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Continuous professional development programmes for school principals in the 21st century: Lessons learned from educational leadership practices

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Continuous professional development (CPD) is important for educational leaders to improve institutional performance and students' learning outcomes. Yet, organizing effective professional development programmes are often more complex than we might assume. The current study aims to explore the challenges of managing CPD for high school principals in Indonesia. Six high school principals and three officers of the Ministry of Education and Cultures (MoEC) were interviewed. Qualitative data from the interviews were analyzed and coded thematically using ATLAS.ti. Several themes and main points emerged from the transcripts of interviews. The findings revealed some challenges in managing CPD programmes at schools. They include resistance to change, technicality and workload, almost zero follow-ups, unprofessional recruitment, and unclear training syllabus. Among the suggestions to improve the CPD programmes are building personal approaches, developing professional skills, establishing a professional recruitment system, making continuous training programmes, and optimizing school organizations. This study can be used as an additional guide to implement effective CPD and can be a platform to improve the professional development of educational leaders.

KEYWORDS

continuous professional development (CPD), educational leader, school principal, students' learning outcomes, leadership practice

Introduction

Studies on school leadership show that leadership practices of school principals determine school improvement (Lambrecht et al., 2022; Thien et al., 2022) and students' learning outcomes (Fullan, 2015; Leithwood et al., 2020; Özgenel and Karsantik, 2020; Grissom et al., 2021; Kılınç and Gümüş, 2021). In Indonesia, the government system

and socio-political conditions also contribute to school leadership practices (Sumintono, 2017). Even though many Asian countries tend to follow Western leadership styles and training approaches, there is always a local cultural setting that differentiates one leadership practice from another (Cravens and Hallinger, 2012). Mirroring the practices from other countries, the roles of school principals in Indonesia include personnel administration, staff relationships, and professional development (Sumintono et al., 2015).

These findings lead to identifying effective educational measures to prepare competent and professional school leaders (Møller and Schratz, 2008; Jensen, 2022). However, it is difficult to promote effective changes that are relevant to local school leading practices (Aas, 2017; Cosner et al., 2018) due to different educational systems and policies (Harris et al., 2016) and leadership training that pay less attention to link learning activities with actions in school practices (Liljenberg and Wrethander, 2020). Thus, continuous professional development (CPD) programmes for school principals are crucial to improve school performance.

Improving school leaders' professional development requires more research attention (Heffernan, 2018; Brauckmann et al., 2020). Works of literature on CPD showed some barriers and deterrents (Tan et al., 2022), especially to adult education and continuing professional education (CPE) courses (Megginson and Whitaker, 2007; Wessels, 2007). Friedman (2012) identified four common types of deterrents: *situational* or external barriers, such as costs of activities, family and work issues; *dispositional* or personal attitudes toward the benefits of learning activities; *institutional* or quality management, such as inconvenient locations and timing; and *informational* or limited information about availability and suitability of activities.

More specifically, works of literature on the practices of CPD at the high school level in Indonesia are limited. Hence, the current study is significant to explore the challenges in managing CPD at high schools in Indonesia and provides suitable solutions for the problems. Theoretically, this study will contribute to the elaboration of expectancy-value theory and sociological models that are frequently used in research on CPD (Boström and Palm, 2020; Kuhn et al., 2022). This particular study is significant for the policymakers, especially the government to take action in designing suitable CPD programmes for school principals, hence providing educational contributions to relevant stakeholders and authorities.

Professional development paradigm

In recent years, a new and radical tendency has emerged in the field of professional development. Employers are required to provide training for their employees, which is on a par with the status of university courses (Friedman, 2012). Certain large employers specialized in information technology (IT) are developing professions and establishing universities such as systems applications and products (SAP) Training and Certification Shop, Motorola University, and Microsoft Partner Network, Training and Events. Some of these companies provide systems for CPD to support other companies and the public who are interested in trading and professional associations. McDonald is the first commercial company to pilot a basic shift manager course, which is originally an in-house training scheme. Covering marketing, human resources and customer service skills, the course is accredited by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority as the equivalent of an A-level qualifying for university admission. In its implementation, this new technology drifts greatly relies on efficient and effective site-based management (Gurr and Drysdale, 2016; Sebastian et al., 2018; Brauckmann et al., 2020).

