



The Effectiveness of a Continuing Professional Development Programme Using Direct Modality for Principals: A Process and Result Evaluation

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ABSTRACT

School Principals' competencies could be improved through continuous professional development (CPD) programme. Such a programme for principals in Indonesia has been implemented through direct modality since 2014. However, the implementation of this programme has lacked evaluation. This research aims to (1) assess the supporting and inhibiting aspects that contribute to the programme's success, and (2) measure the effectiveness of CPD in improving the school principals' competencies. This research was a survey involving 46 school principals in three Districts of Central Java, Indonesia. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed in this research. Questionnaires and interviews were used to collect data, which were analysed using a descriptive quantitative method supported by data source triangulation. The research shows that (1) the training process has been implemented with appropriate components, including assessment, learning materials, and delivery modes. Nevertheless, training facilities, infrastructure, and locations are less than conducive to learning, and (2) CPD does not fully contribute to improving principals' competencies, human resource management, and quality of instruction.

Keywords: Competencies, evaluation, principals, professional development

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received: 01 December 2016

Accepted: 23 August 2017

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INTRODUCTION

School principals are teachers assigned to the additional task of leading a school. As leaders, principals have an important role in their schools' development. Principals should conduct their duties with full mandate and be responsible for the quality of their schools' performance (Sahenk, 2010). This

means that school principals have a major role in achieving the established quality standards (Luddin, 2013).

Under principals' leadership, schools are expected to reach, or even exceed, the national standards of education as indicators of school's quality. In achieving these quality standards, schools must have qualified human resources, and particularly, professional principals. As such, school principals' competencies must continuously be improved through a continuous professional development programme (Luddin, 2013). This is in accordance with Ministerial Regulation No. 28 of 2010, which explains that all school principals must undertake a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) formulated for them.

CPD for Principals with Direct Modality

CPD for principals is widely acknowledged to be important for the pursuit of improvement in teaching and learning (Hargreaves, 1994; Harland & Kinder, 1997). In research literature, the relationship between the development of principals and schools is well established (Day, 1999). Though there are many interpretations of CPD, at its core is nothing other than reflection activities of professional learning. As Day (1999) suggests, CPD encompasses all natural learning experiences and those conscious and planned activities that are intended to be of direct or indirect benefit on both individual and group bases. Previous research projects have asserted that the quality of professional interaction, staff

development, and relentless pursuit of teaching and learning improvement are the key characteristics of school effectiveness (Gray, 2000; Harris, 2002; Maden & Hillman, 1996). In addition, the research has acknowledged the importance of principals' engagement in continuous development that meets their own personal and professional needs.

CPD for Principals is one of the four principles in the Professional Development for Education Personnel Programme (ProDEP) – an education partnership between the Government of Indonesia and the Government of Australia (Australia's Education Partnership with Indonesia). The Workforce Development Centre, as the coordinator appointed by the Human Resources Development Agency of Education and Culture — Education Quality Assurance (Ministry of Education and Culture)—the secretary of the ProDEP programme—has worked in collaboration with the Australian government to encourage the implementation of CPD for principals. This programme has taken the form of personal development through training using Main Learning Materials (MLM). In ProDEP, CPD for Principals has been implemented through three types of modalities: direct modality, working group modality, and online modality. Of the three modes, CPD with direct modality has been widely implemented in Indonesia. Therefore, this study has focused on its implementation.

