

CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
FOR PRINCIPALS IN LIGHT OF THE 21ST CENTURY
MANAGEMENT IN SELECTED HIGH SCHOOLS
IN ACEH, INDONESIA

BY

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ABSTRACT

Effective management of continuous professional development (CPD) for school principals is more critical than ever. The focus of this study was to examine the management of CPD programmes for school principals in the 21st century. In general, this study explored the practices and experiences of high school principals, senior teachers, and the officers of the Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC) in Aceh, Indonesia, with regards to their contribution in advancing professional development activities at the school level. A total of 15 informants were purposively selected, comprising of six school principals, six senior teachers, and three MoEC officers. Methodologically, face-to-face interviews were conducted to deeply explore the informants' feelings and views. The findings revealed several emerging themes related to theories and previous studies. Primarily, the informants perceived the concept of 21st century's CPD programs as a trust (*amanah*), professional competence, continuous professional training, lifelong learning, a community of practice, and strategic planning. They viewed the underlying characteristics of effective 21st century's CPD programs to be research-based and result-oriented, align with the current trends, and have significant changes in the form of systematic planning, have practical and interesting methods, and clear targets. The 21st century's CPD programs are beneficial in terms of attitude changes, gaining new knowledge, improving a good relationship, improving self-confidence, and promoting best practices. The findings showed that the informants mainly managed the 21st century's CPD programs through motivation and supervision, collaboration, knowledge sharing, and promoting local values. Among the challenges faced by the informants in managing the 21st century's CPD programs were people's resistance to change, technicality and workload, almost zero follow-ups, unprofessional recruitment, and unclear training syllabus. To effectively manage the 21st century's CPD programs, the informants suggested doing personal approach, professional development skills, professional recruitment system, continuous training programs, and optimizing school organizations. The main contribution of the present study to the existing body of knowledge is the 21st Century AMANAH Continuous Professional Development model, developed based on the study's findings. Finally, this study presented several implications, suggestions, and recommendations for future research.

ملخص البحث

الإدارة الفعّالة التطوير المهني المستمر (CPD) لمديري المدارس أكثر أهمية مقارنةً بالأوقات الماضية. يتمّ التركيز في هذه الدراسة على دراسة إدارة البرامج CPD لمديري المدارس في القرن الحادي والعشرين. استكشفت الدراسة بالشكل العام إختيارات وتجارب مديري المدارس الثانوية وكبار المعلمين ومسؤولي وزارة التعليم والثقافة (MoEC) في آتشيه بإندونيسيا، فيما يتعلق بمساهماتهم في تطوير أنشطة التطوير المهني في مستوى المدرسة. تم اختيار 15 مخبرا عمدا، بما في ذلك ستة مديري المدارس، وستة كبار المعلمين، وثلاثة مسؤولي MoEC. من الناحية المنهجية، أجريت المقابلات وجهاً لوجه لاستكشاف شعور المخبرين وآرائهم عميقا. فقد كشفت النتائج العديد من الموضوعات الناشئة والمتعلقة بالنظريات والدراسات السابقة. في المقام الأول، يفهم المخبرون مفهوم البرامج CPD للقرن الحادي والعشرين باعتبارها أمانةً، والكفاءة المهنية، والتدريب المهني المستمر، والتعلم مدى الحياة، ومجتمع الممارسة، والتخطيط الاستراتيجي. فهُم يرون أن الخصائص الأساسية لفعّالية البرامج CPD للقرن الحادي والعشرين تعتمد على البحث وتحقيق النتائج، فهي تتماشى مع الاتجاهات الحالية، ولها تغيرات هامة في شكل التخطيط المنهجي، ولها طرق تطبيقية ومثيرة للاهتمام وأهداف واضحة. البرامج CPD للقرن الحادي والعشرين لها فائدة في تغيير السلوك، وحصول المعرفة الجديدة، وتحسين العلاقة الجيدة، وتحسين الثقة بالنفس، وترقية أفضل الإختيارات. فقد أظهرت النتائج أن المخبرين يديرون البرامج CPD للقرن الحادي والعشرين بشكل أساسي من خلال التحفيز والإشراف والتعاون وتبادل المعرفة وترقية القيم المحلية. من بين التحديات التي واجهها المخبرون في إدارة البرامج CPD للقرن الحادي والعشرين هي مقاومة الناس للتغيير والتقنية وعبء العمل، واللاتعليق، والتوظيف غير المحترف، والمناهج التدريبية غير الواضحة. من أجل إدارة البرامج CDP للقرن الحادي والعشرين بفعّالية، اقترح المخبرون القيام بالمقاربة الشخصية ومهارات التطوير المهني ونظام التوظيف المحترف وبرامج التدريب المستمر وتحسين المنظمات المدرسية. المساهمة الرئيسية لهذه الدراسة في هيكل المعرفة هي نموذج AMANAH التطوير المهني المستمر للقرن الحادي والعشرين قد تمّ تطويره استناداً إلى نتائج الدراسة. وفي النهاية قدّمت هذه الدراسة العديد من النتائج والاقتراحات والتوصيات للبحوث القادمة.