Governments also play a great role in providing and supplying CPD activities. The possible effects of CPD policies are none other than the potential interests of all democratically elected governments. These particular interests implicate the political and ideological positions of the country in terms of social, economic, and cultural capitals (Bourdieu, 1986). Government policy intervention, for instance, may impact the level of public investment in education (Friedman, 2012). As many academics concerned, the quality assurance and professional development courses designed by higher education may be intervened by other government initiatives through research grants and funding (Elton, 2000). This issue should be discussed among all stakeholders–the ones that affect and are affected by organizational decisions and actions, so it will not hinder CPD programmes due to lack of government support. Evidently, the governments have potential powers to influence CPD, yet it could not be well utilized if they do not realize and recognize the significance of CPD.

On the other hand, there are many deterrents to CPD practices. It is found that those who had involved in CPD for a long time were less interested in the activities. Dentists with the least experience, for instance, are more likely to have the highest participation in CPD (Bullock et al., 2003). Even though age and gender have no significant correlation in CPD participation (Rothwell and Arnold, 2005), Hull et al. (2003) argued that more females than males undertook CPD in the past years. Similarly, Wessels (2007) also found a significant negative relationship between the perceived effectiveness of CPD and years of experience among accountants in the USA. For that reason, all CPD activities need to be monitored effectively to be effective and efficient.

Monitoring is significant in CPD activities. It is needed to know what kind of activities would be of use and beneficial to practitioners or active members (Friedman and Williams, 2007). Unfortunately, not all professional bodies have a comprehensive approach to monitoring. It is not surprising then their professional development activities did not strategically support

the needs of individuals and organizations. To maintain the credibility of professional bodies and their CPD programmes, monitoring needs to be legitimated as a control system to impose discipline on professional members (Friedman et al., 2000). According to the Professional Associations Research Network (PARN) and International Benchmarking Survey (IBS), participation in CPD activities can be monitored using various techniques such as survey questionnaires, voluntary random audit, compulsory random audit, and other methods (Friedman and Mason, 2007).

Findings from previous studies indicate that effective leadership paradigm and professional development programmes are often more complex than policymakers and educational leaders might assume (Hallinger, 2018; Mowat and McMahon, 2019). Based on this assumption, a comprehensive leadership-training programme needs to be context-sensitive. In particular, leadership training and practices for school principals should be linked to better school performance and academic results. Some researchers also argue that little is known about the usefulness of the contents of leadership training programmes to school leadership practices (Pannell et al., 2015; Grissom et al., 2019). Thus, in addition to monitoring previous CPD practices, the programmes need to be continuously supervised for future improvement.

Theoretical perspectives on continuous professional development

The question of which areas CPD programmes should focus on can be answered from various angles. According to normative requirements (such as leadership standards) or empirical findings (such as research on effective school leadership), one approach is to assess the degree to which principals already possess the skills and competences they require, and then to offer CPD programmes in those areas where many principals lack these abilities. However, there are no criteria for school leadership, no in-depth study on successful leadership, and no regular, area-wide principal reviews to formally determine their CPD requirements exist in Indonesia (Bandur et al., 2022; Yulianti et al., 2022). Therefore, the principals' perceived CPD needs affect the CPD programmes they choose to participate in. The CPD needs that an examination might reveal are not always consistent with those that are recognized.

Theoretically, expectancy-value theory and sociological models that account for decisions through the effect of socio-demographics are frequently used in CPD research to explain why people choose to participate in CPD or not (Boström and Palm, 2020; Kuhn et al., 2022). These ideas can be used to decipher theoretical descriptions of the perceived CPD needs

of principals, as well as to explain why people engage in CPD or do not. Choices are seen by expectancy-value theories as a complicated process that is impacted by individual inclinations (Eccles et al., 1983; Eccles and Wigfield, 2002). Decisions are made based on a person's expectation of success on the one hand, and the value attached to a certain activity on the other. Expectancy and value are both influenced by a person's perception of these elements rather than by their objective talents or values.

Based on the above elaboration, a person's past successes and failures, self-efficacy and self-concept of ability, cause attributions, perception of task complexity, and socialization processes within certain social and cultural situations all have a role in how they interpret their current situation. Therefore, a CPD programme is judged by how effectively it matches the principal's self-concept and interests, as well as by its anticipated results (Eccles and Wigfield, 2002). Additionally, sociological studies take into account a person's organizational setting as well as their socio-demographic characteristics. It can be concluded that a person's participation in CPD is influenced by their formal education and training, age, status, gender, personal, and employment circumstances, as well as organizational context-related enabling factors (Drossel et al., 2019).