The Technical Guidelines for CPD for Principals using Direct Modality

(Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan: 2015) state that the CPD programme is a learning activity for school principals that is realised through direct guidance by the principals' superiors. These superintendents mentor their subordinates, in this case the principals, through synchronous guidance throughout the training period. CPD for principals is organised by the Institute for Education Quality Assurance (LPMP) for the principals in the basic education level, i.e. elementary and junior high schools. The activity begins with the assessment of the performance of the principals by the supervisor. From the results of the performance evaluation, an analysis is conducted to determine the priority of needs through negotiations between the principals with the school superintendent. In this way, the priority of Main Learning Materials agreed to be given in one semester. An analysis of the learning materials needed by every school principal is done to determine their needs for basic training through an *in-on-in* pattern. This involves principals, school supervisors, and trainers. In the *In-1* activity, the principals play the role of participants, school superintendents as companions, and trainers as facilitators. In the *On* (OJL) activity, principals act as mentees, superintendents act as mentors, and lecturers conduct monitoring and evaluation. In the *In-2* activity, principals play the role of participants, the school supervisors play the role of assessors, and the trainers play the role of assessors (verifiers).

Evaluating CPD for Principals with Direct Modality

Particular school principals need professional development (Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001). This is to ensure a positive impact at the school and classroom level (Hopkins & Harris, 2001). A lack of staff development opportunities, poorly conceptualised programmes, insensitivity to the concerns of individual participants, and irrelevance to school conditions seem to be evidence that the programme has had little impact on teachers' or their pupils' performance (Day, 1999). It is important, therefore, that any evaluation of CPD measures the gap between the objectives of the programme and its outcome.

A wide variety of methods can be used to evaluate the CPD programme. However, combined quantitative and qualitative measures will produce more holistic results (Creswell, 2003). A specific method of evaluation is required to measure each variety of programme, especially when CPD programmes are complex and multifaceted (Schwartz, Lichon, James, Melniz, & Olson, 1977). Evaluation of CPD usually serves two main purposes: summative and formative. These two goals can best be served by collecting data in different ways; for example, test scores are often used for summative assessment, while interview and survey data can be used for formative evaluation (Scannell, 1996). The subsequent step is data validation. To minimise bias, data must be collected from a variety of stakeholders, rather than just one group. In

addition, using a variety of research methods ensures a greater degree of validity (Smith, 2002).

For evaluation of CPD to be most effective, feedback on evaluation should be provided to participants where possible (Schwartz et al., 1977). Providing continuous feedback that is useful to programme developers is also one way of reducing the ‘excessive evaluation anxiety’ that is often found to be a problem in many evaluations. Such a problem is characterised by conflict with evaluators, refusal to cooperate, stalling and resistance, and trying to hide weaknesses of the programme. Evaluation anxiety often comes up as a result of negative past experiences with evaluation, high personal stakes in programme innovation, and fear of negative consequences—especially when evaluation is conducted by external parties or senior management.

Based on description of the execution of CPD for principals with direct modality, principals’ activities are designed to be ideal programmes because they are conducted in several stages and oriented towards sustainability. This design is recommended by studies by Desimone (2009); Garet et al. (2001); Hunzicker (2011); Lieberman and Pointer Mace (2010); as well as Penuel, Fishman, Yamaguchi and Gallagher (2007), all of which have stated that educators’ professional development is effective when its implementation is continuous and long-term. This implies that professional development in teaching and learning

should be done gradually, from level to level. Additionally, other researchers have made another important recommendation: that effective professional development programmes be long-term and assessed for the purpose of programme redesigning. In fact, based on the research conducted by Visser, Coenders, Pieters and Terlouw (2013), the evaluation of professional development programmes in education has been found as a major benefit, in the sense that educators’ competencies are updated. This requires a study intended to evaluate the process and outcomes of CPD for principals utilising direct modality. The evaluation model that is relevant for that purpose is the Formative and Summative Evaluation Model.

The terms “formative” and “summative” need not be complicated. However, in the past few years, their definitions have become confusing. This is especially true for formative assessment. In a balanced assessment system, both summative and formative assessments are integral to information gathering.

This research focused on evaluating the process of the CPD program for principals utilising direct modality. This evaluation will show how much the programme has improved principals’ performance.

