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At the Heart of Teacher Professional Development: Teachers Matter

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Abstract. This paper focuses on the influence of teacher characteristics on teacher professional development (TPD) practices. It draws upon a multiple-case study of teachers' professional development experiences at three schools. Data were gathered through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Teachers' characteristics matter in any professional development activities but not at the same level of influence to make TPD effective. Formal characteristics such as years of teaching experiences, level of studies and status of employment have always tended to greatly affect the level of teachers' TPD participation. It is found, however, that teachers' level of TPD participation does not always equate learning. It is teachers' personal and professional characteristics such as beliefs about their roles or profession and perspectives of effective TPD that carry profound effects on teachers' experimentation, application and reflection of TPD ideas for meaningful learning to occur, and enact the expected changes or improvements accordingly.

Keywords:
teacher professional development;
teacher beliefs;
teacher practices;
case study;

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INTRODUCTION

Teacher professional development (TPD) has become a major focus of a worldwide educational reform agenda because of the belief that the improvement of students' learning and achievement is largely dependent on the quality of teachers' practices (Doecke *et al.*, 2008, Darling-Hammond *et al.*, 2009, OECD, 2009, World Bank, 2011). In this sense, TPD is viewed as one of the powerful mechanisms for enhancing teachers' knowledge and improving instructional practices (Desimone *et al.*, 2002). If the educational reform agenda is to improve students' learning, then the provision of TPD is fundamental.

So how to offer a powerful or high quality TPD so that it could fulfil its promise as an educational leverage? Scholars and researchers have come with several ideas and recommendations. For example, research studies propose a set of features associated with effective teacher professional development,

such as sufficient time and duration, a focus on content knowledge, active and collaborative learning, and collective participation (Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin, 1995, Burney and Elmore, 1999, Desimone *et al.*, 2002, Ingvarson *et al.*, 2005). In addition to features of effective TPD, researchers have recognised the critical role of teacher characteristics such as beliefs, experiences, or prior knowledge for effective TPD (Smylie, 1988, Pajares, 1992, Little, 1993, Putnam and Borko, 2000, Guskey, 2002). In other studies, environments or contexts in which teachers are situated, most predominantly their schools, are reported to influence the effectiveness of TPD (Bredeson, 2000, Jurasaite-Harbison and Rex, 2010, Wermke, 2011). However, providing or designing powerful TPD programs are not simply a matter of replacing the "old" with "new" ones. Kelchtermans (2004) has discussed this issue, for example, arguing that "exchanging the traditional workshop format for other activities does not guarantee that the desired learning takes place" (p. 341).

The critical importance of teachers in TPD is self-evident across the globe, systems, or contexts. In any government document about TPD, it is easy to find countless accounts of the importance of paying attention to the needs, interests, or circumstances of teachers when designing TPD programs (e.g. Ball, 1996; Hoekstra & Korthagen, 2011; Joram & Gabriele, 1998; Pajares, 1992). It has been long argued that beliefs, knowledge and experiences of teachers serve various functions in their learning. Personal beliefs, for example, serve as a filter through which teachers view and interpret their teaching and learning (Calderhead & Robson, 1991; Joram & Gabriele, 1998; Kagan, 1992; Pajares, 1992) and these beliefs are the most significant predictors of individual change (Smylie, 1988). On the other hand, teachers' knowledge function as mediator by which teachers interpret or evaluate new knowledge through their previously accumulated knowledge and experience Bransford & Schwartz, 1999; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Hughes, 2005). More recently, Avidov-Ungar (2016) suggested that perspective that views teachers as unique individuals with motivation and aspiration as well as word views need to be integrated into TPD. Meaning that teachers are individually unique in pursuing their personal and professional growth and development.

If teacher factors are influential to TPD, then a study to investigate why teacher characteristics matter in TPD is thus worth undertaking. The present study was guided by a research question that is "in what ways do teacher factors influence their learning while participating in TPD?

Teachers are the central actors in TPD either as subjects or objects. In this respect, whatever teachers bring into TPD matters. A number of teacher characteristics are voluminously reported to affect teacher learning and change in TPD (Ball, 1996; Hoekstra & Korthagen, 2011; Joram & Gabriele, 1998; Pajares, 1992). These characteristics can be drawn from multiple domains such as cognition, psychology, biology or socio-economy. However for the sake of this study, teacher characteristics are limited to: teaching experience, educational qualification, beliefs and prior knowledge, and status of employment.

Teachers experience many stages throughout their careers. Understanding where teachers are in their career is important for supporting their learning and development. Thus, many scholars have argued that TPD needs to be aligned to stages of teachers' career development (Kelchtermans and Vandenberghe, 1994, Day, 1997, Maskit, 2011, Richter *et al.*, 2011). Day (1997) suggested that "professional development must take account of where teachers are in their lives and careers, that the kinds, levels and intensities of professional development opportunities available must relate to these, and that resources should be targeted accordingly" (p. 42).

