a more equitable and effective implementation of professional development programs across the region.

Difference in the Level of Implementation of Learning Action Cell among the Selected Public Elementary Central Schools in SOCCSKSARGEN

The difference in the level of implementation of the Learning Action Cell among the selected Public Central Elementary Schools shows the different mechanisms of every school as to how they implement the Learning Action Cell as their way of life in school and on how the LAC improved the performance of both teachers and learners. However, the implementation of LAC varies in different schools, and this variation has been affected by some factors, namely time allocation, commitment and dedication of teachers, prioritization of needs, and engagement of teachers during the conduct of LAC. The following results explore how the level of LAC implementation varies among elementary institutions in the region and its potential impact on teachers' professional development and application to their teaching-learning process.

Table 4. Significant Difference on the Level of Implementation of Learning Action Cell among the Selected Public Elementary Central Schools in SOCCSKSARGEN

School	n	Mean	H-critical	H-statistic	p-value*	Remark
School A	15	4.76				
School B	20	4.63				
School C	36	4.45				
School D	21	4.35				
School E	35	4.68	16.919	30.858	0.0003	Significant
School F	16	4.58				
School G	41	4.40				
School H	24	4.34				
School I	26	4.27				
School J	16	4.76				

**Tested at 0.05 level of significance*

Given that the p-value (0.0003) falls below the 0.05 threshold, a statistically significant difference exists in the level of Learning Action Cell (LAC) implementation among the selected public central elementary schools in the SOCCSKSARGEN region. This conclusion is further supported by the computed H-statistic (30.858), which exceeds the H-critical value (16.919), resulting in the rejection of the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in LAC implementation across schools.

The result suggests that the operationalization of the LAC program varies considerably among schools within the region. Factors such as administrative support, time allocation, teacher engagement, motivation, resource availability, institutional culture, and clarity of program objectives likely influence the degree of implementation. This variation may contribute to disparities in professional development outcomes, teacher performance, and ultimately, student learning. The findings are consistent with the study of the work of Almonicar and Padasas (2022) highlighted



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resource limitations as a major challenge in fulfilling the objectives and priorities of school-based learning initiatives. They noted that resource allocation decisions often depend on administrative prioritization during budget planning, which may explain the inconsistent implementation of LAC programs across different schools.

Experiences Encountered by the Elementary School Teachers in Implementing the Continuous Professional Development in Selected Public Central Elementary Schools across SOCCSKSARGEN

Public Central Elementary School teachers in the SOCCSKSARGEN Region share their thoughts on their unforgettable experiences in relation to implementing the Continuous Professional Development in their respective schools. Considering their view to supporting their professional growth, they wholeheartedly embrace and practice the Continuous Professional Development in their station and even in their personal lives. Hence, their encountered experiences in practicing CPD had generated four (4) main themes namely: Internet connectivity and Gadget Issues, Mandatory Requirement for PRC ID Renewal, Balancing CPD and Teaching Responsibilities, and Prioritization of Teacher's Needs. The teacher shared varied perspectives on these areas, which have a deep connection to their practice in the field.

1. Internet Connectivity and Gadget Issues

Technology plays a crucial role in accessing quality learning materials as well as attending online trainings and seminars; however, problems with internet connectivity and the availability of gadgets for the teachers may hinder them from keeping their attention focused on the webinars and continuing to attend the said CPD activity. Informants 1,3, and 6 highlight that a lack of internet connectivity and a lack of gadgets hinder the practice of CPD:

"...sometimes when I attend training online, I experience erratic signal, and the internet connectivity becomes an issue or problem on my end, so I tend to lack focus and attention on the topic." (I1, KII: Lines 86-94)

"Okay, here in our school, one of the problems is the poor connection. So we teachers, we cannot engage more in discussion since, you know, we are sharing one gadget. One is sometimes, one is to five, one is to four. So oftentimes, we're just listening and we don't even have the chance to ask because of that poor connection." (I6, KII: Lines 144-149)

Geron (2018) supported this idea in parallel to the result of his study, which found that for educators in the Philippines, who face a variety of obstacles in meeting the changing demands of both the educational system and their pupils, professional development is an essential component of their education. He added that one of the main obstacles that the teachers are facing in acquiring CPD is the lack of sufficient access to pertinent and high-quality resources, which prevents educators from taking advantage of professional development opportunities like conferences, workshops, and seminars.