METHODS

This research was a case study which was conducted through a survey by involving 46 out of 79 basic and junior high school

principals from three districts in Central Java, Indonesia. They are Districts of Sragen (SRG), Sukoharjo (SKH), and Purworejo (PWJ). The research employed purposive random sampling where the samples were assigned under two criteria. First, the participants were the school principals from the basic education schools with the minimum accreditation scores of B (Good). Secondly, all of the participants should have experienced the CPD programme for principals with direct modality that has been conducted consecutively since 2014. The data were collected by means of questionnaire and interview. The questionnaire was used to collect the quantitative data, while the interview was for and qualitative data. Prior to the employment of the instrument, the questionnaire was measured in terms of validity and reliability. Evidently, the construct validity showed that all 20 items of the questionnaire were usable to collect the quantitative data with the probability value of 0.904 under Cornbach's Alpha. Beside the questionnaire, interview was also conducted among 10 out of 46 participants to collect the qualitative data.

The data were then analysed descriptively upon the quantitative and

qualitative measures. Percentage was used to measure the results of the main quantitative data. Additionally, the conclusion drawn from interview was used qualitatively to support the validity of the research findings of both the process and the output of CPD programme.

RESULTS

The results of this research focus on the two aspects of evaluation. They are the evaluations on the process and output of CPD programme of school principals.

Evaluation on the Process CPD Programme

On the questionnaire, the participants were asked to choose a number from one to five to best describe their experiences with the CPD programme that they had joined. To evaluate the process of the CPD programme, the participants were asked to respond to the questionnaire consisting of 8 (eight) items. The questionnaire was constructed using the Likert scale, where each responded item was scored in the range of 1-5. Scale 1 reflects the lowest value and 5 for the highest. A full description of the responded questionnaire items is given in the following table.

Table 1

List of claims and average responses of the principals to the CPD process

The effectiveness of components in the process of CPD program	\bar{X}
The training location in service learning (In-1)	2,5
Facilities and infrastructure required	2,8
Quality of the Main Learning Materials	4,0
Delivery of content in the Main Learning Materials	4,0
Use of time in learning	2,8
Methods used in the study	4,0
Assessment used in the training	4,0
Learning activities	3,3
Mentoring by supervisor	2,9

From the data above, claims with high averages are as follows: effectiveness of the learning material used in the training (4.0), effectiveness of the learning delivery (4.0), the method used in the training (4.0), effectiveness of the learning assessment (4.0), and effectiveness of learning activities (3.3). Meanwhile, the average scores were found for effectiveness of the training place in service learning (In-1) (2.5), effectiveness of the facilities and infrastructure required (2.8), effectiveness of the use of time in learning (2.8), and effectiveness of mentoring by supervisor (2.9). In general, the advantages of process conducted to run the CPD programme were found in the learning material, delivery system, method, and assessment of the training process. On

the other hand, location, facilities, time allotment, and learning activities during the training process need special caution for improvement.

Evaluation on the Output of CPD Programme

The principals surveyed selected five of the seven listed activities that, in their view, should be ensured for their professional development. They judged the effectiveness of these activities on a scale ranging from 1 to 5, as follows: 5 (very effective), 4 (effective), 3 (rather effective), 2 (ineffective) and 1 (very ineffective). Although some responses had a value of 5, the averages were generally between 3 and 4. These seven factors are described in Table 2 below:

Table 2

List of claims and average responses of principals to the output of CPD program

The effectiveness of components in the output of CPD program	\bar{X}
Improvement to manage the teachers in his school	2,5
Improvement to manage the administrator in his school	3,5
Development of school curriculum	4,2
Creating school development planning	4,4
Fund raising to achieve its goals in the education unit	4,0
Improving the quality of teaching and learning	2,8
Improvement of counselling activities in schools	3,6

Three activities are considered effective in principals' professional development. Among them are the creation of school development planning (4.4), developing the school curriculum (4.2), and finally the funds obtained to achieve the goals of education improvement. While the CPD programme for School principals is considered effective in managing the administrator in the school (3.5), and improvement of counselling activities in schools, it turns that CPD programme is not effective in improving the management of teachers in the school (2.5), and improving the quality of teaching and learning (2.8). In conclusion, creating the school development, curriculum development, and funding the school mission become important output of the CPD programme. Meanwhile, improving the system to manage teachers' performance as to improve their instruction needs crucial attention in the CPD programme.

