

The Practices and Challenges of Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching Practicum Implementation in Haramaya University Cluster, Ethiopia

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Abstract

The main objective of this study is to investigate the practices and challenges of investigating the practices and challenges of postgraduate diploma in teaching practicum implementation in Haramaya University cluster. In order to achieve this purpose, a descriptive survey research method was employed. By using simple random sampling, purposive sampling and availability sampling techniques a total of 209 respondents were selected from Somali Regional State, East Hararghe Zone and West Hararghe Zone. The data were collected from respondents through questionnaires, interview and documents. Quantitative data were analyzed and interpreted using different statistical tools such as frequency distribution, percentiles, mean and grandmean. In addition to this, qualitative data were analyzed through narration in the way it supplement the quantitative data analysis. This study was found out that large number of mentors has experiences between 1-3 years. This helps to conclude that the experience of the mentors were not sufficient enough to properly contribute for professional development of mentees. This study also revealed that there were shortage of materials and facilities in the school to properly carry out practicum activities. As a result it is very difficult to effectively and efficiently accomplish practicum tasks. Therefore, MoE, REB, ZED, WEO, Secondary Schools, Universities and other stakeholders should have to fulfill necessary materials and facilities in Secondary Schools so that mentees will easily and successfully carried out their practicum activities. This study also found out that the mentors knowledge, skill and experiences were not as expected. As a result mentors faced a challenge to deliver necessary supports for their mentee. Therefore, Universities in collaboration with other stakeholders should have to provide continuous and relevant trainings on Practicum work such mentoring, portfolio preparation and others in order to make them more competent and contribute further for professional development of teachers. This study also revealed that there was a poor flow of information in the implementation of practicum program. This resulted in disorganization of the implementation of PGDT Practicum activities. Therefore, MoE and Universities should have to plan together in collaboration with Secondary Schools in order to make national wide uniform implementations of Practicum Programs throughout the country so that all mentees and mentors have got equal opportunities to get access to necessary information and work together strongly.

Keywords

PGDT, Practicum, Implementation, Haramaya University Cluster Center

Background of the study

Quality teachers have a fundamental contribution for producing competent and dynamic human power that serve as bases for development in the world. In this connection, although teacher education is only one component of what is needed to enable high-quality teaching, it is essential to the success of all the other reforms urged on schools (Darling-Hammond, *Constructing 21st-Century Teacher Education*, 2006). In addition to this, teacher expertise is the single most important factor in determining student achievement and fully trained teachers are far more effective with students than those who are not prepared (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1997 cited in (File, 2009). Furthermore, (Paksuniemi, 2011) stated that good teacher training guarantees the functioning of good schools. Moreover, as elaborated in "Teacher Education and the Future America" one of the significant factors that affect the future of one country is the teacher education (Darling-Hammond, *Teacher Education and the America Future*, 2010).

Practicum is expected to contribute to changing teaching culture and beliefs about teaching and learning in schools, it must be based on a number of principles that are found effective in altering teaching practices and developing valuable skills and values among students, schoolteachers and college/university supervisors. In this support, teaching practice notwithstanding the length or duration, is an excellent opportunity for pre-service teachers to experiment and test their knowledge and skills in an authentic teaching and learning environment in tandem with own understanding of their personal educational philosophies and theories (Izzaham, 2008). As to MoE, it is imperative that the practicum lives to its expectations and its implementation is based on sound educational principles rather than quick fix decisions. It was stated that;

"Practicum is a forum for developing communities of learning and practice, it has to promote reflection on teaching practices and theories; it has to be considered as a learning process rather than a requirement for completion of teacher preparation; it has to be supportive and promote feedback provision by various stakeholders; it has to be developmental and intensive; its duration and developmental steps shall not be compromised for administrative reasons; and it has to challenge learning and teaching beliefs of mentors, student teachers, and college supervisors. Partnership between schools and teacher education institutions has to be based on equal footing and aim at the development of professional development schools (Ministry of Education, 2011)".

The PGDT practicum implementation is among the major challenging areas in the current teacher-training program and more importantly, it needs unreserved interventions across the nation. Even though the challenges of PGDT practicum implementation is wide spread, the issue has not gained substantial attention by scholars in the field of higher education. Thus, this and the existing views concerning the challenges of PGDT practicum implementation are being initiated the research team to examine from the Ethiopia context with particular reference to Haramaya University Cluster Centers.

Statement of the problem

The practicum is a central component of teacher education and has been the subject of discussion among teacher educators internationally for more than a century. But, its implementation is accompanied with several challenges such as language and cultural diversity as well as environmental barriers (Thomas, 2006). In addition to this as cited in (Merc, 2010) by MacDonald, 1992; Murray-H and et al, 2000 pointed out that teaching practices are stress-creating experiences

due to the factors such as lack of role clarification, the evaluation procedure, not knowing the expectations of the cooperating teacher and the supervisor, and lack of time to talk with the cooperating teacher.

