Practices and Challenges of Higher Diploma Program Implementation in Cluster Satellites of Haramaya University, Ethiopia

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Abstract The purpose of this study was to assess the practices and challenges of Higher Diploma Program (HDP) implementation in cluster satellites of Haramaya University. To realize this purpose, descriptive survey research design with a mixed method approach was adopted. The study was carried out on four teacher education colleges and 3 Universities. A randomly selected 86 (50%) HDP candidates and all HDP leaders, tutors, coordinators and deans were selected through availability sampling. Questionnaire, semi-structured interview and FGDs were used to generate data. Document analysis was also carried out. The results of one-way ANOVA and multiple regressions as well as qualitative thematic analysis revealed that the quality of the practice of HDP was low, especially in terms of providing professional support to HDP trainees, and conducting classroom observations. Moreover, the study indicated that high workload on HDP candidates, low value given to HDP certificate and using of the same single HDP training handbook for candidates coming from various fields of specializations were found to be negatively affecting the practices of HDP. The study offered essential implications for further studies and policy actions among which is the need for preparing incentives packages for the HDC, HDLs and HDTs.

Key words: Higher Diploma Program, Cluster Satellite, Haramaya University, Ethiopia

1. INTRODUCTION

We are living in a dynamic and globalized world where situations are remarkably changing. These changes are taking place almost everywhere including classrooms. These changes have also made the 21st century classrooms more complex than before in terms of like student diversity, needs and interests. In connection to this, OECD (2009) points out that teachers are required to be able to effectively teach in increasingly multicultural classrooms, place greater emphasis on addressing the needs of students with special learning, make more effective use of ICT and plan lessons within evaluative and accountability frameworks. This is premised upon the assumption that students in a classroom considerably differ in terms of level of performance, style and pace of learning, as well as in their socio-cultural, socio-economic and/or psycho-social

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backgrounds. In order to address all these in a single classroom or lesson, teacher educators need not only cutting edge theoretical or content knowledge but also pedagogic skills which enable them to especially plan, implement, organize and manage lessons cyclically, teach and assess in tandem, and effectively use ICTs for all these.

Teacher educators' professional competencies (TPCs), in terms of pedagogic skills and content knowledge (PCK), is a key determinant factor of effective teaching and learning processes and hence determines the quality of education. The fact that teacher educators as designers and implementers of the curricula, must possess not only the right skills, knowledge, and attitude but also get opportunity or possess power and freedom to design, research and critique the syllabi or policy since they are expected to demonstrate professional proficiency in their classrooms with the intention of producing competent citizens who are capable of demonstrating social-critical and academic knowledge, skills and attitudes for changing their society and advancing the development of their country. Similar arguments were made by Jula and Shimelis (2018).In relation to this, Platt (1970) stated:

> *Teachers are the heart of educational process and the main determinant of the quality and effectiveness of its results as they play a decisive role in the fulfillment of educational goals. Whatever curriculum change is introduced and whatever reforms are made, all will be of little or no avail without qualified and committed teachers.*

The effectiveness of teacher educators is measured by the successful and collective attainment of educational goals of the country, among which are preparation of citizens who can contribute to regional, national and global developments yet by addressing the complex individual and social needs in simultaneity. As is emphasized by Bhowmik, Banerjee and Banerjee (2013), effective teachers use an array of teaching strategies because there is no single, universal approach that suits all situations. In other words, different approaches need to be used in different strategies with different groups of students to improve their learning outcomes while responding to their individual backgrounds, learning styles and abilities.

In this regard, among the various approaches of learning which help teacher educators to take students diverse needs into account is the constructivist theory of learning and teaching, which is perceived as a predominant and commonly practiced perspective of learning and teaching.

Constructivist theory of learning, as contrasted to the traditional behavioral theory, is the most effective and widely accepted one. As was noted by prominent constructivism theorists (Bruner 1966; Kagan,1995; Johnson & Smith, 1998), learning is perceived as an active process in which learners discover and construct new ideas or concepts based on their current or prior knowledge. That is, students make meaning from what they do and transform it into practicable and durable knowledge .This approach requires teaching strategies which encourage enquiry and problem solving, cooperative and collaborative learning and heuristic learning to mention some.

Thus, teacher educators in higher learning institutions like Haramaya University are expected to have clear conceptualization about constructivist theory of learning and apply it in their classrooms to fully involve learners in the learning process and improve their academic

achievements [knowledge, skills and attitude]. In this regard, the ongoing HDP, which is offered to teacher educators as one of the important components of their professional development, plays a key role in enhancing the trainee teachers' pedagogical competencies. The HDP was developed and has been implemented in all teacher education institutions in Ethiopia since 2003 (MoE, 2011) including Haramaya University (HU) and its cluster members. This coincides with Ethiopia's Education Sector Development Program IV (MoE, 2010) and V (MoE, 2015) which obliged that all academic staff members should receive trainings on teaching methodology so that the observed pedagogical gaps among them will be improved.

1.1. The HDP of Haramaya University

In Haramaya University, where this study was carried out, prior to HDP, an induction training was initially offered only to staffs in the then Faculty of Education. Later on, this training expanded its horizon and started to be offered to staffs from various faculties and wider disciplines so that they become effective teacher educators. As such the training focused mainly on pedagogical skills and teaching methodology courses but as short-term induction trainings. Nevertheless, due to the inadequacy of this short-term induction-training style in arming the would-be teacher-educators with the required pedagogical skills and knowledge, this training was transformed into a full-blown HDP. It was believed that such an HDP would contribute paramount in professionalizing teacher educators in higher learning institutions (HLIs).