DISCUSSION

The evaluation of the process and output of the CPD programme of school principals can be developed in the following discussion.

Evaluation on the process CPD Programme

As indicated in the results that CPD programme is very effective in the aspects of learning material used in the training (4.0), effectiveness of the learning delivery (4.0), method used in the training (4.0), and effectiveness of the learning assessment (4.0).

In terms of effectiveness of learning materials and delivery, CPD programme has been running since 2014. It means that within three years, the curriculum has been reviewed and experienced several modifications in such a way that it fulfils the needs of school principals in the respected areas. The instructors, furthermore, were selected from among the senior school principals and university lecturers. Additionally, these instructors fulfil the minimum requirement of training in the national level. Such a training is conducted in the Training Centre of School Principals under the Ministry of Education and Culture. Hence, the instructors are quite familiar with the sequences of the syllabi prepared for the presentation in the

implementation of the CPD programme of school principals.

This fact is also supported by the statement of participant who commented,

“I appreciate the main learning material used in this direct mode of CPD program is good because it is arranged in such a good sequence that each chapter reflects the actions that we should do to refresh and accordingly improve my school performance (principal of District SKH).

More interestingly, other participant said,

“...the learning material is presented in a very nice way. The use an advance organizer, for instance, really makes me impressed on the main ideas of the learning materials. Firstly, I could not figure out what it means when the instructor said ‘advance organizer’. Then...I realize that what the instructor is telling is not in the module but it is previewed through graphics and summary. Yet, I easily make the assignment well done in the activity of “In1 – On – In2”. Oh...great...and fun as well. Almost 90% of us could finish the learning assignment” (principal of District PWJ).

However, some other principals argued that there were some components with low average. These include: (1) the effectiveness

of facilities and infrastructures, (2) the effectiveness of the training place in service learning, (3) the effectiveness of use of time in learning, and (4) the mentoring by supervisors. These were all indicated by the facts that CPD participants did not like the training location. A big number of the school principals (85%) commented that,

“the location of the In service learning (In-1) of CPD was not appropriate. As stated by some of the participantsThat is true the training takes place in newly established school building...but I sometimes cannot withstand with the smell from the cattle... I feel disturbed particularly when we are doing the assignment seriously...” (principal from District PWJ).

Some other participants also complained about the learning facilities, including libraries and other sources of learning. Electricity and Wi-Fi connection were insufficient for the online modality of learning used. Some participants (60%) even complained about the facilities. For instance, the lack of electricity has caused serious problems during the learning activities. Nonetheless, other learning facilities such as classroom furniture are fully provided. However, internet connection is very bad since the electrical current is on and off so instructional presentation is frequently not running well. Not to mention the frequent Wi-Fi disconnection while browsing for additional learning material, which is the

worst during the learning process. As stated by a participant,

“...I often get frustrated in getting the assignment done due to the black out in the time when everyone is busy with browsing, and the class suddenly burst into messy crowd... (principal from District SRG).

The limited electrical power caused frustration among the participants not only during the time when they were browsing for additional material, but also when they were trying to download the worksheet for urgent completion of final assessment as well as assignment. One participant grumbles,

“...how can I finish the assignment on time? Downloading the worksheet is impossible.... I wish the training programme provide printed example to make the assessment work ...” (principal from District PWJ).

Several participants also commented on the learning time allotted, i.e. CPD was conducted in a limited time but the participants had to complete the assigned workload. This limited time burdened not only the participants, but also the supervisors in mentoring the CPD activities. One said,

“....What makes me tensed is the time. I cannot break even a

minute just to refresh. So much of the time is used for lecturing and brainstorming that we suddenly realise we do not have enough time to accomplish the final assessment. I believe I could better on condition that I have longer time...” (principal from District SRG).