School professional development in Indonesia

In Indonesia, the process of selection and training of school principals are under the autonomy of local district governments since its decentralization system of education in 2001. However, local district governments tend to follow previous practices from the central government due to limited capacity and experience in managing education. Since the Dutch colonial era, especially around 1900–1942 (Penders, 1968), Indonesia did not have special preparations and training for school principals (Sumintono, 2017). Additionally, political power still plays a significant role in the educational sector. The appointment of school principals is based on individual connection and influence to the authorities in power at public governance (Sumintono et al., 2015).

School principal selection and preparation are starting to have a significant development since the Ministry of Education released regulation No. 6/2009 establishing an agency for school principal empowerment and development known as *Lembaga Pengembangan dan Pemberdayaan Kepala Sekolah* in 2009 (LP2KS, 2016). As a national certification institution, LP2KS provides training for all school principal candidates. After completing and passing all the training and assessments from LP2KS, every candidate will be awarded a principal registration number (*Nomor Unik Kepala Sekolah–NUKS*). This NUKS will make the candidate eligible to be appointed as a future school principal (LP2KS, 2016).

Several studies on educational leadership in Indonesia during the reformation era show steady improvement. At the beginning of the decentralization system, local district principals were portrayed with limited capacities, expertise, and experiences in handling the challenges and opportunities of education and school administration in the autonomy era (Sofo et al., 2012; Sumintono et al., 2015). In its later development, studies on a principalship in Indonesia show a significant shift from school management or administration to educational leadership. As a result, it was found that principals' decision-makings that are less coercive and bureaucratic improve teachers' job satisfaction (Hariri et al., 2012). Another study revealed that school improvement is greatly determined by principals' leadership behaviors and school climate (Damanik, 2014). A study on school practices also shows that principals' instructional leadership impacts four areas of improvement, i.e., curriculum, teachers' professionalism, learning facilities, and student learning outcomes (Jawas, 2014).

In short, the unique challenges of educational leadership and professional development for school principals in Indonesia include political, cultural, and social factors as mentioned above.

Objective and research questions

The main objective of this study is to contribute the knowledge about CPD for school principals by exploring the challenges in managing CPD programmes at high schools in Indonesia. Specifically, two research questions are addressed:

- What are the main challenges faced by high school principals in managing CPD programmes at schools?
- How to effectively manage CPD programmes for school principals in the 21st century?

Methodology

Research design

This qualitative study used face-to-face interviews as a methodology to seek information from the respondents. Based on the extensive data collection process, a specific entity such as activity, event, process, or individuals are explored in-depth (Creswell, 2008). In this context, the researcher looks for meanings and contexts and brings personal values into the study (Creswell, 2007).

The researcher used the data analysis framework proposed by Dey (1993) and later refined by Creswell (2007) to analyses and interpret the qualitative data. This framework was chosen because it is systematic and robust in managing and categorizing qualitative data into meaningful information. According to

Creswell (2007), the data analyzing procedure is divided into four main steps: (1) data managing, (2) reading and memoing, (3) describing, classifying, and interpreting, and (4) representing and visualizing.

The researcher further extended the step of the data collection process into several stages consisting of managing the data, reading and memoing, initial coding, identifying main ideas, and generating themes. Following a similar pattern, as recommended by Dey (1993) and Creswell (2007), the main ideas and themes produced from the data analysis were revisited and revised as the researcher moved further and higher into the next step of the data collection process.

Population and sampling

Nine respondents comprising of six school principals from six selected high schools in Aceh, Indonesia, and three officers from the Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC), Indonesia, were interviewed. In order not to disclose the respondents' identities and their affiliations, they were given specific codes for the analyses. Table 1 presents a summary of respondents' backgrounds and settings.

Discussion on findings and analyses

The challenges of managing the continuous professional development programme

Based on respondents' responses on the challenges of managing CPD programmes at schools, five themes were generated for the first research question: What are the main challenges faced by high school principals in managing CPD programmes at schools? The discussion of the findings is extracted in light of related literature reviews and theories (Burnard, 2004). More specifically, the "describe, relate and compare" approaches are employed to provide a more meaningful and coherent way of finding and analysis (Bazely, 2009). The emerging themes are shown in Figure 1.