2. Mandatory Requirement for PRC CPD ID Renewal.

A certain law has been passed requiring professionals to undergo professional development continuously; hence, it became a heated discussion among lawmakers whether this law is mandatory to pass or not. However, after a series of discussions, it has become a reality; thus, earning CPD units is compulsory in order to renew their professional ID. This became a dilemma among professionals, especially teachers, who were mandated to renew their licenses as part of carrying out their duties in teaching. Hence, teachers see to it that they attend training and seminars that are CPD-accredited to earn CPD units, which in turn is a requirement of PRC ID renewal.

"So I think one of the most contributing factors to that is the requirement imposed on us by the PRC. So we cannot renew our license unless we can earn some hours of CPD units." (I10, KII: Lines, 399-402)

"So, needed CPD hours to comply. It's mandatory. You have to comply with those hours for you to renew your license. So, those are the policies to implement CPD highly." (I10, KII: Lines 893-896)

In connection with these voices of the respondents, Gomez et al., (2020) revealed that there are several obstacles and objections to the use of ongoing professional development (CPD) for educators. Critics contend that forms of CPD based on externally imposed criteria may overlook important issues pertaining to the goal of teaching and may reduce instructors' capacity for autonomy and reflection. Notwithstanding these objections, laws like the Philippines' Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Act of 2016 demand CPD in order to renew a professional license.



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3. Balancing CPD and Teaching Responsibilities.

Teaching requires a full-time commitment to carry out all the tasks and responsibilities assigned to a classroom teacher. This profession requires passion and dedication to serve the Filipino learners continuously; however, due to this demanding job, teachers sometimes do not have enough time for their own personal and professional growth. Indeed, sometimes they feel burned out performing their duties which in turn prevents them from pursuing any professional growth and development because they lack the time to participate in any CPD programs. They need to hurdle everything, hence, they need to balance between attending CPD programs and at the same time their career--teaching.

"Ok. The experiences that I have encountered in participating in the online learning activities, sometimes the online training schedules will not meet my schedule because I am teaching during weekdays. Unfortunately, there are trainings scheduled during weekdays, so I cannot attend those trainings, especially when scheduled during weekdays." (I1, KII: Lines, 86-94)

"The most challenging part is the time management. You have to balance everything because of so many factors. Of course, we are expected by our colleagues like that. We're lacking activities in the school. So there's a need for you to prioritize everything to keep up with those modes of learning." (I10, KII: Lines 681-686)

This is supported by the result of the study of Bernadine (2019), wherein she espoused that teachers rarely have opportunities for ongoing professional development in many school settings. The two most frequent issues with faculty development are time constraints and an excessive workload. Inadequate instruction can lead to a decline in acquiring the essential knowledge, perspectives, creativity, and worth.

4. Prioritization of Teachers' Needs.

The teacher highlighted that for Continuous Professional Development (CPD) training to be effectively implemented in schools, the topics must correspond closely to the specific needs of the educators. Since CPD programs aim to strengthen teachers' skills—particularly in the areas that demand their specialized expertise—it is crucial for teachers to continually develop themselves to manage their responsibilities efficiently and confidently. Therefore, identifying gaps in teachers' competencies, prioritizing these areas, and providing targeted technical support tailored to their needs are essential steps toward achieving meaningful professional growth.

