

A Concise Study on Teachers' Perceptions of Their Continuing Professional Development in Cambodian High Schools

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ABSTRACT

This concise study was mainly about the perceptions of teachers toward continuing professional development (CPD). A qualitative method was employed to gather participants' information and ideas. Two-main questions and several sub-questions were designed to interview the respondents to address the research issue. Findings suggested that continuing professional development (CPD) is essential for teachers and school leaders to develop their mindsets and growth; moreover, most respondents agreed that CPD is crucial for self-development. However, one respondent felt that the school lacked teacher training. This can be notified that school leaders shall create more CPD activities for improving their colleagues. Moreover, without continuing professional development (CPD), teachers and staff will not become well-educated and knowledgeable human resources. Hence, lifelong Learning is a must for oneself to be promoted or to a successful life journey. Last but not least, this study implied that school leaders' and teachers' perceptions were slightly different regarding CPD. Further study shall focus on teachers' satisfaction regarding continuing professional development (CPD).

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1. INTRODUCTION

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is the educational process through which members of any profession retain, expand, and enhance the information, skills, and character traits necessary for success in the workplace [1]. This study mainly aimed to explore the perceptions of teachers regarding CPD. In the past 15 years, educational scholars have paid much attention to ongoing professional development [2]. Teachers are not born; they need lots of training to be professional. Teachers who do not value training or never joined CPD seemed to have nothing in teaching, and their students did not successfully learn. Whohab [1] added that the purposeful upgrading of professional

knowledge and enhancing professional competence throughout a person's career are further definitions of CPD. Lorraine [3] also indicated that continuing professional development is sometimes used interchangeably with other phrases like staff development, lifetime learning, and continuing professional education. CPD, which stands for continuing professional development, is the name given to the extra learning professionals engage in. Typically, CPD aids in enhancing and augmenting their professional skills. It includes, however, a lot more than just learning. Many teachers found difficulties in participating in the CPD programs, such as workshops, webinars, sharing sessions, peer teachings, and training. However, Powell et al. [4] pointed out that in terms of professional reflection and knowledge, confidence, articulating practice at higher cognitive levels, increasing classroom management, and professional discourse, teachers see significant benefits from recognized CPD.

Interestingly, around the world, the members of numerous professional organizations are attempting to alter the behavioral component of their performance in the workplace [1]. CPD takes the learning process one step further by ensuring that the way you learn and the material you learn is organized, applicable, and pertinent. You will probably have finished your academic requirements when you begin working in a particular industry in a new capacity. CPD advances the learning process and allows you to concentrate on particular information and abilities over time.

Many researchers have been studying CPD recently. One example, Manley et al. [5], who studied healthcare, suggested that to improve Learning, development, and healthcare performance, the findings propose four interrelated transformation ideas, including modifying individual practice, developing skills for evolving healthcare contexts, translating information, and changing workplace cultures. Additionally, Al Asmar [6] conducted a study on this problem, and Al Asmar [6] found that the respondents favored lifelong Learning and experiential approaches that emphasized the learner. They saw the CPD as a test of their prior understanding and instructional strategies. However, they raised their worries about the localization of CPD programs, institutional support for running classroom activities, and follow-up activities. According to Avre and Arda [7], CPD should be undertaken to enhance teachers' professional growth. Results, however, also showed that their opinions before and after creating the teacher development unit varied significantly.

In addition, Mahmood and Ali [8] declared that CPD suits teachers and found that teachers were excited to participate in teacher training and development. Jack C and Farrell's [9] research found that the respondents believe that training entails preparing for the teaching task, teaching environments, content modification, and learner grouping. However, development involves a teacher's understanding of themselves and their teaching environments, and it frequently entails looking at various aspects of a teacher's practice. A study by Yurtsever [10] also showed that Searching for English language teachers is challenging for school administrators. Schools offer a range of in-service training programs to help all teachers, regardless of preference, improve their teaching abilities.

Another study by Aylin [11] indicated that the subject became comfortable with the action research methodology. The ability to assist her pupils with the arrangement of their

essays by utilizing various pre-writing activities, such as mind-mapping and roleplaying, was noted to be one of the teacher's self-developed teaching skills. The results show that the subject gained the most awareness from the teaching/learning process, acknowledging her weaknesses and pupils' strengths.