To show the influence of teachers' years of teaching experience on TPD, a number of teacher career stage models have been developed to describe the stereotypical development of teacher characteristics in terms of discrete stages. Huberman's (1995) model of teacher career stage (see Figure 1), for example, characterises teacher career cycle as a set of five consecutive stages which are closely connected to teachers' years of teaching experience. This model suggests that, among other things, teachers make use of different forms of learning opportunities or activities across their careers. Choy *et al.* (2006) found that beginning teachers (3 years of experience

or less) participate more frequently in mentoring or peer observation while teachers with 10 or more years of teaching experience involve more in collaborative and observational visits to other schools. These stages, however, "should not be viewed as fixed, but rather as a dynamic working explanation as new data are fed back into the process" (Fessler, 1995).

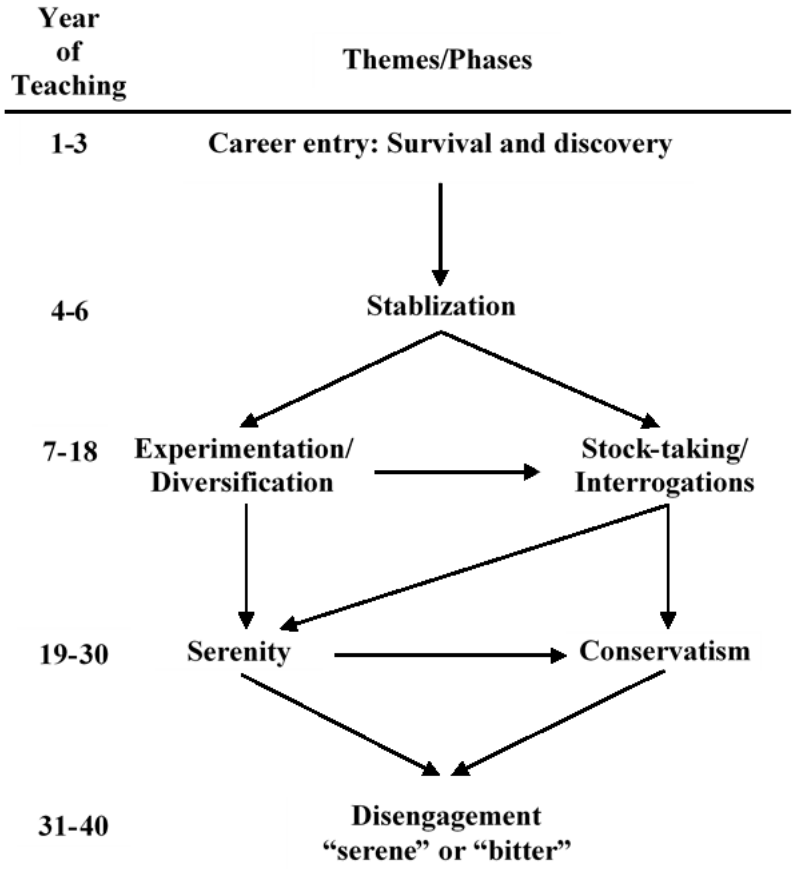

Figure 1. Huberman's (1995) model of teacher career stage

In a study to investigate teachers' uptake of different learning opportunities from the beginning to the end of a teaching career, Richter *et al.* (2011) reported a statistical analysis that indicates a significant year-of-experience-related change in the uptake of in-service training and content of TPD activities. Their findings further suggest there is a distinct learning pattern across the teaching career. For example, teachers who are at the beginning of their careers are more inclined to collaborative learning and learning from or drawing on the expertise of more experienced teachers than teachers in the middle or at the end of their teaching careers. Conversely, self-directed learning, such as reading professional literature, is more often preferred by older teachers as opposed to teachers in the beginning of their careers. From these findings, it can be inferred that to some extent teacher learning is informed and influenced by individual teacher's experiences, especially experiences that are relevant to learning and teaching.

The other characteristics that are closely related to teachers' experiences are their beliefs and knowledge. Teachers hold beliefs and knowledge about their students, subjects they teach, and their roles. Although these beliefs and knowledge are often implicit or tacit, they have been widely acknowledged to influence their thoughts and actions (practices). The beliefs and knowledge of teachers are perhaps teacher characteristics that get the most and massive attention and investigation in reference to teacher learning and development (Nespor, 1987, Peterman, 1991, Kagan, 1992, Pajares, 1992, Boulton-Lewis *et al.*, 1996, van Driel *et al.*, 2001, Hughes, 2005, Luft and Roehrig, 2007). Nespor (1987) described