Resistance to change

It is mainly because of teachers' characters, staff's paradigms, and their ignorance of the problems at school. In addition, incompetent supervisors and passive school leaders also contribute to the said problem. Respondent 1, for instance, stated:

TABLE 1 Characteristics of respondents.

Codes	Gender	Age	Years of experiences	Affiliation	Location
Respondent 1	Male	55	15	High school A	Banda Aceh
Respondent 2	Female	50	10	High school B	Aceh Besar
Respondent 3	Male	43	3	High school C	Aceh Besar
Respondent 4	Male	48	8	High school D	Aceh Besar
Respondent 5	Male	58	18	High school E	Aceh Besar
Respondent 6	Female	46	6	High school F	Banda Aceh
Respondent 7	Male	60	20	MoEC	Banda Aceh
Respondent 8	Male	59	19	MoEC	Aceh Besar
Respondent 9	Female	42	7	MoEC	Banda Aceh

Out of nine respondents, six were males and the rest three were females. Their ages ranged between 42–60 years old with 3–20 years of experiences in their line of works. The schools are located in two main districts in the Province of Aceh, Indonesia, which are Banda Aceh and Aceh Besar. The former was chosen because of its function as the capital city, while the latter was due to its nearest location to the city.
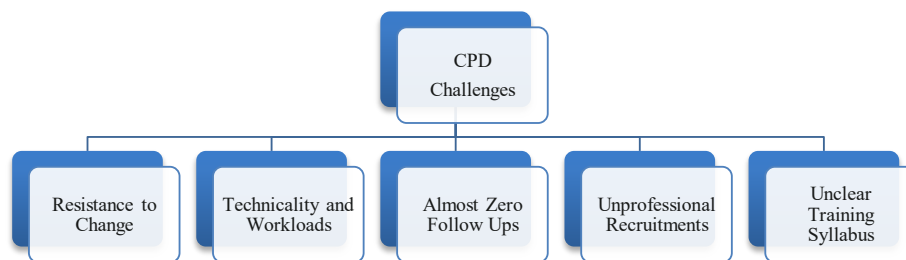

FIGURE 1
Emerging themes from research question one.

"The biggest challenge is actually from the teachers. I would say that only 40% of the teachers have the characters of ideal teachers. Meaning they have the passion to care for the students, responsible for their jobs, commitment. This is something that is still lacking..."

(Respondent 1)

According to Respondent 4, the incompetent supervisor is also one of the big challenges in managing CPD at school. The supervisors from the MoEC are supposed to guide the school principals properly, but in fact, they are not competent in doing the job:

"The supervisors from the MoEC are supposed to guide and control the smooth running of school management. On one hand, the MoEC has limited supervisors who can go to the schools they are supposed to guide. On the other hand ... some of them are not competent in doing their job because they do not really have the knowledge."

(Respondent 4)

Furthermore, one of the biggest challenges in managing the CPD programmes is the unprofessional school principal. Respondent 8, for instance, stated that some school principals

have other priorities outside the school jobs so they do not focus on the school principal's job:

"Especially in rural areas, it is common for the school principals to have other priorities. As a result ... they do not focus on schoolworks. Even though we have already given the proper training, the case is they are not really professional as the school principals."

(Respondent 8)

Being a school principal in the 21st century requires complex competencies. Compared to any other time in history, effective management of CPD for principals is more critical than ever. To facilitate change at schools and to meet the demand of the century, principals need to re-examine their practices and belief systems (Evans and Mohr, 1999). Today's school principals are expected to have expertise not only in leadership, instruction and academic content but also in many other aspects including data analysis and public relations (Darling-Hammond et al., 2010; Ravitch, 2010).

To facilitate the change and avoid its resistance, a school principal need to see alternatives of CPD activities which include literacy training, numeracy training, induction training, ICT training, headteacher training, ITT (Induction Tutor

Training) mentor, departmental meetings, courses, workshops, conferences, award bearing courses, best practice research scholarship (BPRS), secondments, sabbaticals, bursaries, visits to other schools or teachers, peer coaching as a mentor, peer coaching as a mentee, international visit or exchange, exhibitions, personal reading, and personal online learning (Hustler's et al., 2003).

Technicality and workloads

According to the respondents, educators have a teaching work overload. Sometimes with too many educational projects and an old batch of school principals who are not familiar with the use of technology. In terms of teaching workload, Respondent 3 explained:

> "One of the challenges in managing professionalism at the school is the workload at the school. This is something that burdens them. As a result, when we want to conduct formal training, we have difficulties in finding suitable time with those teaching workloads."

