

Problems Faced by Participants Online Continuing Professional Development for Principals and Strategies to Solve

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Abstract: One of the education and training programs for principals held by the Indonesian government is online mode professional development (CPD). Learning activities in this program are carried out with blended learning, namely, face to face and online or using internet-based computer technology. The purpose of this study is to study the difficulties experienced by principals in discussions on online CPD programs and strategies that are done to overcome them. The study used a mixed quantitative-qualitative method with principals in Central Java Province who had been online CPD participants since 2015. There were 69 heads of elementary and junior high schools from Sukoharjo, Wonogiri, Sragen, Magelang, and Purworejo districts who benefited. Quantitative data obtained through questionnaires, while qualitative data through in-depth interviews. The results showed that problems related to the implementation of online PKB for principals in Indonesia were too much workload to [school nutmeg, too many tasks and bills, limited or unavailability of internet access in schools in rural areas and cheap to use participant information technology. It involves the recruitment of principals as CPD online participants based on the supervisor's assessment without an assessment of the results of the principal/teacher's competence and school self-evaluation. To overcome the problems in the online CPD implementation, participants conducted several strategies to overcome them, namely involving school administration staff and teachers in the implementation of tasks carried out by the principal as an education participant. The same solution is also used by schools to overcome the problem of limited internet access, limited competence in using the internet and computers.

Keywords: *difficulties, coping strategies, online CPD*

INTRODUCTION

The principal is the teacher who is given an additional task to lead the school. That is, the principal is a functional teacher who is given the task of leading a school (Yuliana, Rahman, & Djasmi, 2013: 236). As leaders, principals have an important role in school development. The principal must truly carry out his duties responsibly because the achievement of school quality cannot be separated from the success of the principal in leading his school (Sahenk, 2010: 4300). Therefore, according to Luddin (2013: 220) principals in Indonesia have a big role in achieving the established quality standards. For the principal and function of the principal to be carried out properly, all dimensions of competency must always be improved and the improvement of the competence of the principal can be obtained through the Continuing Professional Development or CPD program (Luddin, 2013: 221). This is following Minister of National Education Regulation number 28 of 2010 which explains that principals must carry out continuous and needs-based professional development called CPD for school principals.

CPD for principals is an activity that leads to all formal and informal learning to improve school principals to carry out their main tasks and functions (Bubb & Earley, 2007). Therefore, the focus of the principal's CPD covers the individual needs of principals, schools, local,

regional and national CPD implemented after the Professional Development Need Analysis (PDNA) which apply to prospective school principals and principals.

The goal of CPD for principals is to improve the knowledge, attitudes, skills and professional performance of school principals to improve the quality of learning of their students (Ministry of National Education, 2010: 11-12). Specifically the aim is to improve the following matters: (1) the competency of the principal since being appointed as the principal until the end of the term of office, (2) the performance of the principal which leads to increasing overall school performance, (3) leadership of the principal empowerment of school resources, (3) leadership of principals in quality learning, (4) managerial leadership of principals in achieving quality school management, (5) leadership of principals in implementing academic supervision of teachers, (6) head entrepreneurship leadership school in terms of work ethic and entrepreneurship spirit, and (6) the ability of school principals in school development through school self-evaluation.

Since 2014, CPD for principals has been implemented by the Indonesian government. The program aims to improve the knowledge, skills and professional attitudes of principals (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2015b: 76). In addition, as a planned and purposeful program, CPD is based on several principles which include (1) planned, (2) sustainable, (3) systemic, (4) focus on students and learning, (5) focus on individual and school change, (6) based on school vision, and (7) attached to daily activities (Ministry of National Education, 2010). Thus, these activities are carried out in stages, gradually and continuously to improve school management and leadership. The activities of the education and training program for school principals are carried out through three types of modalities, namely direct mode, modes of Working Group and online or online Deliberation Working Group (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2015c: 2).