Thus, since 2011, the HDP has been made mandatory to all teachers teaching in HLIs across Ethiopia (MoE, 2011). Following this, Jigjiga University, Dire Dawa University, Chiro College of Teachers Education, Dr Abdulmejid College of Teachers Education and Harar College of Teacher Education all adopted the HDP of Haramaya University and started implementing it at different times. Thus, all these institutions' HDPs were clustered under Haramaya University whose role is to play out the role of a moderator. Also, as a moderator, Haramaya University designed and distributed *HDP Training handbook* (shortened as HDP *handbook*) to all the cluster training in addition to its own training faculties' or colleagues' training sites.

The major contents of the *HDP handbook* are*:

1. teachers as reflective practitioners,
2. managing learning,
3. action research
4. school/organizational placement,
5. moderation workshop and
6. active learning projects

However, reports developed by the moderating University, which is HU, indicated that, some of the major components of the training such as moderation workshop, active learning project and organizational placement were not adequately practiced as was stipulated in the *HDP handbook*.

1.2. Previous Studies

A number of studies have been conducted in the area of HDP. For instance, a tracer study conducted by Adula (2008) on application of HDP training skills in classroom instruction indicated that the HDP graduates did not apply the competences set in the HDP syllabus to the expected level. According to the findings, this is due to constraints such as large class size, shortage of HDP handbook and absence of well-organized follow-up or support that enforced or reinforced teacher educators to use the training skills.

Furthermore, Addis (2008) reported that a considerable number of teacher educators had a positive attitude towards HDP training, but the skills acquired from the training were not fully practiced. Addis's study indicated that the teacher educators shortly relapsed back to the traditional modes of using the lecture method and assessment based on formal written examinations, leaving aside all or some of the modern alternative methods introduced to them during the HDP training.   In the same way, Staurt et al (n.d) indicated that the attitude of Aksum University faculty towards HDP was positive though implementation barriers were prevalent in the University. Recently, a comparative study between HDP certified and non-certified teacher educators in Ambo University was conducted by Mengistu (2017) focusing on their pedagogical competencies. The study revealed that those who have been certified dominantly implemented contemporary student-centered pedagogy through constructivist approach while instructors who were not HDP-certified dominantly implemented conventional teacher-centered methods. In line with this, Ashenafi (2017) concluded that HDP has a great value for instructors in improving their professional development but indicated that the mode of delivering the HDP course required some amendments.

Overall, the above studies highlighted important insights about the role of HDP in improving teacher educators' academic performances. However, it seems that these studies did not address issues related to the practices and challenges of HDP implementation in much detail beyond assessing instructors' attitudes and surveying the role of Teachers Professional Development (TPD) program. Thus, this paper is more elaborated in terms of its depth. In addition, this study differs from other similar studies in terms of its comprehensiveness - it included five teacher education running cluster satellites (institutions) situated in different contexts and regions (Somali, Dire Dawa and Oromia) in the eastern part of Ethiopia where no such all-encompassing studies that assess the status of HDP implementation, challenges encontered and compare relative differences among the institutions in terms of HDP implementation and associated bolstering factors for the better performances of some institutions have been conducted.

1.3. Objectives

The specific objectives of the study were to:

1. assess the current practices of HDP implementation in Haramaya University's HDP cluster satellites

2. identify the major challenges confronting the HDP trainers and trainees in effectively implementing the HDP

3. examine if significant mean difference exists among the HDP cluster satellites of Haramaya University in terms of the extent of HDP implementation.

2. METHOD

2.1. Research Design
In this study, a descriptive survey research design with mixed method approach was used. As argued by scholars such as Wisdom and Creswell (2013), using both quantitative and qualitative approaches is useful in understanding contradictions in between quantitative results and qualitative findings. They also stated that using the combination of both approaches has a great advantage in elucidating more information than using either of them.

2.2. Source of Data
To collect the required data, both primary and secondary sources were used. Primary sources of data were Higher Diploma Program Coordinators (HDCs), HDP Leaders (HDLs), HDP Tutors (HDTs), HDP Candidates (HDPCs) and College Deans (CDs). As secondary sources, MoE's guidelines for the HDP, cluster sites and cross moderation reports, cluster and national workshop reports, and HDP candidates' portfolio were considered.

2.3. Population, Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

The total population of this study was 201. As the number of respondents was manageable, all leaders, tutors, coordinators and deans were included in the sample using availability sampling technique. From 172 HDPCs, 86 (50%) were included in the study through stratified random sampling technique. As stated by Bertlett *et al.* (2001), a sample size of 76 (38%) is acceptable if the population is about 200 and the sample size of 106 (10.6%) is acceptable per 1000 population. The summary of sample size and sampling technique is presented in table 1 below.

Table 1
Sample Size of Institutions

Name of satellite cluster	HDCs	HDLs	HDTs	Deans	HDPC
Haramaya University	1	5	No	1	54
Jigjiga University	1	2	No	1	55
Dire Dawa University	No	2	1	No	45
Chiro CTE	1	1	No	1	6
Dr. Abdulmejid CTE	1	2	1	1	12
Total population	4	12	2	4	172
Sample size	4	12	2	4	86
Percent of sample size	100%	100%	100%	100%	50%
Sampling technique	Available	Available	Available	Available	Stratified random

Key- HDL: Higher Diploma Program Leader; HDC: Higher Diploma Program Coordinator; HDT: Higher Diploma Program Tutor; HDPC: HDP candidate

2.4. Methods of Data Collection

2.4.1. Questionnaire

A questionnaire, both close- and open-ended type, was designed to gather data from HDP candidates. It had two sections. The first section dealt with the background information of the respondents. The second section was related to the practices of HDP and challenges that affect the practices of HDP. The questionnaire comprised 5 items on background information of respondents, 10 items about the practices of HDP and 7 items about the challenges that affect the practices of HDP. Additionally, open-ended items were designed in a way to elicit responses from the respondents and so that they could make possible suggestions to improve the practices of HDP. All the items were adapted by the researchers in line with the literature and harmonized HDP handbook. The items on practices of HDP were Likert scale types with 5 points scales, ranging from 1- very low to 5 - very high. The second part of the items which were concerned with the challenges that have affected the practices of HDP was Likert types rated on a scale of 0 to 4 (0- not at all: 1-to some extent: 2-moderatly: 3-highly: and 4- extremely).