(Respondent 3)

Another challenge as described by Respondent 1 is the non-tech-savvy generation of school principals. Meanwhile, most of the training nowadays is conducted with the current development of the technology:

> "There are school principals who are still in preferable of using pens and paper only in their works. The tech-savvy generation of school principals, who can use social media and the Internet, are still limited. Because the world has changed so much, the old batch of school principals must adapt to the changes."

(Respondent 1)

More specifically, one of the challenges in managing CPD programmes is uncoordinated educational plans and funds. The problem is not because of no budget, but rather unclear planning and executing the training programmes. Respondent 7 described:

> "We have a lot of funds in Aceh. Unfortunately, it is not really well organized. There is no clear coordination among the organizations. At the national level, for instance, the law states that 20% of the overall fund must be allocated for education. Aceh province has another 30% allocation for education . . . However, most of the funds are not really used for improving the quality of education in the form of training and guidance."

(Respondent 7)

According to Hustler's et al. (2003) report, the amount of time spent on those CPD activities is respectively ranked from the greatest to the least based on improving teaching skills, increasing subject knowledge, developing other professional skills, extending leadership or management skills, personal career development, and reflecting on values. The report also showed that gender has a statistically significant relationship with time spent on some CPD activities. Males, for instance, are more likely to spend time on developing professional skills and extending leadership or management skills. While females are more likely to spend time on improving teaching skills and increasing subject knowledge.

Based on the above elaboration, CPD programmes gradually become more open to public scrutiny, hence it adds to the technicality and workload for the schools. Professional bodies and higher education institutions are rushing to get into CPD. As a continuation and commitment to adult education service to the community, universities especially aspire to become high-quality institutions for research and teaching. The Quality Assurance Agency (2005) sets criteria for courses and ensures specific standards based on expected achievement. Unfortunately, universities are forced to enter markets for education including CPD activities due to a gradual reduction in public funding. Some universities take a different approach by partnering with the units of local and multinational businesses. Other universities link CPD programmes to prospective employers, which encourages a change of training more broadly to meet the company's interests.

Almost zero follow-ups

Lack of follow up from the MoEC is one of the challenges in managing CPD programmes. Respondent 4 stated that not only there are no follow-ups after the training was given to the school principals, the implementations of the programmes at the school units are also lacking. According to Respondent 1, the lack of implementation of the knowledge received from the training at the school perhaps due to the teaching career as a second option. Some school principals and teachers join the teaching profession because they failed to be doctors or engineers.

For that reason, Respondent 6 hoped that the MoEC could at least do follow-ups in the form of in-service and on-service training at the school level:

> "We hope that the government could prepare and equip the school principals with the necessary training. After the training, they should visit the school and continue giving guidance in real-life practice. . ."

(Respondent 6)

The MoEC officers viewed that lack of recognition and acknowledgment also contributes to the challenges of managing CPD programmes. Respondent 9 affirmed that:

> "Another thing is a lack of recognition or acknowledgment in which you are better than others and you are performing better than others. So why would you do something if you are not to get anything? Unless if you really want to do it."

(Respondent 9)

Meanwhile, the quantity and quality of teachers are not on par with the increased numbers of schools and students. In response to this issue, the Indonesian government introduced a scheme known as short-term contract teachers (*Guru Kontrak*) in 2003. The data from the Ministry of Education and Culture (2015) showed that 190.700 *Guru Kontrak* were hired in 2003 and another 79.200 in 2004. In addition, since the decentralization of education was implemented, honorary teachers were also recruited with the payroll from respective schools and their foundations that support them. Teacher quality has also increased significantly over the last decade. It can be observed from two main aspects: educational attainment and years of experience. Before 2005, primary school and junior secondary teachers were required to have 2-year (D2) and 3-year (D3) of tertiary education respectively. With the introduction of Law 14/2005, the minimum educational qualification for teachers is now a 4-year diploma (D4) or bachelor degree (S1). Data from MoEC showed that the percentage of teachers with minimum qualifications has increased from 24.8% in 1999/2000 to 49.2% in 2009/2010 (Suharti, 2013).

Unprofessional recruitments

Unprofessional recruitment of school principals affects the styles of leadership in motivating students. The MoEC officers acknowledged that there is an inconsistency and nepotism in the recruitment of school principals.