Effective participation of stakeholders plays significant role for the success of practicum program. However, according to (Smith, 2011) cooperation between the schools and university, inside the school, and between peers, may be underdeveloped in the program, resulting in limited learning opportunities from others for student teachers. Ethiopian teacher education lived with much rhetoric and little change, due to unplanned activities and lack of a proper change management strategy and system. Recognizing these facts, MoE has designed a new teacher education program called PGDT with practicum as an integral part of the courses where students work on their practicum on in out modality, but due to various factors practicum is being undertaken on in –out –in modality where the students work on their practicum for one year.

In this connection, the problem of teacher training would be reasonably addressed when the conceptual orientations, roles, and responsibilities outlined in PGDT Practicum Guideline document is enacted properly (Dawit, Dereje, Mulugeta, & Reda, 2011 cited in (Ministry of Education, 2011). And thus, it is almost two years since PGDT practicum started. During the implementation of the program, the team of this research work had observed many problems. However, the problems are not in organized and dependable ways and require a thorough and scholarly investigation. Thus, this study deals with investigating the Challenges and Prospects of PGDT Practicum Implementation in the Case of Haramaya University Cluster Schools. In order to address this problem, this study attempts to answer the following basic research questions:

1. What is the current status of PGDT practicum implementation in Haramaya University Cluster?
2. What are the major challenges affecting PGDT practicum implementation in Haramaya University Cluster?
3. To what extent the PGDT stakeholders are fulfilling their roles and responsibilities in the practicum implementation in Haramaya University Cluster?
4. How the PGDT practicum implementation would be improved?

Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of this study are:

- To distinguish the current status of PGDT practicum implementation in Haramaya University Cluster.
- To identify the factors affecting PGDT practicum implementation in Haramaya University Cluster.
- To examine the extent that PGDT stakeholders are fulfilling their roles and responsibilities in the practicum implementation in Haramaya University Cluster.
- To suggest possible mechanisms through which PGDT practicum implementation would be improved.

Significance of the Study

The finding of this study may help for Educational authorities at different levels (Region, Zone, woreda and Schools) to understand the major challenges of PGDT practicum implementation and to improve their roles for effectiveness of teachers' training. Additionally, it also helps policy makers to get information on the current practices and challenges in the implementation of practicum. Moreover, it helps it serve as a clue for stakeholders to aware about the benefits of working together for effective implementation of PGDT practicum activities for the further improvement of teacher training. Furthermore, it may serve as a base for other researchers who want to make further investigation on the issue.

Delimitation of the study

The major aim of this study is to investigate the practices and challenges of PGDT practicum implementation in Haramaya University Cluster. So, this study is delimited to some selected secondary schools in Somali Region, East and West Hararge zone. Practicum activities are related with various issues, but this study was delimited to current practices and challenges its' implementations.

Research Design and Methodology

Research method

Descriptive survey method was employed to address the objectives stated. Because, descriptive survey research method allows the researchers to assess the current information about the practices and challenges of PGDT practicum implementation.

Sources of data

This section deals with the sources from which data were collected. For this study both primary and secondary sources were used. Primary source of data for this research were collected from Region Education Bureau Head, Woreda Education Office Head, Zonal Education Department Heads, Supervisor, School Principals, School Mentors, Teachers and PGDT student teachers. Secondary source of data for this research is collected from different practicum guideline, practicum implementation provisional guidelines, portfolios and available documents in schools and universities.

Target population, samples and sampling techniques

The target population of this study includes Regional Education Bureau Head, Woreda Education Office Head & TDP focal person, Zonal Education Department Heads & TDP focal person, Woreda Education Office Heads and TDP focal person, Supervisor, School Principals, School Mentor Teachers and PGDT student teachers.

Table 1: Population, sample and sampling techniques

No	Respondents in the universities	Population		Sample		Sampling Techniques
		No	%	No	%	
	Student teachers	200	100	100	50	Simple Random
	Teachers or mentors	200	100	100	50	Purposively
	Secondary school principals and supervisors	80	100	20	25	Simple Random
	ZED TDP experts, ZED Head	9	100	9	100	Availability
Total		449	100	209	46.55	

Data collection tools

In order to gather the desired information for this study questionnaire, interview, checklists and documents were employed.

Methods of data analysis

The techniques of data analysis used in this study were both quantitative and qualitative in nature. After the information is collected from the respondents, the process of tallying and tabulation was carried out and then a descriptive statistics were used for the quantitative ones. In analyzing the data, the descriptive and inferential statistics in SPSS (Statistical packages for social sciences) was used. The statistical tools that were used are: frequency distributions, percentage, mean, and grand means.