Another participant said,

“...learning activities are running quite well along the schedule. The learning materials are delivered in accordance with the time allotment. I am happy to have finished with the exercises in the module prior to training. Time for learning is so short. I notice some do not have enough break time even for revising the assignment to submit....” (principal from District SRG).

No one is believed to be able to work successfully beyond the overloaded burden (Bubb & Earley, 2007).

Evaluation on the Output of CPD Programme

Prior to the training in CPD programme, every participant was required to prepare a lesson plan as part of the curriculum applied to their respective schools. The researchers found most of them (85%) prepared good lesson plans, and also showed a better performance in putting the lesson plans into practice. They even showed the most

sophisticated media of learning during the practice. One of the participants commented that,

“the instructors were impressed with the media we prepared. The instructors also agreed with the lesson we prepared because it was already aligned with the policy of curriculum and syllabi that is nationally applied to schools” (Principal of District PWJ).

However, there were some other participants (15%) who had prepared the lesson plan poorly. These participants did not fully grasp the curriculum development in their schools. The reason is that the principals trust their vice principal too much with the curriculum development. It is evident that the two activities considered least successful by the principals are improving teacher management in school and improving the quality of teaching and learning. Nonetheless, such principals learn almost nothing from the training activities. One principal said

“...it seems that CPD programme, to some extent, had tried to give some guidance on how these principals learn better, but such principals remain unable to make changes on the improvement of teaching and learning in the very short time of CPD programme” (Principal of District SKH).

Another school principal also commented that,

“in general, managing the teachers to improve their instructional performance is not too difficult. The problem, however, is because each of the teachers has very different subject matter that is not trained in the CPD programme. The CPD programme mostly provides training to manage teachers in Science, Mathematics, and language. So, managing teachers of skills or counselling is not as easy as managing teachers of other subject matters. None of the school principals masters specific subject matter” (principal from District PWJ).

This means that, in spite of the fact that the CPD programme is well organized and implemented in the appropriate procedure in managing teachers' performance, the quality improvement of teaching and learning depends much on the participants themselves (Bubb & Earley, 2007).

In general, it implies that the effectiveness of CPD implementation, as judged by the principals, varies. Data showed that CPD has the least impact on principals' competencies in managing the teachers in their schools. In other words, the CPD programme needs to be modified so as to improve the principals' competencies in making teachers perform better, with greater responsibility and accountability.

The second dissatisfying effect of CPD is the principals' limited competence in improving teachers' instructional performance in their classrooms. The limitation of the school principals in guiding the teachers in their respective school causes the problems in guiding teachers with specific subject matter which is beyond the principal' knowledge. The school principal can go deeply on the technical aspects of instruction when he does not have the qualification nor knowledge of the respective subject matter. It implies that guiding the teachers on the improvement of teaching skill is limited to the general theory of learning and instruction. In short, during the CPD training, discussion on the general principles of teaching and students learning is much fruitful for the school principals.

CONCLUSION

It can be stated that the principal training, through the CPD programme, has been implemented effectively, except for the issues pertaining to the location of the training and its infrastructure.

1. The implementation process of the CPD program went well in some aspects such as learning material and sophisticated media applied to the presentation through professional instruction. The problems seem to be more technical such as the limited facilities and comfort of the programme location.
2. However, the findings revealed that most principals did not consider the output of the CPD program as effective. The output of the training gives a little

relevance to the condition of their school and has not improved the quality of the learning process at the school. This is related to the complex situation faced in the field when managing educators, particularly when comparing it to other components of the education unit.

Hence, it is recommended that the implementation of the CPD programme for school principals using direct mode should be done in the respective areas with more appropriate environment and facilities. Along with the development of communication technology and easy access to information, the CPD programme can be implemented using a combined system of direct and online modes.

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