According to Respondent 5, the recruitment process of school principals is not professional because of nepotism:

> "I think some of the school principals are not ready to be the leaders at the schools. Especially in Aceh, the placement of the school principals is not professional. Sometimes, it is because of the political basis, nepotism. Someone can be a school principal without following the procedure, just because he/she is a relative of the ruling party."

(Respondent 5)

More importantly, an effective leader should know how to recruit, coach (Wilkinson, 1993), train, delegate (Nahavandi, 2015), and motivate his followers so they voluntarily help the organizations to achieve its objectives (Fisher and Cole, 1993) from multiple perspectives or frames (Bolman and Deal, 2013). Several contemporary empirical studies also linked leadership effectiveness with the sense of humor a leader possesses (Hughes and Avery, 2009; Palestini, 2013). Hence, Cole and Kelly (2015) identified various types of leaders as charismatic, traditional, situational, appointed, functional, and principle-centered. For that reason, the call for leadership is historical and universal. No one best style of leadership can cater for all situations at all times. Rather, a combination of styles is needed to be appropriately applied depending on the situations a leader's faces.

Unclear training syllabus

Another challenge of managing CPD programmes is insufficient training for school principals. Respondent 5 described:

> "The preparation for school principals is only 2 months. I think this is really insufficient in terms of knowledge capacity. The profession of the school principal is different from the teaching profession. A school principal has a more complex work compared to the teachers."

(Respondent 5)

Ultimately, unclear training syllabus must be carefully catered to. With the introduction of the Local Content Curriculum, a new Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) was implemented in 2004. In this new curriculum, teachers were responsible to design syllabuses with student-centered activities in all subject areas (Raihani, 2007). However, the reform initiatives were not necessarily improved teachers' practices in teaching and learning. Despite the revisions of the curriculum to make it more relevant to students' needs, Weston (2008) argued that teachers remained traditional in their instructional practices. There was a mismatch between the objectives of CBC formulated by the MoEC and its implementation in the classrooms. Instead of engaging in learning through problem-solving, discussion, and hands-on activities, teachers misunderstood the main concept of CBC and returned to their former comfortable teaching practice, i.e., lecturing. Among the factors contributing to this mismatch perhaps due to insufficient educational resources and inadequate pre-service and in-service training for teachers (Bjork, 2013).

Effective management of continuous professional development programmes

Based on main ideas from respondent' suggestions on managing CPD programmes at school, five themes were generated for the second research question: How to effectively manage CPD programmes for school principals in the 21st century? The emerging themes are shown in **Figure 2**.

Building personal approaches

The school principals suggested giving personal advice and supervision to effectively manage CPD programmes. This is relevant to do because they must lead by example and they are considered as parents for the students at the schools. In terms of leadership by example, Respondent 2 elaborated:

> "From the Islamic perspective, we have to show the example first. So the leadership must be by example. We give good examples to the people surrounding us so the changes can be learned fast. The most important thing is everyone must be willing to learn what they do not know yet."

(Respondent 2)

On the other hand, the MoEC officers suggested giving rewards and punishments to effectively manage the CPD programmes. Respondent 9 described:

> "Do not forget to evaluate the programmes and then give rewards and punishment. It must be clear, identify what should we do. And then plan for its continuity, not only just a one-time hit and run or one-time exercise. The monitoring and evaluation also must be continuous and strong."

(Respondent 9)

A school principal should make more personal approaches in managing CPD programmes. The increasingly accessible technologies open new opportunities for student participatory learning. This also opens up the way for school principals to have personal approaches through technology media. Grossman (2006) called this era the age of participation. This is true in which potential social networking sites as Facebook, LinkedIn, and MySpace offer all people to be active collaborators. In 2009 for instance, Wikipedia had half a million active contributors, YouTube had 10 billion video views per month, and Facebook reached 112 million visitors (Bonsignore et al., 2011). In keeping with collaborative learning communities, social models of learning are developed focusing on

learning from experiences in daily life supported by personal networks of family, friends and co-workers (Lave and Wenger, 1991).

Professional development skills

To effectively manage the CPD programmes, Respondent 3 suggested inviting professional instructors, making regular school meetings, doing class action research, and prioritizing principals' development. By inviting professional instructors to the schools, the participants can save their time and change their paradigms through the best practices in the field. If there is no budget for professional training, conducting regular school meetings would be the best way to learn from each other among the schools. More specifically, teachers can conduct class action research [*Penelitian Tindakan Kelas– PTK*] and share it with other teachers who have not done so. But most importantly, the development of school principals must be prioritized through systematic training and continuous evaluation.