Data presentation, analysis and interpretation

The main objective of this study is to investigate the challenges and prospects of Post Graduate Diploma in teaching practicum implementation in Haramaya University Cluster.

Mentor-mentee relationship in the feild of study plays fundamental role for the success of practicum activities. Accordingly, the exsistance of feild of study relationship was identified and treated as follows:

Table 2: Mentors and Mentee Field of Study

No	List of Field of Study	Mentors Field of Study		Mentee Field of Study	
		f	%	f	%
1	English	13	15.9	10	12.2
2	Afan Oromo	4	4.9	3	3.7
3	Amharic	3	3.7	5	6.1
4	Mathematics	10	12.2	13	15.9
5	Biology	14	17.1	14	17.1
6	Chemistry	11	13.4	9	11.0
7	Physics	5	6.1	8	9.8
8	Geography	10	12.2	7	8.5
9	History	6	7.3	3	3.7
10	Civics	4	4.9	7	8.5
11	HPE	1	1.2	3	3.7
12	EdPM	1	1.2	0	0
Total		82	100.0	82	100.0

Data obtained from Table 2 indicated that about there are 13(15.9%) mentors and 10(12.2%) mentee from English field of study; 4(4.9%) mentors and 3(3.7%) mentees are from Afan Oromo field of study; 3(3.7%) mentors and 5(6.1%) mentees are from Amharic field of study; 10(12.2%) mentors and 13(15.9%) mentee are from Mathematics field of study, 14(17.1%) mentors and 14(17.1%) mentees are from Biology field of study; and 11(13.4%) mentors and 9(11%) mentees are from Chemistry field of study. In the same table, about 5(6.1%) mentors and 8(9.8%) mentee are from Physics field of study; 10(12.2%) mentors and 7(8.5%) mentees are from Geography; 6(7.3%) mentors and 3(3.7%) mentees are from History field of study; 4(4.9%) mentors and 7(8.5%) mentees are from Civics field of study; 1(1.2%) mentors and 3(3.7%) mentees are from Health and Physical Education field of study; and 1(1.2%) mentor is from Educational Planning and Management field of study.

These data indicates that in except Biology field of study in which there is equal much between number of mentor and mentee (i.e 17.1% for both) the number of mentor and mentee varies in all other field of studies. This implies that some mentors assigned to student teachers whose field of study is different from his/her field of study. This is also supported by information obtained from the interview and also realized by the information the researchers obtained while school supervision visit.

Table 3: Mentors attended mentoring training

No	Did you attend mentoring training?	Frequency	Percent
1	Yes	72	87.8
2	No	10	12.2
Total		82	100.0

The data obtained from Table 3 indicated that majority 72(87.8%) of the Mentor respondents replied that they attend mentoring training where as the remaining 10(12.2%) mentor respondents replied that they didn't attend mentor training. This implies that even though majority of the mentors took mentoring training there are some mentors who are involved in providing mentoring services for PGDT student teachers without taking mentoring training.

Table 4: Additional Responsibility Given for Mentors

No	Any additional responsibility or position you are given	Frequency	Percent
1	Principal	2	2.4
2	Vice-Principal	2	2.4
3	Department Head	28	34.1
4	Unit Leader	5	6.1
5	Club Head	8	9.8
6	Other	8	9.8
7	Free of other duty	29	35.4
	Total	82	100.0

The data obtained from Table 4 indicated that majority 53 (64.6%), which is the sum of 2(2.4%) Principals, 2(2.4%) Vice-Principal, 28(34.1%) Department Heads, 5(6.1%) Unit Leader, 8(9.8%) Club Heads, and 8(9.8%) of them are holding other positions) of the mentor respondents have additional responsibility/position in the school and the remaining 29(35.4%) of the mentor respondents are free of additional responsibility/position in the school. In this connection, data obtained from the researchers team observation also realized that most mentors were occupied by several additional responsibilities from principalship up to leaders of different committees. This implies that majority of the mentors are occupied with other several duties which affects their mentoring services.

Mentors' efforts made to support mentee in practicum activities

Mentor is a role model teacher who is capable to provide professional support for newly recruited teachers in order to make him/her a competent teacher in the future. In this connection, (Tuli, 2009) stated that cooperating teachers play key role to the success of practicum. The interest, motivation and commitment of the mentors plays significant contribution for provision of necessary guidance and support for future teachers. In this support, Mentors' support for mentee has a great role in the success of practicum work. In relation with this, seven items were presented to the respondents to be rated by the five point Likert scale. Strongly Agree (SA) =5, Agree (A) =4, Undecided (UD) =3, Disagree (DA) =2 and Strongly Disagree(SD) =1.