2.4.2. Interview

Semi-structured interview was conducted with College Deans to gather data regarding the practices of HDP by focusing on the major components such as GEQIP budget, school placement, action research and moderation workshop. Additionally, the data regarding the major factors affecting the practices of HDP were collected using an interview. Interviewees were coded as CDs, HDLs, HDCs, and HDPCs, respectively, to refer to College Deans, HDP leaders, HDP Coordinators and HDP Candidates

2.4.3. Focus group discussion (FGD)

In order to collect data regarding the extent of execution of HDP activities (like undertaking continuous assessment, checking fulfillment of reflective activities, conducting cluster and

national moderation workshops), FGDs involving 5 to 7 participants (HDCs and HDLs) was conducted in each cluster institution.

2.4.4. Document analysis

In order to get valuable data using a document analysis, a checklist having various rubrics was prepared. Then after, documents like HDP candidate's attendance, HDP handbook, cluster and cross moderation visit reports, cluster and national workshop reports, and candidate's portfolio were critically examined against the rubrics.

2.5. Pilot Test

A pilot test was conducted to ensure the reliability and validity of the questionnaire before collecting the actual data. The rationale behind conducting a pilot test was to ensure whether the questionnaire was clear to respondents and free of ambiguities that could cause misunderstanding. To ensure this, the researchers consulted two instructors working in the school of foreign language and literature; additionally, two experienced researchers in the area of TPD from the department of Educational Planning and Management (EdPM) and Curriculum checked the content validity of the questionnaire. Accordingly, constructive comments and suggestions were obtained. A pilot test was carried out on 16 HDPCs of Qabredhar College of Teachers Education - not included in sample. Finally, internal consistency reliability was computed and the average reliability coefficient of 0.81 was found.

2.6. Ethical Considerations

Consent from the respondents was secured through a clearance letter from Haramaya University and open discussion with them before starting the study. All of them have shown their agreement and thus, participated willingly. Their anonymity as well as their responses were kept confidential and responses were used purely for research purposes.

2.7. Methods of Data Analysis

Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used in this research. Mean was used to analyze the data collected through close-ended questionnaire concerning the practices of HDP. The expected mean score (3) is used as a cut point for analysis, meaning mean score below 3 indicates low practice of HDP and above 3 represents high practices of HDP. One-way ANOVA was also employed to see if there were significant differences in practicing HDP among the institutions. In addition, multiple regressions was employed to identify the most statistically significant factors that affect the practices of HDP. The qualitative data, which were collected through interview, document analysis, and open-ended questionnaire, were analyzed thematically.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In line with the research questions, the major findings and discussions are presented below.

3.1. The Extent of Execution of HDP Activities by the Program Leaders and Coordinators

Table 2

Extent of Execution of HDP Activities by HDLs and HDCs

No	How do you rate the activities of HDL & HDC in performing the following activities?	Mean Score
1.	Make HDP candidates submit their Continuous Professional Development Plans	2.98
2.	Help HDP candidates in preparing lesson plans; showing development of active learning and assessment techniques	2.43
3.	Enable HDP candidates to do action research project	3.27
4.	Let HDP candidates attend school placement	3.18
5.	Let HDP candidates attend organizational placement	2.98
6.	Carry out regular professional interview with HDP candidates	2.43
7.	Undertake regular observation of HDP candidates' teaching	1.87
8.	Accomplish continuous assessment of HDP candidates' work on a regular basis with a written constructive feedback	3.12
9.	Allow HDP candidates to participate in moderation workshops that are planned for sharing experience	2.38
10.	Follow up HDP graduates to assess the impact of the programme on teaching and learning	1.4

Scale: <2.49 = low   2.5-3.49 = medium   >3.5= high

As is presented in table 2, the mean score of respondents for items number 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 9 and 10 were below the expected mean score (3) indicating that the HDLs and HDCs were performing low in helping HDPCs to perform activities such as facilitating HDPCs submit their CPD Plans, attend organizational placement, carry out regular professional interviews and observations of classroom teaching, conduct action research, attend school placement, and accomplish continuous assessments.

In relation to action research, Ashenafi (2017) found out that HDP has a great value in motivating instructors to conduct action research to improve their classroom teaching and learning. Similarly, Stuart (n.d) explained that HDP helped instructors improve their action research and teaching skills. On contrary to Ashenaf's and Stuart's finding, Adula (2008) said that HDP graduate instructors were not applying pedagogical skills obtained through the training. This implies that the graduates were not using action research as a means for solving their classroom problems. Hence, it is possible to say that low practice of HDP components at the time of HDP sessions may lead to a low application of pedagogical skills in the teacher educators' future professional career.