In addition, the school principals suggested to specifically train the emotional-spiritual quotient (ESQ) for school leaders (Respondent 1) and focus more on actual research (Respondent 5). The ESQ training is considered important because the school leaders must be emotionally and spiritually ready to interact with all of the teachers, staff, students, and parents (Gujral, 2016; Singh et al., 2022). Respondent 4 elaborated on the focus of actual research:

> "I consider research as an important element in education. So, I do hope that the government conduct proper research on education and involve higher education authorities. That way our country will be advanced."

(Respondent 4)

In addition, CPD must develop the skills of its participants. Quoting Neil and Morgan (2003), the following general framework of professional development for educators appears to be consistent in many countries. It starts with the initial training, followed by induction within the first year in post, and early professional development (EPD) that normally last for 2 years. Then the CPD cycles take place in career-long promoting various subjects and topics as leadership, advanced skills teacher, key stage coordinator, and headship including the programme like the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH). In the lifelong learning sector, CPD is expected to maintain, improve and broaden relevant knowledge and skills for a positive impact on learner experiences (Scales et al., 2011). To achieve effective professional development, individual attributes, knowledge, understanding, and skills
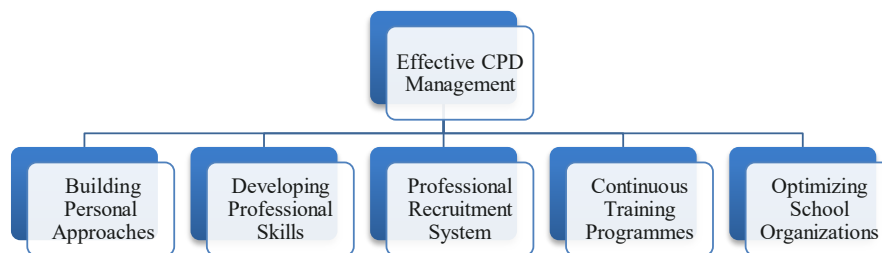
FIGURE 2
Emerging themes from research question two.

must be supported to improve professional practices. That is the key to the success of any educational institution (Earley and Porritt, 2010).

Professional recruitment system

Having a professional recruitment system is one way to effectively manage the CPD programmes. The system could be in the form of fit and proper tests, synchronizing national and local programmes, and making special certification for the school principals. According to Respondent 1, the fit and proper test are significant to know the real characters of prospective school principals and not only based on high marks to pass the test. In addition, Respondent 6 argued that the school principals must achieve the passing grade and show they are professionally, pedagogically, socially, and personally competent. She further elaborated:

> "There is a specific need for school principals to have an Act and Certificate like Teacher Certification Programme [*Pendidikan Profesi Guru–PPG*]. The current practice is the selection of school principals, but they are tested like teachers. For that reason, we should establish a professional recruitment system in the future. Starting from the selection, placement, evaluation, and development must be professional. So, it cannot be based on politics like in the past."

(Respondent 6)

More importantly, a professional recruitment system is also important. Previously, individual qualifications were considered as relevant to professional ethics, thus they could be trusted as members of the professional class. In this traditional view, being professional make individuals trustworthy persons and indicates their professional power and social welfare (MacDonald, 1995). From the late 19th century to the 1960s, professions were considered as a primary force for good in the community. It is argued

that all professions are conspiracies against ordinary people or laity. On the contrary, some people see professions as major forces tempering individualism to meet the needs of an acquisitive society. Professions were also seen as the common good and "moral milieux" that could bring society into cohesion (O'Neill, 2005; Owen and Powell, 2006). Gold et al. (2007) claimed that professional bodies maintain CPD to protect their professional autonomy and privileged status in society. In this regard, CPD not only legalizes professional skills for career development but also emphasizes trust in professionals by actively maintaining their competencies.

Continuous training programmes

Making continuous learning process for school principals with a good standard operating procedure based on Islamic principles like humility (*tawadhu'*) is important. Respondent 9 recommended to have good planning for CPD and evaluate the programmes accordingly:

> "The first thing that we should recommend is to make a continuous professionalism programme for the school principals. It must be well planned by experts at the local and national levels. We do have actually many experts, but the thing is most of them think that if there is not motivation why should we do it? So … I recommend making good planning and identifying the needs for the development of the school principals."