beliefs to be propositions about existence or non-existence of entity as well as ideal or alternate reality. For example, teachers may believe teaching is simply a matter of drilling; other teachers may believe that students who fail on a test are simply because they are lazy, or other teachers may believe that that there is an ideal teaching model alternative to sorts of model he or she is familiar with, though he or she never experiences or achieves it. Pajares (1992) suggested that these propositions "are the incontrovertible, personal truths everyone holds" (p. 309). Nespor (1987) also that beliefs have strong affective and evaluative functions that become "important regulators of the amount of energy teachers will put into activities and how they will expend energy on an activity" (p. 320). The affective and evaluative nature of beliefs probably becomes the most common base for theorists and researchers for deducing their interpretation about the roles of beliefs on teachers. To name but a few, beliefs function as filters, determinants, predictors, directors, or indicators of teachers' perception, judgement and behaviour.

Knowledge, on the other hand, is a mental representation of objects and events. What teachers know about their subjects (knowledge what) and how to teach the subjects (knowledge how) are instances of teacher knowledge. Teacher knowledge (Michaloski, 2009), or teacher personal/practical/professional knowledge (Clandinin and Connelly, 1987, Clandinin and Connelly, 1996, Connelly *et al.*, 1997) which is distinguished from the knowledge base of teaching, "is highly determined and 'colored' by … [teacher's] individual experiences, personal history (including learning processes), personality variables, subject matter knowledge and so on" (Verloop *et al.*, 2001). As such, this personal knowledge plays prominent role in teachers' perception, thinking and action. It filters, guides and determines teachers' practices (Pajares, 1992, Borko and Putnam, 1995, Verloop *et al.*, 2001). Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002) argued that teacher change is closely related to the growth of teacher knowledge.

The last teacher characteristic influencing teacher learning and change is teachers' status of employment. To make an ongoing professional development, sufficient financial resources are essential. This seems to be the case in some circumstances, particularly in developing countries, where the financial situation of most teachers does not allow for sustained, intensive TPD (Villegas-Reimers, 2003, Christie *et al.*, 2004, Lambert, 2004). Villegas-Reimers (2003) argued that "differences in the amount of time allotted to professional development are related to differences in salary and the hiring practices in those countries" (p. 126). Darling-Hammond and Cobb (1995) also reported that in many APEC members such as the United States, Canada, China, Singapore, and New Zealand, salary levels vary greatly within schools and states and among the schools and states, and suggested that "increases in salary and career advancement as the major incentives for teachers to participate in professional development activities" (p. 12). In a similar trend, Lambert (2004) found that poor salary among teachers in African regions is the most detrimental factor for the education sector in general, and for teachers' commitment and motivation to their job and development in particular. In such cases, teachers often cannot participate in TPD opportunities because they do not have time or feel exhausted from doing their second or even third jobs; or they cannot afford the costs incurred (e.g. registration/tuition fee, travel costs, etc).

METHOD

This study employed a multiple-case study design (Yin, 2003). TPD practices from three secondary public schools (called Mak, Par, and Wap Schools) in three different regions across the province of Sulawesi Selatan, Indonesia are set as the cases for this study. All teachers from the three schools were recruited as research participants for the survey phase and three teachers along with their principal were selected for the interview phase (Table 1).

Data for the present study were gathered through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) developed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2009) was adapted to collect data about teachers' TPD. Data collected from this part were mainly ordinal or categorical with some "other" options/space provided to enable participants give responses not covered by the questionnaire items. 150

copies were sent to the teachers in three participating schools and 128 questionnaires were successfully completed and collected.

Table 1. Interview Participants

Schools	Teachers	
	Pseudonyms	**Gender**
Mak	Malan	M
	Muzan	F
	Manton	M
Par	Parrick	M
	Pachel	F
	Pini	F
Wap	Waul	M
	Windy	F
	Wudolf	M
	Principals	
	Pseudonyms	**Gender**
Mak	Mr. M	M
Par	Mrs. P	F
Wap	Mr. W	M

Questions in semi-structured interviews were developed around topics pertinent to the research question and informed by the scientific literature about the topic. There were two interviews scheduled for each interview participants. The first interview focused on what has happened in teachers' professional development lives and what were their perspectives about their TPD. The interview was transcribed and directly content analysed to create "working codes" through *In Vivo* coding process (Saldana, 2009).

The second interview was conducted after a few week interval from the first interview. In this interview, the participants' transcript from the first interview was presented to him or her, and asked to recall the interview and check if their viewpoints were correctly represented in the transcript. If not, they may reformulate, eliminate, or replace it with a more appropriate statement. This process was a member checking or respondent validation (Maxwell, 2005, Flick, 2006). The topic ideas form the first interview were used as guidance to further explore teachers' beliefs, views and attitudes toward their TPD experiences and practices. The two sets of interviews were conducted at the participants' schools with various durations, ranging from 45 minutes to an hour and a half for each interview section.