Regarding continuous assessment, MoE's document (MoE, 2011) stresses that continuous assessment should be carried out on regular basis, i.e., weekly, and the HDP leader has to check and comment on the reflective activities with written constructive feedbacks. However, the observation of the checklist showed that the portfolios of some HDPCs were incomplete, and not to the required level for others even if the HDP handbook s were already completed. In a similar way, one of the interviewed HDLs said, "Some HDPCs did not submit their reflective activity as soon as we finish the HDP handbook. But they submitted all reflective activities at the end of the year to fulfil the requirement of graduation." Mengistu (2017) also explained that HDP helped instructors use continuous assessment and feedback when they deliver courses. This implies that continuous assessment of HDPCs during HDP sessions is helping instructors to be aware of its benefits.

Regarding lesson plan preparation, the HDP handbook (MoE, 2011) indicates that candidates should prepare 8 lesson plans that show the development of active learning and assessment techniques (excluding Projects and the School Placement). In contrary to this, the observation of HDP candidates' portfolio indicated that the portfolios of some of HDPCs lacked lesson plans and they were not up to the required level. In relation to this, Mengistu (2017) stated that instructors who attended HDP were better in setting, presenting, introducing, managing and achieving lesson objectives than those who did not attended HDP.

Furthermore, the interview held with one of the HDLs revealed that HDPCs mostly prepared and attached "only one lesson plan in their portfolio and rarely only few of them annex two lesson plans." Similarly, the interview held with the majority of HDLs concerning formal lesson observation seemed unsatisfactory as conducting lesson observation in a classroom was very difficult because of three reasons. Firstly, HDLs and HDCs were busy as they had formal classes in addition to handling four hours HDP sessions per week. Secondly, there was a mismatch between the class schedule for HDLs and HDPCs – while one group was free, the other group was busy with classes. The third reason was that HDPCs themselves were not happy to be evaluated and assessed by HDLs or tutors because instructors in higher institutions of Ethiopia had not been familiar with instructional supervision.

In connection to this, the HDP handbook (MoE, 2011) obliges that as a minimum requirement, HDPCs should have records of 4 formal lesson observations with written feedback and should conduct discussions with and receive feedback from HDL or HDT for the award of the diploma. Additionally, the HDP handbook presupposes that short informal observations for specific purposes may also be arranged. In support of the above finding, the observation of HDPCs' portfolios confirmed that the majority of them did not have the record of formal lesson observation reports.

Concerning carrying out regular professional interviews with HDP candidates, the handbook of HDP (MoE, 2011) states that professional interview should be conducted by HDPL and/or HDPT at least once in a semester. Contrary to this, all HDPCs' portfolios showed that professional interviews were not at all conducted. Gardner, M, et al., (2017) explained that coaching or other expert scaffolding can support the effective implementation of new curricula, tools, and approaches by educators. This implies that regular professional interview with HDPCs

has a paramount importance in improving HDP candidates' pedagogical skills if it is practiced in a well organized manner.

There is a general consensus among educators that a moderation workshop ensures the standard of HDP. In line with this, HDP handbook (MoE, 2011) clearly depicts moderation visits are designed to gather data and ensure consistency across the provision, identify areas for development and share innovative practice across the clusters of HDP. The handbook also prescribes that a moderation visit should be conducted once per semester in each of the cluster institutions by the moderating University. But in a slightly different way and in a way that supports the finding of the questionnaire above, the moderation visits and workshop reports indicated that both of them were not satisfactorily conducted. For instance, a moderation visit was conducted only once in the first semester of 2015/16. Similarly, a moderation workshop was not carried out in 2014/15, except that it was only once conducted in 2015/16 academic year. The document further indicated few people attended the moderation workshop.

As clearly indicated in HDP handbook (MoE, 2011), one of the responsibilities of HDLs is making a following up on HDP graduates to assess the impact of the programme on their profession. However, the report of the moderation workshop indicated that the impact assessment was not conducted by any of the cluster institutions. Interviews conducted with the majority of the deans and HDLs confirmed the same. For instance, one of the deans said:

> *We have been running HDP for about six years, but no research has been conducted on assessing the impact of HDP training on the teaching and learning process [CD1, Nov 2018].*

The other interviewed HDLs at the time of the interview complained, "We always plan to revise HDP handbook and conduct impact assessment. But GEQIP does not allow budget to do these activities" [HDL1, Nov 2018].

3.2.   The Major Constrains to the Practices of HDP

Table 3

Challenges to the Practices of HDP

No	Items	Mean Values
1	High workload on HDP candidates	3.58
2	Less follow up/attention by concerned higher officials	3.55
3	Low incentive for HDP leaders, coordinators and tutors	2.32
4	Low value given for HDP certificate	3.72
5	Lack of interest on the part of trainees	3.17
6	Absence of enforcement by the management body	3.86
7	Insufficiency of refreshment like tea/coffee at the time of training	2.82

As it is depicted in table 3, the mean response for item numbers 1, 2, 4, and 6 was above 3.5. This shows that a high workload on HDP candidates, less attention by concerned higher officials, less value given for HDP certificate, and absence of enforcement on HDPCs to attend HDP from the government side were highly affecting the practices of HDP in satellite clusters of HU. In the same way, Ashenafi (2017) addressed that little attention given by a University management in remuneration and encouragement was a factor affecting the practice of HDP. He also elaborated that HDP handbook itself should be revised in a way that matches the background (disciplines) of the trainees. In a similar manner, Gardner, Darling-Hammond and Hyler (2017) discussed that the importance of providing professional development in conjunction with model curriculum and classroom material should not be underestimated. Regarding this, Stuart (n.d) concluded that high work load and lack of consistent follow-up by administrators were some of the challenges in implementing HDP in Aksum University. In the same way, MoE (2008) explained that incentive package, workload on instructors and less attention given to HDP by management bodies were the major factors affecting the implementation of HDP.