Furthermore, Judith [12] surveyed CPD opportunities, spoke with instructors, and held focus groups with the educators overseeing their professional development. The results showed they saw continuing professional development (CPD) as necessary to meet society's changing needs, pupils, and knowledge throughout their careers. Besides, the study findings of Gokce et al. [13] indicated a significant, medium-level link between instructors' self-efficacy and principals' instructional behaviors. Additionally, principals' instructional leadership behaviors support teachers' motivation and task focus, the growth of kids' learning capacity, and the development of instructors' abilities to evaluate themselves and their pupils. Hence, continuing professional development is so crucial to self-efficacy.

Ironically, Badia et al. [14] also addressed that teachers' activities as inquirers have been studied using various psychological models, such as models emphasizing teachers' professional development, socio-constructivist models of teacher thinking, and teacher learning as Al Asmar [6] indicated that things were pertinent to learning methodologies, the professional development concept, perceptions, and comments on CPD. The respondents favored lifelong Learning and experiential approaches that emphasized the learner. They saw the CPD as a test of their prior understanding and instructional strategies. However, Al Asmar [6] also raised their worries about the localization of CPD programs, institutional support for running classroom activities, and follow-up activities.

One impressive study by Vadivel et al. [15] demonstrated that teachers are in command of their professional growth. However, for better results, they require shared experiences, reflective teaching, and a sense of community to maintain parity with the international standards of the educational system. As a result, Johnson and Golombek [16] revealed that cultural environment, linguistic variation, and social interaction mediate cognitive development and are part of self-development. Consequently, the data analysis of Dilsad [17] showed that the teachers accepted most of the notions reflecting the significance of professional development. They also understood the value of significant professional development activities for their advancement. As Sey [18] mentioned, teachers were concerned about the COVID-19 crisis; therefore, they still joined online workshops and training programs to learn something new. It is a kind of continuing professional development as well. Sey [18] finally addressed that educational and organizational staff started to develop their self-learning even if it was difficult. A case study by Sey and Em [19] declared that students were not positively engaged with online platforms such as Zoom. Moreover, Sey [20] addressed in his finding that students were afraid when they learned on Google Classroom because of teachers' qualifications, and it is not internationally recognized. Therefore, teachers should take part in CPD to improve their teaching.

Last but not least, the study of Lee [21] demonstrated how teacher knowledge generation and sharing opportunities at CPD seminars might enhance student learning. The

study concludes that teachers should take on a considerably more active role in CPD activities than is typically permitted in CPD activities dominated by the traditional training paradigm focused on knowledge consumption. Providing continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities that allow employees to quickly acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to incorporate new teaching approaches into their course design may lessen this issue in Littlejohn [22]. In addition, the professional development process is continual and changes as teachers evaluate and reevaluate their teaching philosophies and methods Alice [23]. Moreover, Richards and Farrell [24] added that CPD can help teachers in their language teaching with a successful result. According to Morris [25], there are different environments in primary and secondary schools, both in terms of pedagogy and practice and the ICT abilities of the teachers. Consequently, Shawer [26] also provided recommendations for teacher, curriculum, and school development regarding CPD.

Additionally, this study will respond to the following research inquiries, including 1). What is CPD, and how is it essential in your career? and 2). How often do you participate in CPD? The researcher will interview the respondents flexibly and can ask various questions besides the main research questions to find out the truth of the answers.

2. METHOD

The research methodology used in this study was qualitative. In qualitative research, a broad question is presented, and in-person and online interviews are used to collect verbal data, which is subsequently analyzed for common themes. This research aims to answer a question Without attempting to quantify or examine possible quantitative relationships between variables.

Six respondents participated in this research. Purposeful sampling is used to select interview results for the study based on their capacity to share and produce information-rich output Tongco [27]. In this case, six interviewees were chosen from 6 different schools in Cambodia. Among the six respondents, there were two school leaders and four teachers. The researcher selected the two school leaders and four teachers because the researcher aimed to compare the perceptions of school leaders and teachers and whether they have similar or different food for thought regarding Continuing Professional Development.

The researcher took notes during the interview and recorded what the respondents said. Finally, the researcher analyzed and interpreted the gathered data using visualization to make readers easily understand Fussell et al. [28].

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This result can alert school leaders and teachers to award Continuing Professional Development to improve the school's quality of education. With a combination of the previous study results, a researcher in this paper strongly believes that school leaders and teachers will gain valuable discoveries from this paper and will change their minds to love CPD and participate in every CPD event in or outside schools.

3.1. Demographic Data

a. Interviewee Profile

A thorough profile of each of the five participants in the critical informant interview is provided in Table 1 below. There are two females and four males, respectively. One participant is 40 years old, two are 22 years old, and another three are 25 years old. Two interviewees finished their Master's degree, and another three respondents finished their Bachelor's degree. Moreover, two respondents hold positions as school leaders, and three hold positions as teachers of English.