Online CPD for principals is a continuous professional development carried out by school principals through internet media (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2015d: 1). Thus, in contrast to the previous 2 (two) modes, namely learning is done face to face, online mode learning is done through internet access. If the material module in the direct mode and working group is in the form of printed material, modules in the online mode are delivered in a soft-file format that must be downloaded from the CPD online page. The implementation procedures include ICT Literacy activities (Teknologi Informasi and Komunikasi) - Online learning - Review - Evaluation.

Regarding the implementation of the principal's CPD, so far there are not many parties who have reviewed the program. The researcher only found one evaluation study conducted by Mustikasari (2014), but only on the implementation of the direct mode CPD program. Thus, evaluative research on the implementation of online CPD heads for schools has not been conducted. Even though the information from the evaluation results is certainly useful to overcome the problems that arise in the implementation of the program in the field. Even considering online CPD is planned to be implemented more widely than the other two modes, a study of the obstacles and difficulties experienced by participants is very important to do. The results of the study serve as input to perfecting the online CPD program for school heads. The purpose of this study was to identify the problems faced by participants during learning in the online CPD program for principals and strategies to overcome them.

METHOD

This research was conducted with a case study approach, namely intensive study of a person, group of people or unit, which aims to generalize several units (Yin, 2003). Case studies are

described as intensive and systematic investigations of an individual, group, community or another unit where researchers examine in-depth data relating to a variable or problem (Stake, 2006). The focus of this research study is the problems or difficulties experienced by principals during the learning process in CPD online for principals.

As stated in the CPD Program Technical Guide for principals, in the first period (starting in 2015) the participants were the heads of primary and secondary schools in 250 districts/cities (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2015e: 8). The districts are spread in four provinces, namely: Central Java, West Java, East Kalimantan, and North Sulawesi. As for Central Java, 7 regions got quota for participating in online CPD for online principals, namely Sukoharjo Regency, Sragen Regency, Wonogiri Regency, Magelang Regency, Magelang City, Purworejo Regency, and Purbalingga Regency. The total participants were 105 principals. The researcher sent a questionnaire to all the participants, but the ones who returned the questionnaire were 69 school principals. Thus, the participants of this study were 69 junior high school principals and elementary schools in Central Java.

Data collection used is a questionnaire (questionnaire) and interviews. The questionnaire developed included four components with 15 items. 69 school principals responded and returned the questionnaire. Interviews were conducted after data from the questionnaire were obtained. Interviews were conducted for all participants who returned stationary. The technique is carried out to explore information about obstacles, causes, and methods taken to overcome the problems faced by principals during the online PKB mode program.

The data analysis technique used in this study is quantitative and qualitative descriptive analysis, namely by describing and interpreting data from each component studied both quantitative and qualitative data. Data from questionnaire instruments were analyzed in a quantitative way and data from interview results will be analyzed qualitatively.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research data presented was obtained from questionnaires and interviews. Data from questionnaires are calculated as percentages and average voter scores on four responses, namely "strongly agree" with a score of 5, agree with a score of 4, disagree with a score of 2, and strongly disagree with a score of 1 "against eighteen statements. The percentage of voter data is presented in Table 1. While the average score data for each item is presented in Table 2.

Table 1. Percentage of Participant Responses

No	Problem	Percentage			
		Very Agree	Agree	Dis agree	Very Disagree
1	Difficulty using the internet	13%	27%	16%	44%
2	Difficulty in operating a computer	12%	19%	9%	70%
3	Difficulty in getting internet access at school	9%	30%	15%	46%
4	The principal's workload is too much	36%	46%	18%	0%
5	Difficulty in consulting supervisors	15%	23%	15%	42%
6	Difficulty in consulting instructors	0%	9%	45%	46%
7	Difficulties consulting with CPD online admin	5%	23%	38%	34%
8	Difficulty communicating with other participants	9%	23%	34%	34%
9	Difficulty downloading module material	5%	23%	28%	42%