Questionnaire data were descriptively analysed to see the overall picture and patterns. The results of descriptive analysis were then elaborated with the interview data. The analysis procedure for interview data adopted Yin's (2011) five-phased cycle of qualitative data analysis which consists of procedures for preparing, organising, examining, tabulating, categorising/developing themes, and interpreting qualitative data to address the research questions. The entire analytic process, however, does not occur in a sequential manner but rather it occurs in *interactive* and *iterative*.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section starts with the findings resulting from the teacher questionnaires and interviews about teachers' TPD experiences and features of TPD activities. It is followed by a discussion of trends, themes and patterns emerged from the analysis of findings.

Teachers at the three schools had a generally high level of TPD participation during the 18-month period prior to completing the questionnaire. Overall levels of TPD participation are measured in terms of teacher participation rates in both formal and informal TPD. Formal TPD refers to learning activities provided by externals which were mostly conducted off-site schools, while informal TPD refers to learning activities initiated and provided by schools or teachers which are conducted on-site. As shown in Figure 2, 84% and 83% of teachers reported to have participated in formal and informal TPD activities respectively.

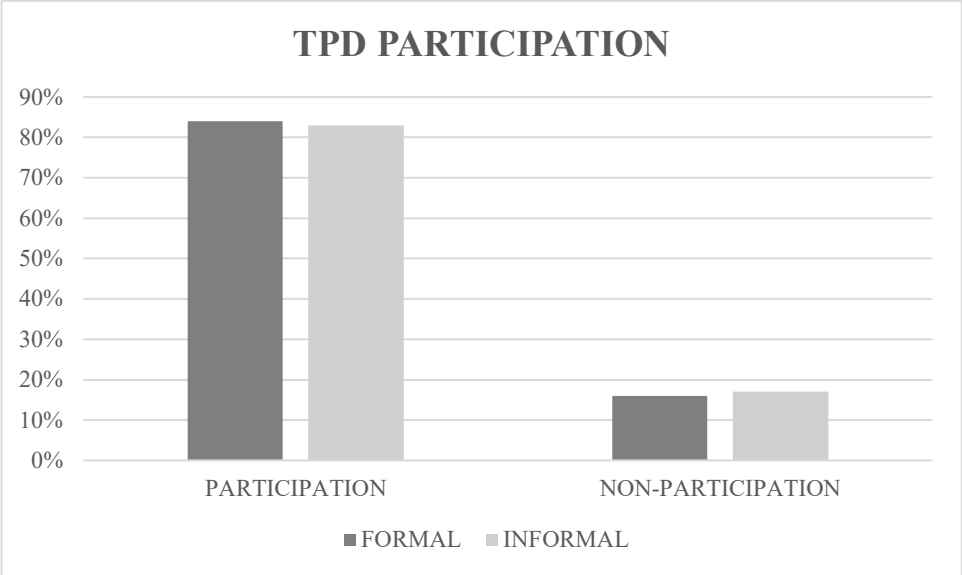

Figure 2. Rate of teachers' participation in formal and informal TPD activities

The high TPD participation rate may indicate that provision of TPD has been widely adopted by the government and school managers as a school improvement strategy. For Mr. M, the Mak's principal, all teachers must be involved in TPD activities; no teacher can be left out. Mr. M stated:

> So, for the last six months I had only invited school supervisors once to give a presentation [training] about assessment, lesson plan, and the like. And because not all my teachers were covered, I plan to conduct another training… We would do that [the training] during the next school holidays, so every teacher who missed the previous training would be trained on that occasion.

Mr. M's plan to provide make-up training for his teachers in the above example is a logical decision and action in this respect.

Further analysis of the intensity of teachers' TPD participation reveals some interesting findings. The teacher questionnaire measured the intensity of participation in terms of the number of hours of TPD learning activities undertaken by teachers during the 18-month period prior to completing the questionnaire. The difference between teachers with the lowest intensity and highest intensity of TPD participation is very wide, two hours for the lowest and 356 hours for the highest. This statistical finding suggests that TPD opportunities are unequally distributed among teachers. Table 2 unveils that, in general, teachers with higher educational qualification and more years of teaching experience have more hours or high intensity of TPD participation. Teachers with a Master's degree or higher had an average of 136 TPD hours while those with a Bachelor's degree or lower have only an average of 60 TPD hours. When it comes to years of teaching experience, teachers with 6-10 years or more of teaching experience have at least double average TPD hours (an average of 60 TPD hours at least) than those with 3-5 or less years of teaching experience (a minimum average of 6 TPD hours and a maximum average of 32 hours). Although the difference is not too big, full-time/civil-servant teachers (81 hours) also tend to have a higher average of TPD hours than contact teachers (71 hours). This finding indicates that TPD opportunities skew toward teachers who have more "capital" such as having higher educational qualification, more years of teaching experience, better employment status.