"In terms of CPD, I guess I can suggest to develop more or in-depth individualized CPD plans that should align with the personal and professional growth of, to get the interest of especially the teachers, your audience, and then align CPD activities with real-world challenges, to make it relatable." (I2, KII: Lines 907-914)

"Okay, so, regarding this CPD participation, well, our main objective here is, of course, to prioritize the needs of the school. So, this pertains to the needs of our teachers, as to professional growth, as to training, as to teaching strategies, and also to address the gap, since we are facing problems, to find possible solutions to the possible problems in handling our pupils. So, this is what I guess my recommendation is: always prioritize the needs. And every school has its unique and own way, you know, we each have our problems we are facing." (I3, KII: Lines 915-925)

Participants identified the absence of a comprehensive needs assessment as a significant challenge in the implementation of Continuing Professional Development (CPD). This finding aligns with the study conducted by Culajara (2023) which highlighted the importance of systematically identifying teachers' professional needs to inform targeted development initiatives. The lack of structured needs assessments that comprehensively address the diverse challenges, instructional gaps, and evolving demands faced by teachers in contemporary classrooms has emerged as a barrier to the meaningful implementation of CPD.

Experiences Encountered by the Elementary School Teachers in Implementing the Learning Action Cell in Selected Public Central Elementary Schools across SOCCSKSARGEN

The practice of LAC has brought different experiences among the teacher practitioners who religiously incorporate LAC as their avenue for self-improvement and learning. Hence, examining the conduct of LAC in the field by conducting a key informant interview to selected public central elementary schools in the region had generated four



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(4) emerging themes namely: Focus on Instructional Improvement, Assessment and Reporting Practices, Collaboration, Professional and Personal Growth, Time Management and Allocation. These emerging themes have been culled out from the shared experiences among the selected teachers in dealing with the implementation of the Learning Action Cell in their respective schools.

1. Focus on Instructional Improvement.

This is the most prominent theme, indicating that teachers heavily experienced and emphasized the LAC sessions as a mechanism for improving their teaching practices and student learning outcomes. This suggests that the core purpose of LAC is to collaboratively analyze teaching and learning and implement better strategies, which become the central part of their experience.

"...we conduct our LAC sessions twice a month and the usual topic is about the teaching strategies and methodologies, classroom management, assessment and evaluation, curriculum development and integration, and professional development." (I1, KII: Lines 1013-1017)

"So I often participate in our LAC whenever there is a schedule. The topic that we discuss typically focuses on the topics that enhance teaching effectiveness, address challenges in education, and support professional development." (I9, KII: Lines 1068-1072)

Teachers' experiences conform to the study of Castillo (2019), wherein, based on the result, in order for teachers to deliver the best quality of instruction, they must engage in ongoing professional development. Increasing student involvement in the classroom provides teachers with yet another chance to take advantage of professional development and personal growth opportunities that come with the changes in the educational landscape.

2. Assessment and Reporting Practices.

This theme suggests that a significant portion of the LAC implementation involved discussions and activities related to how teachers assess student learning and report on their progress. This includes topics like developing better assessment tools, analyzing assessment data, and improving reporting methods to parents and stakeholders. This highlights the importance of assessment as a guiding tool in order to properly assist the learners in their learning stage and provide them with the necessary knowledge they need to acquire.

"Okay, the best practices that I have applied during the LAC session, during the LAC session applied in the student's assessment and reporting is that the making of TOS in summative and periodical test, and making of grades following the DEPED order 8 series of 2015, which talks about the classroom assessment, and DEPED order 36 series of 2016, which talks about the guidelines on awards and recognition." (I1, KII: Lines 1245-1251)

"For example, making a TOS (Table of Specifications), student assessment, so we should make a TOS so that we can give the correct assessment to our pupils. In terms of reporting, we collaborate with our parents, call for a PTA meeting, and hold a conference." (I8, KII: Lines 1301-1304)

This claim has similar implications on the study of Vega (2019), which showed that the LAC session participants recommended improving LAC by creating a model and an assessment method to monitor its advancement in each school suitably. The findings demonstrated that LAC's implementation of session scheduling differs and is uneven from those of other schools. Furthermore, the school does not have any success indicators or a technique for implementing LAC, nor does it have a mechanism for assessing the LAC session.