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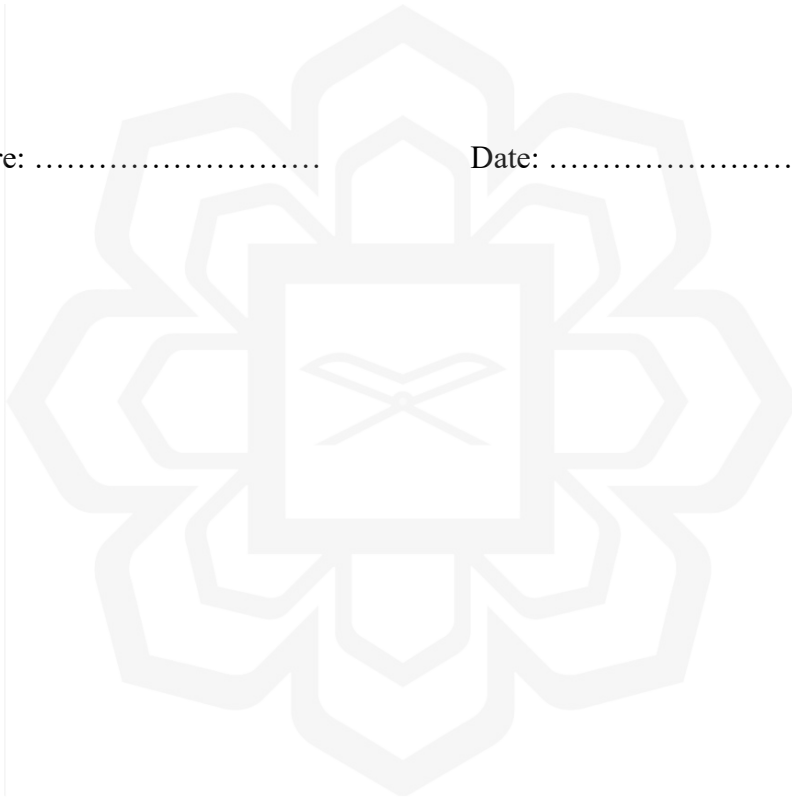
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DECLARATION

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*To my beloved parents, **Ansari Nurdin** (Alm) and **Fauziah Sulaiman***

I love you and miss you both beyond words

To my siblings and all family members

Who always encourage me to fly toward my dreams

*To my dearest wife, **Sri Mazlisa Binti Mohd Salleh***

*To my treasured son, **Uwais Al-Fatih Bin Ahmad Faizuddin***

Who have been affected in every way possible by this quest

My love for both of you can never be quantified

May Allah SWT bless you all forever and ever

I dedicate this little research

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces an overall context for the present study on continuous professional development (CPD) for principals in light of the 21st century management in selected high schools in Aceh, Indonesia. The chapter presents a brief background of the study, statement of the problem, research objectives, and research questions. It also highlights the significance of the study, delimitations of the study, and definitions of terms. Chapter one ends with a review of organization of the study and summary of the chapter.

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1.1 School Leadership Challenges in the 21st Century

The 21st century school principal is facing expanding responsibilities and highly complex roles (Beatty, 2015; Heffernan, 2018). As the highest authority in the school, a principal is expected to identify issues and challenges of school daily works and manage certain functions to accomplish goals, obtain effective achievement, and utilize human efforts and physical resources (Brubaker & Williams, 2010; Rousmaniere, 2013). Hence, it is argued that principalship is one of a little understood profession in organizational and social contexts.

One of the external mandates of the instructional leader and mediating agent is to strengthen continuous professional development (CPD) for the school community (Louis & Robinson, 2012). CPD has progressively become an important issue as the roles of school principals coupled with reform initiatives and accountability measures. The readiness of principals – especially in the secondary education level, is greatly challenged by the social and cultural movements as they relate to the construction and

improvement of the school education. In this knowledge society era, it is imperative for the current school leaders to “inspire leadership aspirations in others” (Anderson & Cawsey, 2008, p. v).