Table 5: Mentors effort made to engage in practicum activities

No	Items		SA (5)	A (4)	UD (3)	DA (2)	SDA (1)	Mean Value
1	I have a regular contact with my mentees to work together.	Fre.	40	37	5	-	-	4.43
		%	48.8	45.1	6.1	-	-	
2	As a mentor I review and check the students' portfolio.	Fre.	44	35	3	-	-	4.50
		%	53.7	42.7	3.7	-	-	
3	I have tried to facilitate the organization of peer mentoring and reflection among student teachers.	Fre.	40	38	3	1	-	4.43
		%	48.8	46.3	3.7	1.2	-	
4	I try to answer any questions that the student teacher might have.	Fre.	49	31	2	-	-	4.57
		%	59.8	37.8	2.4	-	-	
5	My mentee have the feeling that he/she	Fre.	8	3	4	25	42	1.90

	does not need any help on his practicum.	%	9.8	3.7	4.9	30.5	51.2	
6	I am committed to improve students' practicum work upon my skills as a mentor.	Fre.	57	24	-	-	1	4.66
		%	69.5	29.3	-	-	1.2	
7	It is difficult to guide mentees without financial remuneration	Fre.	9	15	17	19	22	2.63
		%	11	18.3	20.7	23.2	26.8	

Mean value => 4.0 - < 5.0 = Strongly Agree; >3.0 to < 4.0 = Agree; ≥ 2.0 to < 3.0 = Undecided; ≥ 1.0 to < 2.0 = Disagree; < 1.0 = Strongly Disagree

As indicated in Table 5, in the first item respondents were asked to rate on the extent they regularly contact with their mentees to work together. Accordingly, about 40(48.8%) of mentor respondents rated 'strongly agree', 37(45.1%) of them rated 'agree' and the remaining 5(6.1%) of them rated 'undecided'. This imply that most of the mentors regularly contact with their mentee to work together and also supported by the mentor respondents mean value 4.43 which entail to 'strongly agree'. Therefore, one can conclude that there are regular contact between mentors and mentees. Similarly in the same table of item 2 respondents were asked to rate to what extent they review and check the student teachers' portfolio. Accordingly, majority 44(53.7%) of the mentor respondents rated 'strongly agree', about 35(42.7%) of them rated 'agree' and the remaining 3(3.7%) of them rated 'undecided'. The mean value 4.50 of the mentor respondents shows that they strongly agreed on reviewing and checking student portfolio. This response implied that mentors were reviewed and checked the student teachers' portfolio. However, the data obtained from the portfolio check-up implies that most of the practicum 1, 2 and 3 documents of student teachers didn't seem properly reviewed and checked by the mentors.

As depicted in Table 5, in item 3 respondents were asked to rate on the extent they tried to facilitate the organization of peer mentoring and reflection among student teachers. Accordingly, about 40(48.8%) of the mentor respondents rated 'strongly agree', 38(46.3%) of them rated 'agree', 3(3.37%) of them rated 'undecided' and the remaining 1(1.2%) of them rated 'disagree'. This implies that most of the mentors facilitate the organization of peer mentoring and reflection among student teachers and also supported by the mean value 4.43. From this, one can conclude that mentors are trying their own efforts in facilitating and organizing peer mentoring and reflection among student teachers. Similarly, in item 4 of the same table respondents were asked to rate on the extent they tried to answer any questions that the student teacher might have. Accordingly, majority 49(59.8%) of the mentors respondents rated 'strongly agree', about 31(37.8%) of them rated 'agree' and the remaining 2(2.4%) of them rated 'undecided'. The mean value 4.57 of the mentor respondents also implies that they tried to respond for questions raised from their mentee.

As indicated in Table 5, in item 5 respondents were asked to rate to what extent their mentees feeling implies that they do not need any help in practicum work. Accordingly, majority 42(51.2%) of the mentor respondents rated 'strongly disagree', 25(30.5%) of them rated 'disagree', 4(4.9%) of them rated 'undecided', about 3(3.7%) of them rated 'agree' and the remaining 8(9.8%) of them rated 'strongly agree'. The mean value 1.90 of mentor respondents implied that mentors disagree with items. In addition to this, in item 6 respondents were asked to rate to what extent they are committed to improve students' practicum work based on their skills as a mentor. Accordingly, majority 57(69.5%) of the mentor respondents rated 'strongly agree', about 24(29.3%) of them rated

'agree' and the remaining 1(1.2%) of them rated 'strongly disagree'. The mean value 4.66 of the mentors' responses implied that as mentors committed to improve students' practicum work based on their skills as a mentor.