3. Collaboration, Professional and Personal Growth.

This highlights the collaborative nature of LAC and its impact on teachers' professional development and even personal growth. Teachers likely experienced sharing ideas, learning from colleagues, receiving feedback, and developing new skills and perspectives through the LAC sessions. Teachers nurture collaboration as part of their learning experience, where they share significant learning experiences with their peers, and in return, they are also learning from the experiences of others. In other words, collaboration becomes the common practice in LAC, wherein they freely express themselves to others and are free to share significant ideas with their peers.

"In terms of LAC implementation, I am more motivated now, and I am very responsible for making a design and then implementing it to my co-teachers, because it is required. Since I am shy, I have now developed my confidence, and I am also learning a little bit learning also. Before, I didn't know how to



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make a design, but because it is required, I learn. I learn how to make an L&D." (I8, KII: Lines 1564-1570)

"The most important experiences in LAC implementation that I encountered include collaborative learning and professional growth. It also enhanced teaching strategies and addressed diverse learners' needs. So despite the challenges of our LAC session, our LAC session strengthened our teamwork, innovation, and instructional effectiveness." (I9, KII: Lines 1571-1576)

Vega (2020) affirmed that the SLAC is crucial for professional growth since it enhances instructors' views on teaching as a career and profession and their educational philosophy. Furthermore, LAC sessions helped teachers improve and modify their teaching strategies. It aided in the professional and moral development of educators (Cabral & Millando, 2019)

4. Time Management and Allocation.

The presence of this theme with a notable emphasis suggests that teachers found time management and the allocation of time for LAC sessions to be a significant aspect of the implementation. This could imply discussions around scheduling, balancing LAC activities with other responsibilities, and finding effective ways to utilize the allocated time. The implementation of LAC has been challenged by the time allocation. Informants expressed ideas wherein they found the schedule of LAC to be limited and insufficient to cover the essential discussions.

"Okay, the improvement that I see in terms of LAC implementation is that school administrators or even the DepEd allocate a longer time for LAC to cover the necessary topics, as well as cater to the ideas to have a rich discussion on the topic. Also, to set a clear objective to avoid unfocused discussions." (I1, KII, Lines 1583-1588)

"So, I guess I will just pinpoint two aspects regarding this learning action cell implementation, and that would be the time allocation. We all know that LAC sessions should be conducted after class. Sometimes, if not approved, because it will just probably run about two to three hours, and I guess that is insufficient to, you know, to, to, to, so, yeah, to discuss and to target the objectives." (I3, KII: Lines 1599-1619)

De Vera et. al., (2020) espoused that the execution of LAC sessions in schools is not without its difficulties. The LAC session is challenging to schedule because of the numerous school events. Educators also perceive that there is no assessment of the LAC session, including the timetable, which serves as the foundation for creating performance indicators in this activity. They further emphasized that in order to meet the specific group needs of instructors, LAC sessions should be tailored to the field of load or specialization, rather than simply being a regular general session.

Impact of the Elementary School Teachers' Experience in Implementing the Continuous Professional Development across SOCCSKSARGEN

It has been said that through collaboration, an individual can share his thoughts, which would allow him to learn from that productive interaction. In this section, the impact of the Learning Action Cell has been explored, thus it generates three (2) essential themes: Fosters Collaboration and Enhancement of Teaching Strategies and Pedagogical Practices. Teachers shared varied perspectives on these areas, which have a deep connection to their practice in the field.

1. Fosters Collaboration.

This is the most strongly emphasized impact, indicating that CPD initiatives in Region XII were highly effective in promoting collaboration among teachers. This suggests that CPD activities provided significant opportunities for teachers to network, share ideas, and work together on common goals.