More importantly, the standardization and commercialization of education with one size fits all agenda affect not only the principals and the organization of schools, but also teachers, students, parents, administrators and policymakers. Responding to the expanding responsibilities of the school principals, Kouzes and Posner (2011) stated that leadership is everyone’s business. They proposed five practices of exemplary leadership: model the way as guiding principles, inspire a shared vision to others, challenge the process of learning from failures, enable others to act with competence, and encourage the heart of others to do their best.

To provide sufficient remediation from the problems, a school principal should have at least three important foundations. They are knowledge, skills and attitude (Lorriman, 2006). The three of them are distinct entities but interconnected. Knowledge is linked to academic ability either formally (e.g. school, university or a course) or informally (e.g. daily experiences). In addition, appropriate knowledge will produce a set of skills, which indicates principals’ competencies. Finally, both knowledge and skills can be appropriately managed by applying positive attitudes. Nonetheless, not all 21st century school leaders have all the above-mentioned potentials.

Based on the above emerging challenges and competencies, CPD for specifically the school leadership-training program has become an interesting issue to discuss among many researchers and policy makers. It is considered as an important aspect in finding an appropriate approach to teach school principals thus achieve school effectiveness. Previous studies indicated that the school leadership programs

could not meet the actual demands in managing effective school leadership (Leithwood et al., 2020; Sumintono, 2017). Other studies argued that the trainings had enhanced principals' knowledge, increased their competency, and nurtured finest values as school leaders (Fullan, 2015). In other words, it can be said that what is taught in training institute or university is irrelevant to today's school management thus school leadership effectiveness remains a critical issue.

On the other hand, the nature of CPD practices might be different from one school principal to another. CPD itself is a complex and developing concept. As yet no generally accepted standards on how CPD should be done or measured, the practices of quality improvement may include structured activities like formal educational courses or unstructured activities such as informal reading and discussions at social gatherings. For that reason, CPD activities are hardly ever reported and its expenditure is barely unknown in government education policies and plans (Sumintono et al., 2015). In the last few years, universities and higher education have contributed into CPD research and published a vast array of economic, management and social studies journals. Unfortunately, the reports and findings remain in the specialized or archived journals without much support from the research councils or government policy makers. Arguably, CPD is a critical component for the quality of our society. Hence, it must be carefully examined in order to be more widely recognized and well understood by the key players or stakeholders.

1.1.2 The Significance of Continuous Professional Development Programs

Managing continuous professional development (CPD) programs are significant in any kinds of organizations including the educational institutions. Overall, the range of CPD activities are not well recognized by public (Cosner et al., 2018) while in fact

CPD is open to many categories. Quoting the examples of CPD activities from the UK Health Professions Council (HPC, 2011), the types of CPD activity can be categorized into work-based learning, professional activity, formal and educational activity, and self-directed learning.

Among the many examples of work-based learning are case studies, reflective practice, learning by doing, coaching, supervising, discussions with colleagues, peer review, journal club, in-service training, and project work. Professional activities may include but not limited to involvement in professional bodies, lecturing or teaching, tutoring, giving presentations at conferences, and supervising research. The examples of formal and educational activities are taking coursework, researching, attending conferences, and writing articles or paper. Self-directed learning involves activities like reading journals or articles, reviewing books, updating knowledge through the Internet or TV, and keeping a file of personal progress. Other CPD activities include public service, voluntary work, and courses. In line with all of the above examples, Parsloe and Leedham (2009) argued that mentoring and coaching are among popular CPD activities.

Some professional bodies set a more stringent criterion for CPD including a number of hours to be achieved per year. The Health Information Management Association of Australia (HIMAA), the UK General Dental Council (GDC), Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA), Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA), Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW) and Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland (ICAS) set professional credentialing scheme for their associations by looking at the average hours spent on CPD activities in the past year (Paisey et al., 2007; Tredwin et al., 2005). Considering the activities participants undertook, the most popular CPD

activities are actually informal (Friedman, 2012). Thus, given the nature of its examples, it is argued that most of CPD forms are informal activities in which they are formalized through the label of CPD (Cheetham & Chivers, 2005).