Table 2. Average hours of teachers' TPD participation based on status of employment, level of educational qualification and years of teaching experience

Teacher Characteristics	Means of TPD Hours
Contract Teachers	71.32
Full-time/Civil-servant Teachers	80.67
Teachers with Bachelor's Degree or Lower	60.08
Teachers with Master's Degree or Lower	136.30
First Year of Teaching	6
Teachers with 1-2 Years of Experience	25
Teachers with 3-5 Years of Experience	32.67
Teachers with 6-10 Years of Experience	106.92
Teachers with 11-15 Years of Experience	60.30
Teachers with 16-20 Years of Experience	116.13
Teachers with 20+ Years of Experience	81.78

Teachers have diverse perceptions towards different types and forms of TPD activities. In the questionnaire, there are seven forms of TPD activities; workshops/trainings, conferences/seminars, qualification (teachers continuing their education), observation, teacher network (e.g. MGMP), mentoring/coaching and research, all of which are categorised as formal types of TPD. There are also two forms of TPD activities, namely dialogue/discussion with fellow teachers and reading literature which are categorised as informal types of TPD. Figure 3 shows the extent of perceived impact of each form of TPD activity on teachers' instructional knowledge and skills. Most teachers report training/workshops (53%) and teacher network (58%) from the formal type category of TPD to present high impact on their instructional practices. For the informal type category of TPD, 59 % and 57% of teachers report to gain high impact from dialogue/discussion and reading literature respectively.

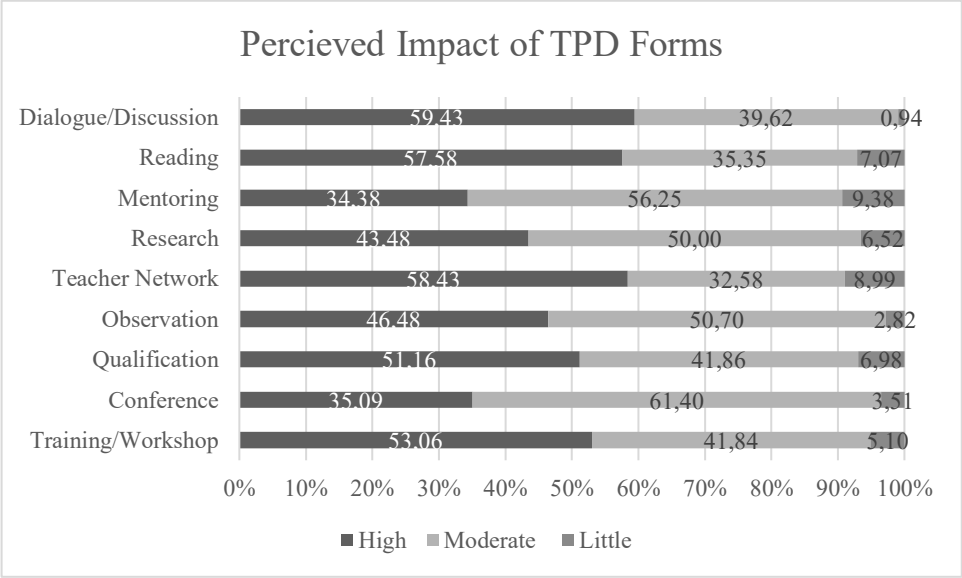

Figure 3. Teachers' perception towards the impact of TPD form

Data from the interviews with the principals and teachers support these statistical figures. In the interview, one of the questions asked to the principals was "What types of TPD activities have your teachers participated in?" Mrs. P, the principal of Par school,

answered: "Like usual, … workshop and training that are formally provided by either district, province or central government". Mr. M described his actions to improve teachers' competency at Mak school with special reference to workshops or trainings as a form of TPD:

> I get all teachers on board. Should there be a training [invitation], I send them to [participate in] training]. I get them involved [in the training] …[For example] Just recently, I mean the school is invited to involve in a USAID [United States Agency for International Development] project about contextual learning. I had 15 places for my teachers so I sent all [15 teachers] for a three-day workshop training [in that USAID project]. (PR/MC)

For teachers, the question was "In general, can you tell me about TPD activities you have participated in?" Most teachers mentioned workshops/training and the teacher network (MGMP) to be the TPD activities that they most commonly participated in. Pachel, for example, replied to the question: "I try my best to be actively involved in MGMP". Similarly, Parrick expressed: "Usually, if there is a training [invitation], the school will send relevant teachers….Nowadays, the school [principal] is steering us to participate in MGMP". Likewise, Manton from Mak school revealed his TPD participation: "A workshop training which was similar to the one conducted by USAID a few months ago … I had a training for three days as one of the representatives from this school". These principal's and teachers' accounts suggest that the most commonly accessed forms of TPD learning activities are usually those that are made available or endorsed by authorities. In other words, most formal TPD opportunities for teachers are externally provided.