"So as a teacher, nonformal learning enhances my collaborative skills in terms of collaborating with my peers or co-teachers to create a collaborative learning environment. It also widens my perspective in terms of sharing and discussing ideas with peers, wherein during discussion, they can provide alternative explanations to make a certain idea clearer." (I1, KII: Lines 761-766)

"So, for example, for this non-formal learning, sir, I believe it's the collaborative expertise that we have every day, but we cannot deny the fact that we cannot do that every day, since we have many tasks to do. So, particularly in our grade level, we convene at least once a week for our collaborative expertise."



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So, sharing our different experiences, sharing our different hassles inside our classroom, and then sharing our possible solutions." (I3, KII: Lines 519-526)

The significance of collaborating was reaffirmed by UNICEF Philippines (2019) in another related and informative study. It was clear from the successful implementation of SLAC as a school-based continuous professional development model for teachers that high-performing school principals highly value their teachers' commitment to enhancing their teaching competencies. In order to maintain collaborative problem-solving, sharing, benchmarking of best practices, and sustainable peer-to-peer learning on the information, schools must invest in SLAC.

2. Enhancement of Teaching Strategies and Pedagogical Practices.

Teachers cited the positive impact of CPD programs on their teaching strategies and pedagogical practices, wherein they developed these aspects by continuously attending trainings and seminars offered by competent institutions, whether in the form of an online platform or a face-to-face one. The CPD programs allow teachers to gain knowledge and develop expertise in the field of teaching, which they can apply later on in their classroom set-up.

"...We learn more when we discover and explore our teaching strategies for us to utilize those strategies in handling our children inside our classroom." (I3, KII: Lines 256-264)

"It has an impact on me because it has a powerful force for growth. It has practical application and also lifelong learning, and innovative methods." (I8, KII: Lines 806-808)

This result finds significant coherence with the study of Regmi and Jones (2020) wherein CPD integrates concepts like practice-based learning and self-directed learning and stimulates problem-solving and problem-identifying. It is student-driven and tailored to meet the needs of each learner. Creating environments that are demanding, compassionate, and encouraging influences students' achievements.

Impact of the Elementary Teachers' Experience in Implementing the Learning Action Cell across SOCCSKSARGEN

The Learning Action Cell has become part of the teacher's professional life since it was implemented. For almost a decade of implementing it into the schools and incorporating it as a way of life within the school premises, we can perceive its impact on the teachers, specifically on their teaching practices. During the interview, two (2) emerging themes prevailed on the effect of Learning Action Cell on teachers: Addressing Learners' Needs and Enhancement of Teaching Assessment.

1. Addressing Learners' Needs.

In the SOCCSKSARGEN Region, where classrooms are characterized by diverse cultures, languages, and socio-economic backgrounds, focusing on Addressing Learners' Needs during Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions is especially important. This focus enables teachers to become more culturally responsive and linguistically aware while fostering inclusive learning environments where every student can succeed and actively participate in their community. According to the accounts of the participants, the LAC program significantly influenced teachers in Region XII by providing them with effective strategies and practical insights to better support the varied needs of their learners. This impact was likely facilitated through collaborative dialogues, the exchange of best practices, and joint problem-solving efforts centered on recognizing and addressing individual student differences.

"...One example is our discussion in Inclusive Education wherein I learned how to craft activities and assessments for my learners who have special needs and always practice to incorporate differentiated instruction or activities to cater to the different needs of my learners as well as to bring out their unique talents and abilities..." (I1, KII: Lines 1085-1090)

"Our LAC sessions taught us about differentiated instruction. With differentiated instruction, we can cater to all the needs and interests of the learners, as well as identify and address the issues. LAC sessions also train us to recognize different challenges or struggles and teach us how to conquer and overcome those challenges. What are the strategies that we need to use, especially if, for example, we have a difficult learner? What will we do with that strategy? We share ideas, and through that, we can learn from each other." (I2, KII: Lines 1091-1099)



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The findings of Cartilla and Rondina (2020) reinforce the importance of teachers who actively prioritize inclusion by recognizing and respecting students' cultural backgrounds, languages, and identities, thereby fostering a classroom environment characterized by belonging and mutual respect. This underscores the necessity for educators to address learner diversity and student inclusion to cultivate supportive and enriching educational experiences that enable all students to realize their full potential.