On the other hand, a few professional bodies do not have CPD policy and a few others adopt mixed policies. Professional bodies can pursue mixed policies combining both mandatory and voluntary approaches to allow more flexibility in the practice (Friedman et al., 2000). Even though sometimes it could be a bit confusing, applying different policies to different grades of practitioners is a way of easing CPD activities. Professional bodies can introduce mandatory policy for new members as a criterion to achieve a higher-level status in their professions to be Fellows or Chartered members of the profession. For former and current practitioners, they can choose either compulsory or voluntary CPD policies. Friedman (2012) believed that in the near future mixed CPD policies would replace mandatory and voluntary approaches due to the heightened criticisms of the professions in the past 10 years. Professional bodies need to encourage CPD rather than enforcing it. Therefore, CPD is more like a carrot on the stick used to maintain professional competency, and not tick-box exercise as compliance towards activities.

In addition, Brine (2005) listed possible methods of CPD depending on different ways individuals learn. They include case study, computer-assisted learning aid, demonstration, discussion, e-learning, external courses, internal courses, focus groups, job shadowing, lectures, observation, on-the-job trainings, open learning, professional reading, role play, secondments, visits and workshops (p. 28). One important thing to note is the effectiveness of these methods depends on individual preferred learning styles. Those who learn best through behavioural learning style may find practical workshops and other hands-on methods interesting enough to improve

their skills. Alternatively, those who learn best through cognitive learning style may opt to traditional lectures or role-playing to develop new skills. Sometimes, both learning styles will be employed to accommodate all people.

1.1.3 The Focus of the Current Study

Overall, the practices of CPD activities are varied from one country to another. It is greatly influenced by economic, political, and social landscapes. In Indonesia for instance, the major financial crisis in 1998 has brought dramatic shifts in economy and politic of the country. Not only it resulted in the declining of spending in education and investment in schooling but also the beginning of decentralization in education as a national policy (Sumintono et al., 2015). According to Lewin (1993), Indonesia has a strong tradition of professional development programs since 1960s and 1970s especially with the establishment of teacher training programs in colleges (*Institut Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan – IKIP*) and universities (*Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan – FKIP*) (Sumintono, 2017).

The government of Indonesia has long adopted and implemented initiatives to improve the quality of education through a holistic approach of three-week workshops in-service teacher professional development. To support professional development activities at schools, in-service professional development centers (*Pusat Pengembangan Pendidikan Guru – PPPG*) were established in 1979 located near teachers colleges. To improve the efficiency of educational systems, the PPPG centers also established regional professional development programs (*Balai Pendidikan Guru – BPG*). Since the reform initiative in 2000s, currently there are about 7000 cluster-based teacher-working groups across the country known as *Kelompok Kerja Guru* (KKG) at primary school level and *Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran* (MGMP) at

secondary school level. KKG provides in-service teacher training while MGMP supports group discussions based on teaching subjects (Heyward & Sopantini, 2013).

More specifically to the focus of this research, internal conflict for nearly 30 years (1976-2005) and tsunami disaster (2004) in one of the provinces in Indonesia – Aceh, also has a big impact on education and professional development (Shah & Cardozo, 2014). Following the signing of a peace agreement in 2005, education in post-conflict Aceh was granted a special autonomy along with the economy and Islamic religion law (*Shari'ah*). With the enactment of Aceh's Qanun (Law) on education in 2008, the educational opportunities and resources become widely open and accessible. As part of special autonomy arrangement, Aceh can retain 70 percent of revenues generated from oil and gas. Aceh provincial government is also required to spend 30 percent of its budget on education (World Bank, 2008).

However, it is argued that education as a result of peaceful drive is still relatively received a small portion within Aceh's post-conflict and post-disaster schemas. The educational agenda should focus more on training the school principals as the main figures who determine the direction, policy and success educational outcomes. Education is facing a growing leadership crisis and at the same time urgently demands for the school improvement. Educational institutions must devote their focus on leadership development especially in identifying, recruiting and selecting school leaders followed by designing appropriate training, induction and on-going development programs to create a template of best practices communities of learners and leaders of learning (Harris et al., 2016).