As indicated in Table 5, in item 7 the respondents were asked to rate to what extent it is difficult to guide mentees without financial remuneration. Accordingly, about 22(26.8%) of the mentor respondents rated 'strongly disagree', 19(23.2%) of them rated 'disagree', 17(20.7%) of them rated 'undecided', 15(18.3%) of them rated 'agree' and the remaining 9(11%) of them rated 'strongly agree'. The mean value 2.63 of the mentor responses implied that it is undecided issue for them. However, data obtained from unstructured observation and from the researchers' actual two year practicum experiences most of the mentors raised the question of benefits associated with being mentor in the school.

Values given by mentors for practicum activities

The mentors' knowledge about practicum activities plays key role for the success of PGDT students in their practicum work. In this regard, six items were presented to the respondents to be rated as follows,

Table 6. Values given for practicum activities by mentors

No	Items		(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)	Mean Value
1	My help for the student teacher has a great value for professional development of the mentee.	f.	60	22	-	-	-	4.73
		%	73.2	26.8	-	-	-	
2	Participating in practicum activities through mentoring less experienced student teachers really helps both parties.	f.	30	39	5	3	5	4.05
		%	36.6	47.9	6.1	3.7	6.1	
3	Effective mentoring highly contributed for the success of practicum work.	f.	58	22	1	1	-	4.67
		%	70.7	26.8	1.2	1.2	-	
4	Mentoring is valuable to develop successful collegiality who will, in turn, mentor other junior members of the profession.	f.	38	35	7	1	1	4.32
		%	46.3	42.7	8.5	1.2	1.2	
5	Mentors have a responsibility to guide mentee's practicum work, action research agendas and engagement in the society.	f.	55	24	2	-	1	4.61
		%	67	29.3	2.4	-	1.2	

Mean value => 4.0 - < 5.0 = Strongly Agree; >3.0 to < 4.0 = Agree; \geq 2.0 to < 3.0 = Undecided; \geq 1.0 to < 2.0 = Disagree; < 1.0 = Strongly Disagree

As indicated in Table 6, in item 1 the respondents were asked to rate what extent their help for student teacher has a value for professional development of mentees. Accordingly, overwhelming majority 60(73.2%) of the mentor respondents rated 'strongly agree' and the remaining 22(26.8%) of them rated 'agree'. The mean value 4.73 of mentor respondents implies that mentors strongly agreed that their support has a value for the professional development of student teachers. From this, one can deduce that mentors support has great value for the professional development PGDT student teachers.

As presented in Table 6, in item 2 respondents were asked to rate to what extent participating in practicum activities through mentoring less experienced student teachers really helps both parties.

Accordingly, 30(36.6%) of the mentor respondents rated 'strongly agree', 39 (47.9%) of them rated 'agree', 5(6.1%) of them rated 'undecided', 3(3.7%) of them rated 'disagree' and the remaining 5(6.1%) of them rated 'strongly disagree'. This implies that participating in practicum activities through mentoring less experienced student teachers and also supported by the mean value 4.05 of the mentors responses. From this, one can conclude that both mentors and mentee get when they participate in practicum activities. Similarly, as can be seen from Table 6, in item 3 respondents were asked to rate to what extent the effective mentoring highly contributed for the success of practicum work. In this regard, majority 58(70.7%) of them rated 'strongly agree', 22(26.8%) of them rated 'agree', 1(1.2%) of them rated 'undecided' and the remaining 1(4.05%) of them rated 'disagree'. This result indicated that mentors strongly agree with the high contribution of effective mentoring for the success of practicum work and also supported by the mean value 4.05 of the responses.

As depicted in Table 6, in item 4 respondents were asked to rate to what extent mentoring valuable to develop successful collegiality who will, in turn, mentor other junior members of the profession. Accordingly, 38(46.3%) of the mentor respondents rated 'strongly agree', 35(42.7%) of them rated 'agree', 7(8.5%) of them rated 'undecided', 1(1.2%) of them rated 'disagree' and the remaining 1(1.2%) of them rated 'strongly disagree'. The mean value 4.32 implies that respondents strongly agree on the value-ability of mentoring for developing successful collegiality and create opportunity for junior members of the profession. From this, one can concluded that mentoring has a great value for developing collegiality and profession in schools.