Interestingly, Mr. M, Malan and Muzan from Mak school perceived external TPD to be more effective than the internal ones. Mr. M suggested: "If it is from internal, I found teachers not to be seriously involved. You know, it's just among themselves; they have known each other…it's not effective; it's trivial". In the same manner, Musan felt: "If the [TPD] activity is from school, I feel like it's less effective because, you know, it's just among us". Malan observed: "… most teachers do not have such a strong motivation to get involved in school MGMP activities as they do not think that they would get something new or valuable when participants are only teachers from their schools, their own colleagues". For these educators, they do not believe that internal TPD has the potentials to bring about some knowledge.

Although preferring external TPD over the internal one, teachers at Mak school criticise external TPD such as MGMP to be instrumental, task-focused and less on "learning". Muzan, for example, complained about the content of MGMP:

> What teachers really need is not there [not covered in MGMP]. Because MGMP heavily focuses on the making of teaching documents such as syllabus, lesson plans or student worksheets but, in fact, we also need other materials [TPD contents] such as teaching methods or approaches."

With regards to the current mode or process of MGMP, Manton described:

> For MGMP, I feel like, I am over it, though, I used to be active [participating]. It used to be very substantive, you know. Now the activity in MGMP is more like a "task distribution" where teachers will be grouped and each will be assigned to a particular task, say each group developing a syllabus for the chosen topics to be covered for one semester. So, the objective is how to get the task done. Back in the day, MGMP was not like that… In fact, we used to have what you call peer teaching or practice teaching. (AN/MC)

In the same manner, teachers interviewed at Wap school pointed out the shortcomings of government or externally-provided TPD opportunities. Waul mentioned three of them:

> [Firstly] personally, I am not satisfied with what the government has provided. I mean, one to two [TPD opportunities] in a very long time is not enough.…[Secondly] if the [TPD] program is from the government, teachers as participants are expected to submissively listen to

> facilitators' lectures.…[Thirdly] another problem if the professional development programs are provided by government programs is that teaching and learning process at school is disturbed [as teachers have to leave their classrooms].

Maul's account implies that external TPD opportunities, particularly those provided by the government, are occasional; treat teachers as passive learners and are conducted off school site. In latter circumstance, TPD programs can be disruptive to teaching and learning process when there is not available substitute teacher to cover teachers who are off to training as it may happen to Maul's case. The government-provided TPD programs in Indonesia mostly take the form of cascade model which can be seen as another shortcoming. Windy suggested:

> It would be better if there is a training or MGMP, all teachers are invited to participate. There is a problem if only one [representative] teacher is sent to participate. Let's say teacher A is invited while teacher B who has the same subject with A is not invited. Later at school, this teacher A usually does not have chances or time to train teacher B.

Windy's point is that cascade model may not be an appropriate model given the over-burden of teaching responsibilities. Mr. W, the principal, pointed out another problem with TPD opportunities provided by the government. He particularly highlighted this problem in relation to teachers' implementing ideas from TPD in their schools or classes. He maintained:

> [Government-TPD programs] lack follow-up. I mean, there isn't any assistance after teachers complete training. Ideally, teachers who have completed a particular training are provided with assistance. At certain times providers need to come to schools to observe and evaluate the implementation of ideas gained from teacher training programs at schools and provide necessary help if needed.

Teachers' preference over external TPD activities and their criticisms of external TPD seem to be paradoxical. However, a further look into interview data reveals that teachers' preferences, criticisms or comments over types and forms of TPD activities inherently represent teachers' general orientation towards TPD.

Teachers' orientation towards TPD unveils opinions about what counts as an effective type/form of TPD activities. Table 3 summarises each interview participant's perceptions on the effective form of TPD learning activity along with reasons for its effectiveness.

Table 3. Teachers' perceptions on effective form of TPD learning activities

Participants	Effective Forms	Reasons	Quotations
Mrs. P	Workshop	- actively involves teachers to think & work - produces concrete, applicable results	I think workshop is the best [most effective] because if it is a training, teachers only listen to lectures and that's it, finished. But if it is a workshop, there is a product. Teachers work on or create something that are useful for them.
Parrick			[among other forms] I'd say workshop has the most impact on teachers. Why workshop? Because teachers think and do something. I'm telling you, teachers no longer want to listen to theory presentation. Don't give teachers theories, let them find it out and practice it.