(Respondent 9)

On the other hand, since the beginning of its establishment, the emphasis of teacher-training programmes were, however, more on the mastery of curricular content rather than instructional methodology and teacher performance (Bjork, 2013). This practice and insufficient training led to the culture of ineffective teaching methodology in which teachers put a high priority on lecturing rather than instructional practice. In addition, under the New Order era in the

1950s, the government gradually forced the schools and teachers to primarily follow the national agenda articulated by political leaders in the capital city, Jakarta (Shaeffer, 1990).

Under the New Order government, schools became tools of the nation in which teachers and principals' roles were to instill national discipline rather than opening the minds of students (Bjork, 2005). Teachers were controlled and monitored to be obedient civil servants as other public employees. Even the teachers' union known as *Persatuan Guru Republik Indonesia* (PGRI) became the hand of the government in monitoring teachers rather than a mechanism for expressing teachers' opinions and concerns. Their loyalty and support to the nation-building accomplishments guaranteed their job security, while improving curriculum and pedagogical practice was not necessarily rewarded.

Optimizing school organizations

Optimizing school organizations is not just focusing on buying learning materials. Respondent 9, for instance, suggested that the government must cooperate with universities to improve the quality of education:

> "University is producing a lot and a lot of papers which are beneficial for the government, but they are not working together. At the end of the day, one doing one thing, the other one doing other things. So, when the planning is made, it is not really who made the initial research. What we want is the government is working tight together with universities, where universities ask the government to sit together what are you gonna do in the next 5 years? In fact, the government they have it which is what we call a mid-term development plan for 5 years..."

(Respondent 9)

Finally, school organizations must be optimized to support the quality and competency of educators. Based on the school level, there are two types of teacher professional working groups in Indonesia: Primary School Teachers Working Group (*Kelompok Kerja Guru,* KKG) and Secondary School Subjects Teachers Working Group (*Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran,* MGMP). KKG and MGMP are used as forums for teachers to share information about curriculum development, teaching skills, learning aids, teaching materials, classroom activities, scientific writings, and professional development (Suryahadi and Sambodho, 2013).

The government supports these activities by providing block grants distributed through Education

Quality Assurance Institute (*Lembaga Penjamin Mutu Pendidikan,* LPMP). The KKG and MGMP forums have the potentials to improve teachers' competency and skills. However, the groups have not been effective in subject matter and pedagogy (Evans et al., 2009) except providing a venue for teachers to share lesson plans only (Suryahadi and Sambodho, 2013). The case might be due to poor management by local authorities particularly school principals and a lack of support from local experts, particularly in the tertiary education sector.

Hence, a practical professional development system should be developed based on performance assessment from recruiting highly qualified educators to providing suitable professional development programmes.

Conclusion and recommendations

The current study has presented some challenges in managing CPD programmes for high school principals in Indonesia and provided some suggestions or solutions to overcome the problems. The common challenges faced by school principals in organizing CPD programmes include resistance to change, technicality and workload, almost zero follow-ups, unprofessional recruitment, and unclear training syllabus. Based on these encounters, the respondents of the study suggested several approaches to improve the CPD programmes at the school level. They are personal approaches, professional development skills, professional recruitment system, continuous training programme, and optimizing school organization.

The discussion of findings revealed that barriers to CPD programmes are sometimes beyond individuals' control. Not only the participants found difficulties competing with family responsibilities and taking time off work, but they also face a lack of time, cost of courses, far away location of courses, suitability of the content, and poor quality of courses. Another set of barriers are associated with self-management such as being fuzzy about what to do next, being negative about career development, prioritizing others, avoiding challenges, and procrastination.

Reflecting on the CPD practices and implications, the current study suggests some recommendations for improvement. As the most potential providers of CPD activities in the future, higher education institutions should organize CPD courses as part of lifelong learning and continuing education. For that reason, academics should be well equipped to teach CPD, which is more practical knowledge than mere techniques. Furthermore, universities should be more sensitive to market opportunities and adjust themselves to teach professional

practitioners courses and workshops as CPD requirements for professional bodies. In the end, government, schools, and professional bodies need to build good relationships with universities and universities should establish decent programmes that support CPD practices.

Data availability statement

The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the authors, without undue reservation.

Author contributions

AF contributed to conception, design of the study, data collection process, and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. NA, AO, and SI improved the contents and analysis. All authors contributed to manuscript revision, read, and approved the submitted version.

Funding

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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