As indicated in Table 6, in item 5 the respondents were asked to rate to what extent the mentors have a responsibility to guide mentee's practicum work, action research agendas and engagement in the society. In this regard, majority 55(67%) of mentor respondents rated 'strongly agree', 24(29.3%) of them rated 'agree', about 2(2.4%) of them rated 'undecided' and the remaining 1(1.2%) of the respondents rated 'strongly disagree'. In addition to this, the mean value 4.61 of the respondents shows that mentors strongly agree as they have a responsibility to guide mentee's practicum work, action research agendas and engagement in the society. From this, one can deduce that mentors are responsible not only to guide them in practicum works but also in action research agendas and engagement in the community. However, the information obtained from unstructured observation and interview made with principals and supervisors implies that even though mentors are responsible to guide student teachers in action research like in practicum work and engagement in the society, they are not properly fulfilling their responsibility in this angle.

Table 7 Effectiveness of stakeholders' participation in practicum implementation

No	Item	Scales	N0	Mean value
1	University in provision of orientation about practicum	Very high	41	X (4.11)
		High	35	
		Moderate	20	
		Low	4	
		Very low	-	
2	University in provision of Practicum materials	Very high	35	X (3.12)
		High	13	
		Moderate	35	
		Low	17	
		Very low	-	

3	Regions assigning work placement	Very high	11	X (3.20)
		High	28	
		Moderate	36	
		Low	20	
		Very low	5	
4	Zone/woreda work placement	Very high	8	X (3.33)
		High	20	
		Moderate	31	
		Low	17	
		Very low	24	
5	Schools in assigning mentor	Very high	10	X (2.99)
		High	26	
		Moderate	30	
		Low	21	
		Very low	13	
6	Schools work load allocation	Very high	3	X (2.43)
		High	12	
		Moderate	20	
		Low	55	
		Very low	10	
7	Schools giving permission for practicum workshop	Very high	35	X (3.87)
		High	39	
		Moderate	10	
		Low	10	
		Very low	6	
8	University supervisors follow-up	Very high	26	X (3.60)
		High	33	
		Moderate	23	
		Low	11	
		Very low	7	

The opportunity to strengthen the value of teacher education through partnership will be costly but must not be compromised by the myriad of competing organizational structural, financial and educational requirements that both the universities and the school face (Mackisack, 2011). In this connection, as indicated in Table 7, the mean value result 4.11 shows that most universities were provided orientation on practicum program for PGDT student –teachers before leaving the campus. This is also supported by the qualitative data obtained from student-teachers while they gave reflection on practicum programs in different cluster centres. In addition to this, the mean value result (3.12) shows medium implies that some universities provided the practicum materials before they leave the campus but some other universities didn't provide necessary practicum materials timely. In this support, during tutorial and reflection sessions PGDT student teachers reported that some universities still not sent the materials and they face a great challenge to do the practicum activities as intended.

As the mean value (3.12), (3.20) and (3.33) shows for a workplace assignment of the PGDT student teachers respectively by Education Bureaus, Zonal Education Desks and Woreda Education Offices is medium. In this support, from the student-teacher reflections made during tutorial and school supervision periods there were serious problems during work placement in some Zones and Woredas which is completely new environment for them. In addition to this, the mean value result

(2.99) implies that schools in assigning mentors for PGDT student-teachers is not as suggested in the practicum guideline.

In the same Table 7, the mean value result for schools work load allocation shows (2.43) is low. This situation makes PGDT student teachers not actively to be involved in practicum activities because of time constraints. On the other hand, the information obtained from interview implies that the shortage of teachers in schools force them to fully engage in teaching activities without considering them as students. However, the mean value result (3.87) shows high, which indicated that schools gave permission for PGDT student –teachers to participate on practicum workshop and reflection programs. Regarding to university supervisors' follow-up, the mean value result (3.60) shows as high. Universities employed pre-determined programs to support PGDT student-teachers as well as better implementation of practicum programs. On the other hand, the data collected through interview implies that universities follow-up and support didn't reach the far and remote areas districts and schools in implementation of PGDT practicum program and also its assessment orientation is affecting the practicum work. In this connection, (O.Jwan, 2009) pointed out that assessment focused supervision has negative effects on the student teacher learning as it creates fear and desire to confirm.

As indicated in Table 8 below, the mean value of mentor's characteristics in practicum program implementation for sociability and honesty is 4.55 and 4.56 respectively .This implies that, mentors in sociability, to see their mentees as critical friends and providing them the necessary information about the environment, culture of the society, needs and interests of the society, and their approach to their mentees is very high. In addition they are honest for their mentees by giving information that is based on facts.

Regarding mentors characteristics on resourcefulness and taking responsibility shows a mean value of 2.50 and 2.85 respectively. The mean value result is medium, which should be improved in the future. Especially in the sense of resourcefulness, to strengthen mentor's capacity to be resourceful in supplying the necessary documents and materials those help for PGDT student teachers in doing their assignments is necessary. In this connection, (Tessaro, 2011) pointed out that resourcefulness affects the success of practicum programs.