Pini	Seminar	- keeps teachers update with the current or new information, ideas or innovation in education	I think it would be great if we have seminars. Particularly here in Parepare, seminar, educational seminar in particular is very rare. You know what, something that you never heard before or new ideas and innovation you do not happen to know, you mostly can find all of these in a seminar.
Pachel	MGMP (Teacher Network)	- derives from teachers' actual problems - offers practical solutions - is on-going	For me, MGMP is the best one. Because at the MGMG when a colleague faces some problems, all members come to help to find solutions. Besides, we meet twice a month compared to a one-day seminar.
Manton	Workshop	- offers theoretical/conceptual understanding	A workshop training which is similar to the one conducted by USAID a few months ago, I like it. … You know, in a typical training, participants are directly asked to make or work on something, but this is different. Participants are asked to understand the underlying concepts [of contextual learning], the reasons why... [TPD] must be sustainable, evaluated and followed up …
Malan		- offers practical solutions	[The ones] that we, teachers, directly involve to create, role-play or review topics… so that we get the sense of its real application…to get things that can be directly used.
Muzan		- offers practical solutions	Effective TPD is the one in which teachers are guided to generate creative and innovative teaching and learning strategies and activities. This means that teachers can learn how to create enjoyable classroom learning strategies for students.

Though often implicit, teachers' belief about their roles or profession influences their TPD orientation. This belief particularly affects teachers' motivation, engagement, initiative and willingness or openness to participate in TPD or to share their knowledge and skills with their fellow teachers. Malan espoused:

> Frankly speaking, what students really need is a figure that can play the role like a parent for them; who can understand students' need and problems and can guide them to reach their fullest potentials….[To assume this role] I need to learn more and more. I believe my pre-service training would not be enough for this. Thus, I need to keep improving my knowledge either by reading books, googling on the internet, or attending training or seminar.

Suzan explicated her effort to make her teaching and learning attractive to students,

> As an English teacher, my concern is how to create and make enjoyable learning situation for my student. Because, you know, English subject is a scourge for students … One way to improve my competency to create such learning is to participate in training or read related literature.

Teachers' engagement in TPD is instrumental. They tend to pursue what gives them "returns". For example, Pachel, who is very active in MGMP, revealed some of her learning experiences:

> You know, during this kind of time [recess/lunch time], if I have problems, I'll directly ask or consult my fellow teachers. … That is my initiative that anytime I have problems, my first initiative is to directly ask my friends at schools or sometimes I call my colleagues at MGMP. If not, I also usually try to find the solutions on the internet.

Unfortunately, not all teachers displayed the same motivation, initiative and willingness as Pachel did. Pachel further posited: "To tell you the truth, at this school there are only few teachers that you can share with. [The] others, either they are ignorant or unconcerned". Similarly, Tini raised this issue in her interview by saying: "Teachers share less here. If they have problems they do not ask [for help], they keep it for themselves".

For Waul, Mrs. P and Mr. W, teachers' awareness of and commitment to their profession are fundamental for the success of any TPD endeavours. Waul maintained this issue when he was asked about his TPD experiences:

> It's very often that the MGMP's meeting is held because teachers ask for it. In our Indonesian [language] MGMP, for example, most of the meetings are initiated by teachers who ask the head of MGMP to hold the meetings. Teachers' awareness to initiate the meeting is the thing that makes MGMP effective, I think.…[Whereas] In our school, teachers often come up with some ideas of what we need to discuss in the scheduled regular school meeting.

In the interview with the principals, Mr. W was asked about factors that hinder teacher learning, and he answered:

> In any opportunities to develop teachers, the key is the teachers' commitment. Tell you what, no matter how hard I try to facilitate them to improve, they do not have strong commitment; they do not have targets for their own development, the [TPD] opportunities are meaningless.

Mrs. P explained: "I have lots of teachers that, although they have been trained until the national level when they return to the school they are still what they are used to be". When asked the cause or reason for this problem, Mrs. P explicated:

> …[It] is influenced by teachers' initial intention to be teachers. There are people who become teachers because it is their call. They want to educate the future generation, make a difference and so on. While others, becoming teachers are their last resort. You know what? This is the latter ones who then usually become ignorant, perfunctory teachers.

Teachers' characteristics matter in TPD as they affect the way teachers think, feel and act their learning. TPD will serve as a fruitful mechanism or leverage for improving students' learning and achievement in particular and educational improvement in general if only teachers participate meaningfully in TPD activities and successfully implement TPD ideas in their instructional practices. In general, the success of TPD are reported on the basis of teachers' level of participation on the respected TPD activities. The findings reported in this paper shows that it is not always the case and reveals a contrary point.