With regard to workload on HDP candidates, one of the interviewed HDLs reported that the majority of HDPCs (for instance, candidates from the institute of technlogy) had the tendency to show the highest rate of absenteeism due to the overlapping of the HDP session with their class schedules. In connection to this view, another HDL asserted:

> *The agreement signed between the departments of* HDPCs *and HDP coordinating office requests departments not to assign* HDPCs *on other tasks at the time of HDP session. But, due to shortage of instructors, some departments are forced to allocate teaching time (schedule) without considering HDP session [HDL2, Nov 2018].*

Still another HDL complained:

> *HDP candidates are required to be exempted up to 3 credit hours load per week from any responsibility, but some departments still consider 3 credit-hours as an overload rather than freeing candidates from additional responsibility like examinations. Due to this misconception,* HDPCs *become busy, tend to show absenteeism and finally are forced to request withdrawal [HDL3, Nov 2018].*

Contrary to the above views, documents, like MoE, 2011 & MoE, 2015, clearly state that the responsibility of college deans is ensuring whether HDP candidates' teaching requirements or loads, timetables, examinations, practicum, extension classes do not overlap with the HDP sessions. MoE (2008) also indicated that the absence of incentive package guideline for HDP leaders and coordinators, particularly at teacher education college level, is confusing college deans not to allocate the required work load.

Regarding the importance of HDP certificate, one of the interviewed HDPCs claimed:

> *HDP training takes the whole year to complete, but the value given for the certificate is so low. For instance, there are a lot of posts for vacant positions in our University, but*

any of them do not consider HDP certificate as a requirement. Therefore, it is not surprising that instructors are not interested to attend [HDPC1, Nov 2018].

In line with the above view, another HDL opined:

Leave the issue of absenteeism and drop out of candidates from HDP sessions due to work load and other additional responsibilities, the majority of instructors in our college have been teaching for many years without having HDP certificate. This implies that instructors do not have awareness about the importance of HDP certificate because they think that they do not get any additional benefits if they get certified or lose nothing if they are not certificated. This indicates that HDP certificate has no value [HDL4, Nov 2018].

The above views and discussion concerning the importance of an HDP certificate implies that the certificate had of little value. Interestingly, policy documents, like MoE, 1994 & MoE, 2015, emphasize that teachers teaching at any level of education will be certified, and the CPD of lecturers and teachers will be a continuing focus for the improvement of quality of education. In line with this view, Villegas-Reimers (2003) stated that professional development has a noticeable impact on teachers' work, both in and out of classroom, especially considering that a significant number of teachers throughout the world is under prepared for their profession.

In line with the finding of the questionnaire regarding the absence of enforcement by the concerned bodies in making HDPCs attend HDP, one of the interviewed HDPCs expressed his view by saying:

Due to absence of measures on HDPCs who request withdrawal from HDP without justifiable reasons, the attendance rate of HDPCs is getting low. It is not only this; there are lots of instructors who have been teaching for years without having HDP certificate. Thus, in my opinion, policies in this regards should force instructors to be certified before starting teaching [HDPC2, Nov 2018].

Similarly, documents like HDP session attendance indicated that the dropout rate of HDPCs was very high in Universities compared to teacher education colleges. For instance, in the 2015/16 academic year, 44, 46 and 42 HDPCs graduated from a total of 62, 60 and 63 HDPCs registered in Haramaya, Jigjiga and Dire Dawa Universities, respectively. This indicates the dropout rates of HDPCs in the aforementioned Universities were 29.03%, 23.3% and 33.3%, respectively. In connection to this, Ashenafi (2017) and MoE (2008) indicated that high rate of drop out is one of the most challenges in the implementation of HDP.

As already shown in table 3 above, the mean scores for HDPCs for item number 3, 5 and 7 were between 2.5 and 3.49. This indicated lack of moderate incentive for HDP leaders, coordinators and tutors, lack of interest by trainees and lack of refreshments (like tea and coffee) at the time of training were highly and negatively affecting the practice of HDP in satellite clusters of HU. In relation to this, Adula (2008) discussed that large class size, lack of learning

materials and absence of well-organized follow-up or support that enforced or reinforced instructors to use the training skills are factors negatively affecting the practices of HDP.

Similar reflections were made during the interviews. For instance, one of the interviewed HDLs contended:

> *University higher officials do not give attention to HDP. The reason for this, as to me, is that some of the top managers do not recognize the benefit of pedagogical skill as their background is from agriculture, technology or health. Therefore, it is good if there is an alternative structure from the college of education to handle the issue of instructors' professional development including HDP among top managers of higher institutions [HDL5, Nov 2018]*

The other interviewee from Dire Dawa University (DDU) also complained that HDP coordinators and leaders were not formally assigned in DDU. As a result, they did not have the right to ask for further benefits, and consequently, they served the University for free.

From the preceding discussions, it is possible to say that the attention and follow-up given by the leaders of higher institutions to HDP appeared to be highly affecting the practice of HDP.

Concerning the benefits of HDLs and coordinators, one of the participants supporting the above finding asserted that "coordinators and leaders of all teacher education colleges in cluster satellites of HU do not have any incentive for working as HDP leader or coordinator. We all are working for free". Similarly, the majority of college vice-deans (2 out of 3) informed that lack of benefits was an issue they had been confronting with for the last five years. The reason is that there was no any guideline that shows additional incentive packages for HDP leaders, coordinators and tutors.

In connection to the incentive packages, surveyed respondents suggested that commensurate payment to be effected as indicated in table 4 below.