No	Problem	Percentage			
		Very Agree	Agree	Dis agree	Very Disagree
10	Module material is difficult to understand	9%	30%	26%	35%
11	Difficulty working on assignments and bills	0%	22%	38%	40%
12	The task of learning CPD is too much	68%	19%	9%	4%
13	Difficulty in attending face-to-face activities	5%	23%	34%	38%
14	Difficulties in socializing learning outcomes	0%	19%	26%	55%
15	Difficulty applying learning results	5%	39%	33%	23%

Table 2. Average problem scores faced by principals

No	Problem	Average
1	Difficulty using the internet	2.06
2	Difficulty in operating a computer	1.24
3	Difficulty in getting internet access at school	1.92
4	The principal's workload is too much	3.06
5	Difficulty in consulting supervisors	1.82
6	Difficulty in consulting instructors	0.35
7	Difficulties consulting with CPD online admin	1.48
8	Difficulty communicating with other participants	1.28
9	Difficulty downloading module material	1.80
10	Module material is difficult to understand	2.05
11	Difficulty working on assignments and bills	1.34
12	The task of learning CPD is too much	3.28
13	Difficulty in attending face-to-face activities	1.04
14	Difficulties in socializing learning outcomes	0.86
15	Difficulty applying learning results	2.64

Based on the results of the questionnaire, researchers followed up with interviews to identify respondents' reasons for the assessment they gave. Thus, the description of the results of this study presents quantitative data as a result of the analysis of the questionnaire, which is accompanied by qualitative data in the form of interviews.

Judging from the magnitude of the average score on the 15 problems experienced by the principal were dominated by factors outside the online learning process, which were related to the principal's problem (average score 3.06) and too many online CPD assignments (average score). -rata 3.28). Another problem that many experiences is the difficulty of applying learning outcomes that reach an average score of 2.64. Other problems do not reach scores above 2.0, which means that only a small number of principals are experienced as participants. The description of the dominant problem details is as follows.

One of the problems that have hampered the smooth running of online CPD learning for school principals is that the task must be done too much, while there is also a lot of work as the principal. This becomes an obstacle in doing and sending assignments, namely the activity of uploading tasks is not on the schedule. To overcome these problems, namely for the effectiveness of uploading assignments not too late, most participants asked for help from the

school administration staff to make and upload them. This is an indication of not optimal learning outcomes achieved. However, the problem of overloading the principal's duties is not only experienced by CPD participants in Indonesia but also in Ethiopia as a result of Akalu's research (2016)

Other problems experienced by participants are limited or even unavailability of internet access in schools, especially in rural areas. This is a factor in the difficulty of downloading material, the difficulty of sending assignments, and the limited competence of using information technology to participants. Regarding the problem, the participants stated that the cause was the limited funds that the school had. Thus, the procurement of competency improvement programs for human resources in the education sector must be balanced with adequate funds. Funding problems have always been the main cause of the low quality of education. This turned out to be not only happening in Indonesia but also in developing countries. As found by Akalu (2016: 190), continuing professional programs in Ethiopia did not work due to the limited education budget. In fact, based on the survey results, McChesney and Aldridge (2015: 239) state that although the professional development of educators is widely seen as an effective way to disseminate and promote teaching strategies and as new education trends, the survey results indicate that budget constraints make a lot of development poor quality professionals and have a minimal impact on classroom practice.

CONCLUSION

The main problem that disrupts the implementation of online PKB for school principals in Indonesia is the excessive workload to [school nutmeg, too many tasks and bills, limited or even unavailability of internet access in rural schools and the low ability to use participant information technology. This is due to the recruitment of principals as CPD online participants based on supervisor performance without considering the results of the principal/teacher competency test and school self-evaluation. Participants who are not yet skilled should use IT skills and competency test scores that have been obtained by the principal. In the process component, the difficulty of internet access for rural participants is the main obstacle in downloading material and communicating. The effect of these problems, the learning outcomes of the CPD online program has not been able to improve their performance in managing HR optimally at school.

To overcome the problems in the online CPD implementation, participants conducted several strategies to overcome them, namely involving school administration staff and teachers in the implementation of tasks that should have been done by the principal as an education participant. The same solution is also used by school principals to overcome the problem of limited internet access, limited competence in using the internet and computers.

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