Teachers' years of teaching experiences, level of studies and status of employment are closely related to the number of hours that they spend participating in TPD activities. Each of this variable follows a similar pattern: teachers with more years of teaching experiences, higher educational qualifications and better employment status generally have more hours of TPD participation. The high level of teachers' TPD hours participation is commonly reported as a success indicator for TPD and interpreted as a base to construe the

effect of teachers' characteristics on TPD. However, the finding in the present study shows a different interpretation. The high level of teachers' TPD hours participation has more to do with the norm of TPD practices than to the effect of teachers' characteristics. It happens because TPD providers view teachers with "higher" or "more" characteristics to be better at cascading TPD ideas than the "less" teachers and thus commonly invite or target the former teachers than the latter ones to be TPD participants. It also happens because if schools get TPD invitations, principals will be more likely to choose teachers with more capital. Teachers with more capital (e.g. have more knowledge or experiences) are thought to have better abilities or positions to cascade knowledge upon returning to schools. Therefore, the effect of teachers' years of teaching experiences, level of studies and status of employment on TPD participation is a constructed view external to teachers.

In a circumstance where most TPD opportunities are externally provided, mostly by the government, teachers only act or are treated as passive, compliant TPD participants regardless of their years of teaching experiences, level of studies and status of employment. Teachers cannot choose the contents and forms of TPD they need or want. The one-size-fits-all TPD approach does not allow for customisation and personalisation of different contents and forms TPD activities across teachers' careers as identified by Huberman (1995). Thus, teachers' high level of TPD participation may mean nothing but rather teachers' compliance to authorities. Being accustomed to conforming to government demands, teachers fall into a "culture of compliance" (Hargreaves, 2003).

Teachers matter in how they perceive effective TPD. The findings suggest that teachers have certain criteria for types and forms of TPD that would be more likely to work for them. Teachers are oriented towards TPD that: 1) involve active participation, 2) generate practical and applicable solution or innovations, 3) provide an evaluation and a follow-up assistance to school, and 4) are continuous. These criteria or features for effective TPD are not new as they have been widely reported (Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin, 1995, Burney and Elmore, 1999, Desimone *et al.*, 2002, Lewis, 2002, Ingvarson *et al.*, 2005), yet it is generally absent in such reports how teachers can learn effectively and meaningfully regardless of the forms or types of TPD. The findings reject the view that some particular TPD types and forms are more effective than others in improving teachers' professional knowledge and skills. Traditional types and forms of TPD such as externally-provided in-service trainings, workshops or seminars are as potentially effective as the reform types and forms of TPD such as school-based learning activities, action research, collaborative learning or peer networks. The findings are consistent with Kelchtermans (2004) who argued that "exchanging the traditional workshop format for other activities does not guarantee that the desired learning takes place" (p. 341). The essential differences do not reside in the types and forms used to facilitate learning but in the teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of designated TPD activities to help teacher learning. Teachers are more likely to learn and gain something from TPD activities that are in line with their criteria for effective TPD.

Personal and professional beliefs and characteristics held by teachers influence their motivation, engagement, initiative and openness to participate in TPD and to share their knowledge and skills with their fellow teachers. Teachers' beliefs often serve as prompt to seek knowledge to improve their instructional practices. Teachers with strong beliefs about their moral and professional roles make more substantial effort to improve their competence by participating in TPD or initiating and creating their own learning. Teachers who are active and display great awareness and commitment towards their professions are more likely to engage in more instructional dialogue and discussions and share more ideas, knowledge and skills with their fellow teachers. It is through their beliefs and characteristics that teachers evaluate the effectiveness of TPD in terms of what teachers get from their participation in particular types or forms of TPD for their schools, classes, or students. All teachers have personally constructed beliefs about TPD. As teachers participate in TPD activities, these beliefs influence and shape their actions. Teachers tend to be "pragmatists" towards their TPD – looking for ideas, knowledge and skills that are practical for their instructional practices. In this sense, this finding concurs with Clark and Peterson's review (as cited in Pajares, 1992)

who proposed that teachers construct perspective (e.g. perspective about effective TPD) based on their interpretation of experience serving as a basis for their subsequent actions. They emphasised that the perspective is situation-specific and action-oriented.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Teachers' characteristics matter in any professional development activities but not at the same level of influence to make TPD effective. Formal characteristics such as years of teaching experiences, level of studies and status of employment is superficially influential to TPD. These formal characteristics have a propensity to greatly affect the level of teachers' TPD participation. It is found, however, that teachers' level of TPD participation does not always equate learning. Participation at the very least can be only seen as a pre-requisite for learning but not the learning itself. Teachers' personal characteristics such as beliefs about their roles or profession and perspectives of effective TPD, on the other hand, are affectively influential to the essential aspects or dimensions of TPD. These personal characteristics affect teachers' experimentation, application, and reflection of TPD ideas for meaningful learning to occur and enact the expected changes or improvements accordingly. Finally, a couple of recommendations are put forward, i.e. a) the conceptualisation of professional development of teachers needs to be more "comprehensive", not merely in terms of teachers' participation in TPD but, more importantly, to include more essential aspects of TPD such as experimentation, application and reflection of TPD ideas' into teachers' practices; b) teachers' characteristics factors, especially the personal and professional ones need to be highly considered if TPD is to of benefits to teachers.

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