Table 8. Mentors characteristics in practicum program implementation

Facilities	Scales	No	Mean value
1 Sociability	Very high	57	X (4.55)
	High	20	
	Medium	6	
	Low	2	
	Very low	-	
2 Honesty	Very high	55	X (4.56)
	High	25	
	Medium	3	
	Low	2	
	Very low	-	
3 Punctuality	Very high	5	X (2.23)
	High	8	
	Medium	12	
	Low	37	

4	Resourcefulness	Very low	23	X (2.50)
		Very high	-	
		High	13	
		Medium	24	
		Low	41	
5	Responsibility	Very low	7	X (2.85)
		Very high	12	
		High	10	
		Medium	20	
		Low	40	
		Very low	3	

The response given by respondents for mentor's characteristics about punctuality shows the mean value is 2.23. This implies that it is low. Time management is a critical aspect in doing and completing activities timely. Moreover, mentors should be a role model for their mentees in time management. At the practicum reflection sessions held at different times, one of the major problem raised from PGDT student teachers was they are not able to schedule their activities with their mentors. Therefore, mentors should improve their time management skill for timely accomplishment of activities and to be a role model for their mentees.

The challenges in the implementation of Practicum in PGDT Program

The implementation of practicum is accompanied with several challenges. In this support, (Ali Merc, 2010) stated that although the purpose and the function of the practicum component in teacher education are clear and meaningful, several problems appear in the implementation stage of this process. In addition to this, (Merc, 2010) stated that insufficient and careless preparation, preparing and selecting materials that are beyond the level of students, and inappropriate planning were among the most frequently stated problems. Accordingly, several expected challenges were identified and presented for respondents to rank them based on the degree of seriousness in their actual environment.

Table 9. Expected challenges in the implementation of PGDT Practicum Implementation

	Expected Challenges	N	Rank Order		Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
			Min	Max			
1	Poor flow of information	100	12	14	1386	13.86	.427
2	High workload	100	2	14	1256	12.56	1.986
3	Infrastructure problems: (Electric, water, telephone, residence...)	100	8	14	1219	12.19	.982
4	Lack of reference materials such as books, journals and etc	100	5	12	1013	10.13	1.926
5	Low mentors knowledge and skill towards the activities to be done	100	5	12	971	9.71	1.465
6	Lack of experiences, knowledge and skill on practicum	100	3	11	922	9.22	1.554
7	Low mentors motivation	100	3	14	802	8.02	3.038
8	Lack of stationery materials	100	4	10	796	7.96	1.222
9	Low mentors support	100	2	14	764	7.64	4.696
10	unfavorable climatic condition	100	2	14	698	6.98	3.250
11	Lack of support and cooperation from school management	100	3	11	688	6.88	2.840
12	Not having mentors	100	1	14	409	4.09	4.238
13	Lack of follow-up and support from university	100	1	8	382	3.82	2.855
14	Distance between schools and resident	100	1	6	275	2.75	1.226
	Valid N (list wise)	100					

As depicted in Table 9 below, respondents were asked to rank about fourteen expected challenges in the implementation of practicum in PGDT Program. Accordingly, the respondents ranked poor flow of information 1st with mean value 13.86, high work load 2nd with mean value 12.56, infrastructure problem 3rd with mean value 12.19, lack of reference materials 4th with mean value 10.13 and low mentors knowledge and skill towards the activities to be done 5th with mean value 9.71. In addition to this, the respondents ranked lack of experiences, knowledge and skill on practicum 6th; low mentors motivation 7th; lack of stationery materials 8th; low mentors support 9th; unfavorable climatic condition 10th; lack of support and cooperation from school management 11th; not having mentors 12th; lack of follow-up and support from university 13th; and distance between schools and resident 14 with mean value 9.22, 8.02, 7.96, 7.64, 6.98, 6.88, 4.09, 3.82 and 2.75 respectively. In relation with workload, (Kosnik, 2002) stated that excessive stress discourage student teachers from experimenting and developing a critical, progressive philosophy of teaching and learning. In addition to this, (Rosalind Murray-Harvey, 1999) student teacher stress affects their behavior and this inturn reduces classroom effectiveness. From this, one can infer that poor flow of information is the serious challenges hindering the implementation of practicum in PGDT Program. On the other hand, distance between school and resident is not a challenge for student teachers in implementing their practicum activities.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the major findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Increasing the number of female teachers has great contribution to maximize the female student participation in Secondary Schools. In this connection, this study find out that only few number of female teachers are involving in practicum implementation of PGDT Program. From this, one can conclude that the current number of male dominant participation in PGDT Practicum implementation affects the motivation of female participation in education especially teaching profession.
2. In practicum work the role of mentors who served as model for student teacher need to have wider experience in teaching profession. However, this research found out that large number of mentors has experiences between 1-3 years. This helps to conclude that the experience of the mentors were not sufficient enough to properly contribute for professional development of mentees. In addition to this, the mentors and mentees field of study need to be the same and mentors need to be free from additional responsibilities in the school in order to provide direct and continuous support for mentees. However, this study found out that some of the mentees and mentors field of studies are different and most of the mentors have additional responsibilities/positions. From this, one can conclude that due to subject difference and additional responsibilities they had, mentors are not providing appropriate support for mentees in their practicum work.
3. The interest and motivation of mentees in practicum work highly determine their success in the program as well as help them to learn a lot from the program about the profession. However, this study find out that the mentees interest on practicum work and their interest in each activities are not as expected. From this, one can conclude