2. Enhancement of Teaching Strategy and Assessment.

The LAC provided a valuable space for teachers to collectively examine and improve both how they teach and how they evaluate student learning. This likely led to the adoption of more effective teaching methods, the development and use of better assessment tools, and a greater understanding of how to use assessment data to inform and refine instructional practices. Based on the gathered interview dataset, teachers have unique ways of incorporating ICT as part of their teaching strategy, as well as the impact of ICT on computing the grades of the learners.

"So, as a teacher who attends the LAC session, my digital literacy has been developed, especially in integrating ICT in my lessons. One example is that I used educational online games suited to my lesson, and of course, educational and interactive videos to support my teaching and learning process." (I1, KII: Lines 1322-1326)

"Our LAC discussed and taught us how to incorporate offline and online educational motivational games in a classroom lesson. Sometimes, on YouTube, we are taught how to search for lessons that are suited for us. I mean, we are taught suitable games, online games, offline games that can be used in the lessons." (I2, KII: Lines 1327-1322)

Innovation positively affects teachers' performance by improving their ability to engage students, use diverse teaching strategies and methods, and incorporate technology into their lessons. Teachers' innovative teaching methods contribute to students' learning attitude, motivation, and skill development (Remya, 2022).

Conclusions

The overall level of practices of the Continuous Professional Development and Learning Action Cell implementation among the selected public central elementary schools in SOCCSKSARGEN was described as High Level and Very High Level, respectively. There was a significant difference between the two levels of CPD practices and LAC implementation. Moreover, teachers also revealed their experiences on the implementation of Continuous Professional Development in their respective schools. Accordingly, teachers' experiences dealt with internet connectivity and gadget issues; teachers' knowledge, motivation, and engagement; as well as their attendance to trainings and seminars; collaborative and informal learning; mandatory requirement for PRC ID renewal; balancing CPD and teaching responsibilities; prioritization of teachers' needs and school support. They also shared their experiences in terms of the implementation practices in Learning Action Cell, which basically focused on Instructional Improvement, assessment and reporting practices, varied roles and responsibilities, collaboration, professional and personal growth, time management and allocation, and commitment, engagement, and dedication. Furthermore, they also viewed the impact of Continuous Professional Development in their respective schools as well as on themselves, such as fostering collaboration, personal and professional growth, and enhancement of teaching strategies and pedagogical practices. Finally, teacher informants categorized the impact of Learning Action Cell into two (2) themes: Addressing Learners' Needs and Enhancement of Teaching Strategy and Assessment.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions of this study, it is recommended that in order to address the issue of the practice of Online Learning Activity, the school may provide strong internet connectivity and enough number of gadgets to be used by the teachers during the conduct of online learning, such as webinars and trainings. The school may also provide plenty of seminars and training pertaining to the integration of 21st Century Skills into Instruction and Assessment. Teachers may be provided with training on the use of other interactive tools. Meanwhile, benchmarking activities may be done by those schools whose level of CPD practices and LAC implementation is quite low, compared to those schools that have a high level of implementation in terms of CPD. The school administrator may continuously conduct teachers' needs assessment, which should be considered in crafting the LAC Plan, and may nurture the culture of collaboration as part of their school practice, and may continuously send teachers to trainings and seminars to further develop their personal and professional skills as well as their teaching strategies and pedagogical practices.



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Notably, the Department of Education may consider the time given for conducting the LAC session. It is recommended that DepEd may allocate longer time in conducting LAC sessions to meet the target objectives in a specific topic to be discussed in LAC sessions and LAC session of learners' development as well the input on the enhancement of the teacher's teaching strategy and assessment may be religiously conducted the as part of the LAC topic.

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