Table 1. Interviewees Profile

Participants	1	2	3	4	5	6
Gender	Male	Female	Male	Male	Male	Female
Age	22	22	25	40	25	25
Education	B.A. Student	B.A.	B.A.	M.A.	M.A.	M.A.
Designation	Teacher of English	Teacher of English	Teacher of English	School Principal	Vice-School Principal	Teacher of English
Years of Work Experience	1	2	3	9	4	7

3.2. Research Findings According to the Questions

a. What is CPD, and how is it important in your career?

Interview Results

This first research question was answered by six respondents, including four teachers and two school leaders responded to this question.

The first respondent, a teacher of English working at one private school, shared his idea that *CPD referred to learning new techniques and methods to improve our ability in the workplace*. He also added that *for my idea, CPD is so important for my career because I can develop my knowledge from a year to a year. Moreover, it can help me find my weakness and constantly improve. I always take a professional development test every year, but I do not know whether it is the same. I am looking forward to joining more CPD events in the future*. He finally pointed out that my salary is also relevant to my continuing professional development because my boss always asked all staff to submit certificates from different webinars or workshops to store in teachers' portfolios. *Then, the academic team will check yearly to see how we develop ourselves in a year with CPD. Finally, they also gave us some credits for taking part in CPD*. This can be explained by the fact that the first respondent valued CPD to identify his points to be improved and learn a better skill for the next day. Without CPD, his salary would not be increased in the workplace because it is one of his work requirements.

The next teacher said that *it is important to sharpen and update the skills as we grow in the profession for a few reasons, such as increasing capacity in completing the tasks in the role, potential for promotion, and self-growth. It mainly depends on the arrangements of my office, and occasionally I sign up by myself*. She is passionate

about joining CPD for improvements. Finally, she added that continuing professional development is suitable for all teachers around the world, and she recommended that she would like to suggest all teachers pay close attention to developing themselves.

Another respondent from a private school in Phnom Penh mentioned that *I am a teacher of English. I love learning new things through CPD, such as webinars, workshops, and sharing sessions with other mentors or staff in and outside the school. Continuing professional development is a process of making a seminar for teachers' teaching improvements. I think taking part in CPD is important because I can learn and upgrade myself to be a better teacher in the future. However, I sometimes have no time to join the CPD for teachers due to personal problems such as my health and family. For instance, my health is not in good condition. Hence, I have to take my time to enjoy myself. I have a few children in the family. I have to take care of them because no one stays with me. My husband has gone to work so far. My children and I stay home. So I have to take care of them. I feel guilty about not spending much time joining the CPD for teachers. However, I like it. It helps me to improve my knowledge.* This can be interpreted that she also wanted to join any CPD events but did not have much time. She wished she could learn new skills and knowledge from the CPD. Finally, she added that *when my children grow, I think I can join any CPDs conducted by schools.*

The fourth respondent, currently teaching English at the secondary level, responded that *I think CPD is something that the school's boss or management team creates designed activities to develop capacities in teachers' teaching. I think CPD is good for me. However, I rarely see any workshops in my workplace. I usually joined outside my workplace. Probably, my school is not standard yet, so the school principals did not conduct any CPD for teachers. I have just been working here at the moment. My school is small, and it has few CPDs for teachers. I think I can also join CPD to improve my career pathway.* This clearly explained that the respondent wanted to participate in CPD for teachers. However, she found that her workplace is small, so she did not see a lot of CPDs for teachers. She would love to join CPD in the future.

Interestingly, one school principal in a private school pointed out that *CPD is the process of routinely enhancing skills and competencies to improve job performance and future career chances, known as continuing professional development. Regardless of occupation, age, or educational level, participating in CPD activities keeps academic and practical credentials up to date and helps people continually upskill or re-skill themselves. A dedication to lifelong Learning is continuous professional development. CPD promotes thinking ahead and spotting opportunities to gain new knowledge, brush up on existing knowledge, sharpen skills, or stay current with recent advancements in a particular profession or business. In actuality, CPD can refer to anything from enrolling in a training program, attending a seminar, studying for new certifications, or picking up new skills related to a job.* He also added that *Learning can become conscious and proactive rather than unconscious and reactive with the*