that less mentees' motivation and interest in practicum affected their success in properly accomplishing the expected activities in implementation of practicum program.

4. The access to necessary materials and facilities enables the mentees to effectively engage in the practicum work. However, this study was found out that, mentees were not get access to several materials and facilities. From, this one can conclude that inaccessibility of mentees to several materials and facilities hindered them not to effectively carried activities expected in practicum work. Similarly, the success of practicum work is determined by the effective participation of stakeholders. However, this study found out that most of the stakeholders are not effectively fulfilling all the duties and responsibilities expected in the implementation of practicum. From this, one can infer that one of the problems affecting the implementation of practicum implementation in PGDT Program is emanated from ineffective participation of stakeholders in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities practicum work.
5. Mentors are model guiders in practicum work. They need to be competent in teaching profession as well as in personal and social skill in order to equip the mentees with necessary knowledge, skill and experiences which made them qualified and competent professionals. However, this study found out that mentors are not as such resource and ready to accept responsibilities. From this, one can conclude that the current skill, experience and knowledge mentors had are not sufficient for to provide expected support for the mentee in practicum implementations.
6. Now day information is a big power for success in any activities. Therefore, all the stakeholders need up to date information timely in the implementation of practicum program. However, this study was found out that stakeholders especially mentees, mentors, principals and supervisors were not get appropriate information at the right time in the implementation of practicum program. One can conclude from this, the poor flows of information are seriously affecting the implementation of practicum in PGDT Program.

Based on the major findings and conclusions the following recommendations were forwarded:

7. This study revealed that the number of female participation in practicum implementation is very low. As a result the problems of shortage of female teachers in Secondary School are still continued. Therefore, MoE, Regional Education Bureau, Zonal Education Department, Woreda Education Office and Universities should have to give more emphasis for increasing the number of female teachers in PGDT Program so that female teachers play their own roles for the development of teaching profession as well as maximize the number of female participation in education at all.
8. This study also revealed that majority of the mentors have less experience in teaching and also assigned for mentees whose field of study is different from them as well as had additional responsibilities/positions in the school. As a result mentors didn't equip with necessary experience as well as get good opportunity to provide necessary support for mentees whose field of study is the same with them. Therefore, Secondary Schools Principals, Supervisors and Woreda Education Office should have

to consider the experience, field of study and workload while they will assign mentors for newly recruited PGDT Program Student Teachers so that they will get further opportunity to be supported by their mentor.

9. This study also found out that, mentees had less interest and motivation in practicum work. As a result, practicum works were carried out for the sake of completing the PGDT program and this implies as its contribution is less for professional development of mentees. Therefore, all the stakeholders especially MoE, REB, ZED, WEO, Secondary Schools and Universities should have properly play their own roles and responsibilities and strongly work on these issues together to improve the interest and motivation of mentees towards practicum work.
10. This study also revealed that there were shortage of materials and facilities in the school to properly carry out practicum activities. As a result it is very difficult to effectively and efficiently accomplish practicum tasks. Therefore, MoE, REB, ZED, WEO, Secondary Schools, Universities and other stakeholders should have to fulfill necessary materials and facilities in Secondary Schools so that mentees will easily and successfully carried out their practicum activities.
11. This study also found out that the mentors knowledge, skill and experiences were not as expected. As a result mentors faced a challenge to deliver necessary supports for their mentee. Therefore, Universities in collaboration with other stakeholders should have to provide continuous and relevant trainings on Practicum work such mentoring, portfolio preparation and ect in order to make them more competent and contribute further for professional development of teachers.
12. This study also revealed that there was a poor flow of information in the implementation of practicum program. This resulted in disorganization of the implementation of PGDT Practicum activities. Therefore, MoE and Universities should have to plan together in collaboration with Secondary Schools in order to make national wide uniform implementations of Practicum Programs throughout the country so that all mentees and mentors have got equal opportunities to get access to necessary information and work together strongly.

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