Hence, the focus of this study is to examine the management of CPD programs for principals in 21st century. Primarily, it explores the practices and experiences of

principals in selected secondary high schools in Aceh, Indonesia, as their contribution in advancing professional development activities at the school level.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

First of all, the current state of educational management and professional development program for principals is generally weak. Each year many graduates from university-based educational leadership programs are prepared for school leadership roles. However, the initial preparation and continuous professional development (CPD) of school principals have been criticized as failing to adequately prepare the principals for their roles as instructional leaders (Klikauer, 2017). Pounder (2011) stated that the school leadership curricula are irrelevant and unwilling to change at the necessary pace. It has low entrance and graduation standards, as well as weak faculty. The programs supposed to promote high quality leadership. Instead, it resulted in a “blurring of the lines between preparation, licensure, induction, and on-going professional development” (Pounder, 2011, p. 259). This is also true to the case of the current study in Aceh, Indonesia. Unfortunately, the researcher found limited resources discussing about this issue.

Secondly, many literatures discussed about professional development from the perspective of teachers, while the school principals’ points of views regarding this issue are still limited. In addition, a large numbers of quantitative studies have been the primary source of data about professional development (Cannon, Kitchel, & Tenuto, 2013; Drage, 2010; Giallo & Hayes, 2007; Richter et al., 2011). Some researchers have performed qualitative studies (Burrige & Carpenter, 2013; Guo & Yong, 2013; Hardy & Wagga, 2009; Petrie & McGee, 2012; Trent, 2012) and other researchers were in fact have used mixed methods studies in which they interview a

sub-sample of respondents (Holmes, Signer, & MacLeod, 2010; Phelps & Graham, 2008; Taylor et al., 2011) in order to learn more about professional development. However, few of them have used school principals as key informants in the data collection procedures.

Thirdly, while the government is continually developing educational policies and pathways to CPD, a large number of school principals are still struggling to access the professional development programs, especially in rural and remote areas. It shows that the current CPD practices are still delivered in the format of face-to-face interactions instead of collaborative approaches. In these typical models, schools are required to send the representatives to periodic meetings or forums in a distant city, which resulted in inconveniences to participate in the professional development programs. The most popular forms of professional development in Indonesia are trainings, workshops and seminars, which is normally held at schools, educational centers or hotels. Not only the existing practices bring about limited opportunities, but also create financial problems to access professional development activities.

Hence, this study is of relevance in the context of Indonesia to deepen the understanding of management of continuous professional development (CPD) programs for principals in the 21st century. Currently, the CPD programs for school principals are insufficient. Based on Researcher's personal informal interviews with some school principals in Aceh, Indonesia, it was found that not all principals received proper professional development programs. Moreover, there are some cases in which normal teachers became the school principals without any certification and let alone the necessary professional trainings. In the long run, it could affect the quality of education and impact teacher performance and student achievement. As mentioned above, most studies about CPD used teachers as the primary participants,

and limited explanation of support from the principals' perspectives existed in the literature. For that reason, as an effort to understand the above-mentioned issues, this study aimed to explore the principals' practices in managing CPD for 21st century education.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The central objective of this study is to explore the experiences of the secondary high schools' principals, senior teachers and the officers of the Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC) in managing continuous professional development (CPD) programs in the 21st century particularly in Aceh, Indonesia. In doing so, the study intended to discover the perceptions, understanding, challenges and suggestions from the informants about the management of CPD in the 21st century. Hence, the specific objectives of the study are:

1. To explore the perceptions of high school principals, senior teachers, and the officers of the Ministry of Education and Cultures (MoEC) towards the concept of the 21st century's Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programs for principals.
2. To investigate the underlying characteristics of practical 21st century's Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programs for principals as viewed by high schools' principals, senior teachers, and the officers of the Ministry of Education and Cultures (MoEC).
3. To examine to what extent the 21st century's Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programs for principals are benefitting high school principals.

4. To understand how high schools' principals, senior teachers, and the officers of the Ministry of Education and Cultures (MoEC) manage the 21st century's Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programs at the school level.
5. To discover the challenges faced by high schools' principals, senior teachers, and the officers of the Ministry of Education and Cultures (MoEC) in managing the 21st century's Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programs at schools.
6. To know the suggestions from high schools' principals, senior teachers, and the officers of the Ministry of Education and Cultures (MoEC) to practically manage the 21st century Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programs.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In line with the objectives of the study, the central research question of this study is: "What are the secondary high schools' principals, senior teachers and the officers of the Ministry of Education's perceptions, understandings, challenges and suggestions about the management of continuous professional development (CPD) programs in the 21st century?" To address this central research question, this study seeks to answer the following sub research questions:

1. How do high schools' principals, senior teachers, and the officers of the Ministry of Education and Cultures (MoEC) perceive the concept of the 21st century's Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programs for principals?
2. What are the underlying characteristics of practical 21st century's Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programs for principals as viewed by high