Table 4
Incentives to be Paid for HDP Leaders, Coordinators and Tutors

Responsible body	Workload ranges	Incentive to be paid per month
HDLs	3-18 hours	2500-3200 birr
HDTs	6-12 hours	1200-1500 birr
HDCs	6-15 hours	500 birr per group and medal of excellence

By and large, from the above discussions, it can be understood that there was less follow-up given to the HDP by the top management of the respective HLIs. What's more, there was no any incentive for HDP leaders as a result of the absence of a guideline that provides HDP leaders or coordinators with incentives at teacher education colleges. This is due to the inability of regional governments who fund their respective teacher education colleges to create incentive packages. In addition, lack of interest on the trainees side was prevalent due to the fact that less follow-up and encouragement was offered from the government. However, an MoE (2011)

document emphasizes that the responsibility of the deans of colleges of teacher education and the appropriate University manager (VPAA) is assigning Higher Diploma Leaders (HDLs) and coordinators who can effectively run the HDP to determine and implement the workload and provide the necessary incentives to the HDLs, HDTs and HDP candidates. The MoE's document, which is nationally prepared for Universities which offer HDP, has also noticeably created the incentive-package ranges indicated in table 4 above (MoE, 2007).

In addition to the issues discussed under table 4, the majority of HDLs and HDCs at the time of interview reported that the delay of GEQIP budget, problems related with HDP manual such as using the same HDP handbook for all HDPCs coming from different colleges, less follow-up by MoE, exit of experienced leaders, absence of appropriate measures on those HDPCs who request withdrawal without satisfactory reasons, absence of transcript on HDP certificate that clearly would have indicated the HDP handbook covered in HDP session, and so on were some of the factors that have constrained the practices of HDP in cluster satellites of HU.

3.3. The Institutions' Implementation of the major Components of HDP

Before proceeding to the ANOVA test, Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilks' tests were conducted to check the normality of the data collected from the institutions. Both tests showed that the sample data were not significantly different as indicated in table 5 below.

Table 5
Summary of Test of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Institutions	.177	80	.200*	.875	80	.034

*a. Lilliefors significance correction; * Lower bound of the true significance.*

Thus, based on the summary depicted on table 5, the researchers accepted the null hypothesis which states that the sample data were generated from the normally distributed population. Following this, the researchers performed ANOVA test to see whether or not significant difference exists among the five institutions in practicing HDP activities. Tables 6 & 7 below (intentionally put separately albeit related) show the summary of mean and ANOVA test resepectively.

Table 6

Summary of Descriptive Statistics on Practicing HDP Activities

Descriptive Statistics			
Institutions	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Dr Abdulmejid CTE	6	44.0	3.2
Chiro CTE	6	44.7	4.3
Haramaya University	24	35.8	7.7
Dire Dawa University	21	40.6	4.8
Jigjiga University	23	36.4	3.7
Total	80	38.5	6.2

Table 7

Summary of ANOVA Test on Practicing HDP Activities among Institutions

ANOVA Test					
Groups	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between groups	772.700	4	193.175	6.4	0.001
Within groups	2265.288	75	30.204		
Total	3037.987	79			

As indicated in table 7 above, there was a statistical significant mean difference among the five institutions in practicing the sub-components of HDP, $F(4, 75) = 6.4$, $p<0.05$. Additionally, the descriptive part of table 6 has indicated that the practice of HDP activities was relatively higher in Chiro CTE and Dr, Abdulmejid CTE with the mean score of $=44.7$ and 44.0, respectively. However, the practice of HDP seemed lower in Haramaya University with mean score of 35.8.

Although there were statistically significant differences among the five institutions in practicing the sub-components of HDP, it was not clear as to which of the specific institutions differed from one another. Therefore, Tukey post hoc test was preferred as it could figure out which groups in the sample differ rather than display false discover when one or more of the tests will have a significant result purely by chance alone like Benjamin-Hochberg test or compare every mean to a control mean like Dunnett's correction (George Washington University, 2015). Multiple comparisons table which indicates the detailed information of each institution was carried out in line with the items in which statistically significant mean difference was observed.

3.3.1. Doing action research projects

Table 8

Condition of Conducting Action Research among Institutions (Post hoc test results)

	Multiple Comparisons on conducting Action Research					
Ietm3: Tukey HSD (I) Institutions	(J) Institution	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Dr Abdulmejid CTE	Chiro CTE	.16667	.65644	.999	-1.6683	2.0016
	Haramaya University	1.75000*	.51896	.010	.2994	3.2006
	Dire Dawa University	.16667	.52633	.998	-1.3045	1.6379
	Jigjiga University	.54348	.52122	.835	-.9134	2.0004
Chiro CTE	Dr Abdulmejid CTE	-.16667	.65644	.999	-2.0016	1.6683
	Haramaya University	1.58333*	.51896	.025	.1327	3.0340
	Dire Dawa University	.00000	.52633	1.000	-1.4712	1.4712
	Jigjiga University	.37681	.52122	.951	-1.0801	1.8337
Haramaya University	Dr Abdulmejid CTE	-1.75000*	.51896	.010	-3.2006	-.2994
	Chiro CTE	-1.58333*	.51896	.025	-3.0340	-.1327
	Dire Dawa University	-1.58333*	.33974	.000	-2.5330	-.6337
	Jigjiga University	-1.20652*	.33177	.004	-2.1339	-.2791
Dire Dawa University	Dr Abdulmejid CTE	-.16667	.52633	.998	-1.6379	1.3045
	Chiro CTE	.00000	.52633	1.000	-1.4712	1.4712
	Haramaya University	1.58333*	.33974	.000	.6337	2.5330
	Jigjiga University	.37681	.34317	.807	-.5824	1.3361
Jigjiga University	Dr Abdulmejid CTE	-.54348	.52122	.835	-2.0004	.9134
	Chiro CTE	-.37681	.52122	.951	-1.8337	1.0801
	Haramaya University	1.20652*	.33177	.004	.2791	2.1339
	Dire Dawa University	-.37681	.34317	.807	-1.3361	.5824

*Significant at 0.05 level.

As table 8 indicates, all institutions had a statistically significant mean difference in facilitating their HDPCs to do action research when compared with Haramaya University. This indicates Haramaya University has less performance in carrying out action research when compared with other clusters. The reason for this difference was that the university has been currently running two programs, namely, PGDHET for non-teacher educators like HDPCs from the colleges of agriculture, health, computing and informatics, business and economics, veterinary medicine, and institute of technology and, at the same time, HDP for candidates from colleges engaged in educating student teachers, such as colleges of education, social and natural sciences. Hence, action research project was actually conducted only by the HDP candidates. In other words, those who have joined the PGDHET program were not required to conduct action research for the fulfilment of the award of HDP in teaching. But all candidates of HDP in all clusters except Haramaya University have been allowed to carry out action research project to solve problems that they face in their daily teaching and learning process.

3.3.2. School placement

Table 9

School Placement among Institutions

Multiple Comparisons on Conducting School Placement			
Item 4: Tukey HSD		Mean Difference	
(I) institution	(J) institution	(I-J)	Sig.
Dr Abdulmejid CTE	Chiro CTE	-.16667	.977
	Haramaya University	1.87500*	.016
Chiro CTE	Dr Abdulmejid CTE	.16667	.977
	Haramaya University	2.04167*	.008
Haramaya University	Dr Abdulmejid CTE	-1.87500*	.016
	Chiro CTE	-2.04167*	.008

* Significant at 0.05 level.

Table 9 indicates the p-value that matched Haramaya University with the two CTEs was less than 0.05. This indicates that there was a statistically significant mean difference between Haramaya University and the two teacher education colleges in allowing their HDPCs to attend school placement. What negatively relates Haramaya University with the two colleges (see in the column of mean difference in table 9) was that the mean score of the later was greater than that of the former. Hence, Haramaya University was performing less in practicing school placement when compared with the two CTEs. Investigations made to find out the reason for the occurrence of such significant differences revealed that the University had no any school placement program for HDPCs that have joined PGDHET program though the HDP guideline urges HDPCs to have school placement report as a criterion to complete the program and obtain the HDP certificate. In practicing school placement, both Jigjiga University and Dire Dawa University were not included in the comparison because they did not have teacher educators in 2015/16 academic year and their HDPCs were allowed to conduct organizational placement instead of school placement. Quite contrary to what was practiced in the Haramaya University, the HDP handbook (MoE, 2011) clearly states that school placement is indented to help HDPCs to experience the situation in schools and the challenges facing teacher educators.

3.3.3. Organizational placement of HDP candidates

Table 10

Organizational Placement among Institutions

Multiple Comparisons in Undertaking Organizational Placement			
Item 5 Tukey HSD (I) institution	(J) institution	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
Haramaya University	Dire Dawa University	-1.77976*	.001
	Jigjiga University	-.93297	.099
Dire Dawa University	Haramaya University	1.77976*	.001
	Jigjiga University	.84679	.165
Jigjiga University	Haramaya University	.93297	.099
	Dire Dawa University	-.84679	.165

Significant at 0.05 level.

Table 10 indicates that there was a significant difference in practicing organizational placement between Haramaya and Dire Dawa Universities. But the practice of organizational placement was statistically insignificant between Haramaya and Jigjiga Universities and between Jigjiga and Dire Dawa Universities. The main reason for the occurrence of the significant difference between Haramaya and Dire Dawa University was that PGDHET candidates in Haramaya University were not allowed to participate in organizational placement. This indicates that Haramaya University was in a wrong direction in terms of practicing organizational placement.

Although the difference between Jigjiga University and Dire Dawa University was insignificant on how they practice organizational placement, it was observed during field trips that there were observable differences in the actual practices of organizational placement. For instance, in Jigjiga University, the candidates have conducted observations only in their college or department in the University instead of conducting organizational placement outside of their own. But, in Dire Dawa University, candidates were able to visit different organizations like hospitals, factories, banks, and agricultural offices, all of which pertains to their fields of study.

3.3.4. Conducting continuous assessment

Table 11

Conducting Continuous Assessment (post-hoc summary & institutional comparison)

Multiple Comparisons on Carrying out Continuous Assessment			
Item 8 Tukey HSD			
(I) institution	(J) institution	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
Dr Abdulmejid CTE	Chiro CTE	-.33333	.970
	Haramaya University	1.58333*	.003
	Dire Dawa University	1.73810*	.001
	Jigjiga University	2.06522*	.000
Chiro CTE	Dr Abdulmejid CTE	.33333	.970
	Haramaya University	1.91667*	.000
	Dire Dawa University	2.07143*	.000
	Jigjiga University	2.39855*	.000
Haramaya University	Dr Abdulmejid CTE	-1.58333*	.003
	Chiro CTE	-1.91667*	.000
	Dire Dawa University	.15476	.980
	Jigjiga University	.48188	.385
Dire Dawa University	Dr Abdulmejid CTE	-1.73810*	.001
	Chiro CTE	-2.07143*	.000
	Haramaya University	-.15476	.980
	Jigjiga University	.32712	.765
Jigjiga University	Dr Abdulmejid CTE	-2.06522*	.000
	Chiro CTE	-2.39855*	.000
	Haramaya University	-.48188	.385
	Dire Dawa University	-.32712	.765

* Significant at 0.05 level.

As one can see from table 11, there was a statistically significant mean difference in undertaking continuous assessment of HDPCs between Dr. Abdulmejid CTE and the three Universities, namely Haramaya, Dire Dawa and Jigjiga (p=0.003, 0.001 and 0.000), respectively. There was also a statistically significant mean difference in undertaking continuous assessment between Chiro CTE and the three Universities (p = 0.000 for all Universities). Conversely, there were no statistically significant differences between Dr Abdulmejid CTE and Chiro CTE (*p* = 0.97). The reason for the existence of significant differences between the three Universities and the two CTEs was the presence of large number of HDPCs in these Universities when compared with teacher education colleges. This means, Universities had relatively a larger number of HDPCs which posed difficulty for HDLs and HDCs to carry out continuous assessment unlike the teacher education colleges. However, the HDP handbook clearly indicates that HDLs and

HDCs should carry out continuous assessment regularly and are required to give constructive written feedback after the HDPCs completed their works.

Key Findings

The major findings of the study have shown that the extent of the execution of HDP activities compared to the activities depicted in the HDP handbook is low. This low implementation was mainly due to lack of motivation by and high workload on HDP candidates, less weight given to HDP certificate, less attention by the concerned bodies and inadequate and/or late release of HDP budget. Significant mean differences were noticed among the institutions with respect to the implementation of identified key activities of HDP.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. Conclusions

This study was designed to assess the level of the implementation of HDP and the restraints that militate its effective execution at cluster satellites of Haramaya University. To address the problem, three research questions related to the contemporary practice of HDP, the key factors that constrain the effective implementation of HDP and testing of the level of significance of differences among institutions with respect to the execution of HDP activities were formulated.

This study is different from other similar studies in that it attempted to address the existing practices of HDP implementation and its limiting factors in HLIs in the eastern part of Ethiopia where no such a comprehensive research endeavors were carried out. Methodologically, unlike other similar studies, this study employed multiple tools of data collection and analysis aligned with mixed methods approach which was lead by a descriptive survey design. Lastly, it was broad in its scope and detail in its depth. One of the noticeable limitations of this study is that its findings can't be generalized to all HLIs in Ethiopia though the context seems to be similar everywhere.

The major findings of the study revealed that the extent of the implementation of HDP activities vis-a-vis the identified key activities in the HDP handbook was low. The major limiting factors to the effective implementation of HDP activities were: lack of motivation by and high workload on HDP candidates, less value for HDP certificate, less attention and unsatisfactory follow-up by the concerned bodies (like deans and top management) to HDP, and inadequate and/or late release of HDP budget. Statistically significant mean differences were observed among the institutions with respect to the effective implementation of the identified key activities of HDP.

The findings were congruent with other findings of other authors such as by Zelalem (2017), Demewoz (2016), Adula (2008), and Bekalu (2009). All indicated that HDP was not properly implemented as per the HDP guideline. They also highlighted that the HDP handbook

was not to the standard or not crafted in line with the disciplinary backgrounds of the trainees. Yet, none of them contented that the program was unimportant.

4.2. Recommendations

The relevance and implication of the present study to practitioners, researchers and policy makers is that though HDP is crucial for the professionalization of teachers, it seems that it has not been implemented as seriously as was expected. The implication is that the problems related to the pedagogical competencies of the teacher educators will remain unsolved although its severity has been emphasized in ESDP V (MoE, 2015). Thus, revision of the training manual, regular follow-ups, incentivization of the HDLs, HDCs and HDPCs are the top priority areas that need due attention.

Generally, HDP is invaluable in arming teacher educators with the required pedagogical skills and knowledge. However, according to this study, there have been a number of factors that impede its effective implementation. The key problems identified were lack of motivation by HDCs, HDLs, and HDTs and their inability to facilitate HDPCs training as per the guideline, the inappropriateness of the HDP handbook, lack of follow-up by the concerned bodies like college deans, HDCs, HDLs, and HDTs. Moreover, less importance or credit was given to the HDP certificate because there was no any incentive given to the candidates after the completion of the training. That is, the certificate has made no increment in salary or in status promotion. Besides, HDPCs had a high workload burden, for instance. To make HDP more effective, the above mentioned challenges should be mitigated.

Thus, it is suggested that the HDP handbook has to be rather contextualized in such a way that HDPCs from different backgrounds (disciplines) will make use of it.

Separate HDP handbook for teacher educators (who will join HDP) and non-teacher educators (who will join PGDHET) should be prepared. It is also suggested that the HDP handbook should be designed in line with the modular approach of course delivery.

For better performance in HDP training and somooth running of the classroom teaching-learning process, workload of the HDPCs should be set to optimum level.

Moreover, the HDCs, HDLs and HDTs should be motivated by designing commensurate incentive packages. The deans and top management bodies of the HLIs should discuss with MoSHE and pay appropriate compensations. Furthermore, the prevalent variation in the rate of incentive packages among the HDP-running institutions seems unjust. Thus, similar jobs or positions should be incentivized similarly.

Besides, HDP certification should be linked to career development and incentives so that HDPCs will be encouraged to attend the training. In this regard, academic deans or vice presidents in consultation with the MoSHE can suggest solutions for this issue.

Finally, adequate and timely allocation and release of HDP budget is crucial to the execution of HDP activities as per the schedule. Failure to do so may lead to an adverse or malfunctioning of the HDP for it becomes an additional bottleneck to the practices of HDP. It is

also advised that HDP is subsidized from the internal revenues which in the future may serve as an exit strategy when external funds cease.

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