help of continuing professional development. It entails tracking and documenting a person's growing knowledge, experience, and abilities throughout their career. CPD integrates several learning approaches, including webinars, online eLearning courses, training sessions, seminars, workshops, conferences, and events. CPD can also involve exchanging best practices, ideas, and opinions to enhance an individual's performance at work. Usually, it is up to the professional to be responsible for this lifelong Learning. It demonstrates that they are always trying to develop and have initiative and genuine enthusiasm for their profession. However, a person's willingness to put in the extra effort required for CPD may depend on their employment and feelings about advancement. While you should promote participation and emphasize the value of ongoing professional development among your team, you also need to ensure they are motivated to participate out of loyalty to the business and their position. Businesses can encourage employees to participate in CPD in several ways, such as flexible scheduling, part-time seminars, events, exhibitions, and courses. The improvement of employee skills is essential for corporate growth and networking opportunities. Enterprise learning also allows you to design personalized courses specific to your business's needs. The principal explained that CPD is so helpful for teachers and that all teachers and staff should engage in CPD to develop skills and knowledge.

The last respondent, a vice-school principal in a private school, said that to assist you in managing and enhancing your professional development, a collection of ideas, techniques, and tactics known as "continuing professional development" has been developed. It applies to most organizations and professions, including marketing, IT, law, technology, and education. Although the focus is on the outcomes, CPD can provide you with a variety of skills that you can apply to interpersonal interactions daily. To ensure that professionals are prepared for the next challenge, CPD supports intentional and proactive Learning over passive and reactive Learning. Conferences, workshops, online courses, and e-learning are just a few ways people can develop and use their skills at work. Educational background, or stage in your professional career, CPD ensures that your existing academic and practical credentials never get stale and gives you the learning chance to advance your skills further.

Additionally, CPD is helpful if you need to adjust to changes in the workplace. The world of today is changing quickly. Therefore, participating in CPD will help you prepare for employment and show employers that you are dedicated to maintaining professionalism and personal growth. In essence, it ensures your proficiency and ability in your job and instills abilities designed explicitly for advancement in your particular industry.

- b. How often do you participate in CPD?

Interview Results

The first and second interviewees claimed that my career required the staff to join continuing professional development. For example, when joining the workshops, we always receive a certificate of attendance at the end of the session. Moreover, I need to

use this certificate to keep it in my teaching portfolio. I want every teacher to take the CPD course because it is helpful for us. I always participate in CPD. This can be noted that the first respondent permanently joined continuing professional development for future improvements.

Moreover, the third respondent said she did not have much *time to join CPD. However, she found that continuing professional development is important for teachers to develop themselves to be better ones in the future.* She continued that *I rarely took part in CPD for some reasons from her family and especially her children.*

Another teacher declared in the interview that *I love CPD and permanently joined continuing professional development. However, my workplace did not always create webinars, workshops, and teacher training. I wish I could join one day.* Therefore, she wanted more workshops in the future.

Based on the fourth respondent, a principal, mentioned that *I always join CPD even though I am busy. I have to spend my time developing myself through continuing professional development. Moreover, I always motivate my staff and management members to participate in the CPD for teachers. For me, I never missed CPD to develop myself.* Finally, he agreed that he always took part in professional development.

Ironically, the last respondent said *I also joined CPD, as always. I love it and look forward to sharing it with my staff. Hence, I have to develop myself as a role model. Teachers should also focus on extra Learning because CPD provides the framework for a professional to take appropriate action to decrease any knowledge gaps and enables an individual to routinely apply focus and attention to critical areas of their growth.* He clearly said that he permanently joined CPD for development.

Finally, this study also implied that school leaders and teachers have shared similar perspectives regarding Continuing Professional Development. However, one teacher complained about Continuing Professional Development because she did not have enough time to join due to a few main reasons, such as family conditions and funds.

To sum up, after receiving some information from the respondents, we can explain that all teachers and staff must pay close attention to continuing professional development to improve themselves. Teachers should spend time on CPD improvement and for future benefits. Further, as the name of teachers, we should try to develop lifelong Learning for a better life.

3.3. Discussion

The above findings also supported Day [29] that teachers should spend time on professional development to succeed in their careers. Furthermore, Cornford [30] research

study suggested that learning-to-learn skills are crucial for effective lifelong Learning to develop over a lifetime. These abilities, which include cognitive and metacognitive learning techniques, have generally been overlooked in assessments of lifelong learning-related problems and policy creation. As research by David [31] added, teachers must develop themselves to become professionals through CPD. However, there will be some difficulties for those who do not want to take part in continuing professional development.

Interestingly, the World Bank [32] declared that although resources must be managed effectively, more spending is necessary to take advantage of learning opportunities during a lifetime. Another study by Yurtsever [10] supported this paper and presented four methods of professional development: training, mentoring, peer coaching, and self-directed. In short, many researchers recommended that teachers participate in CPD for growth. It is one of the best ways to develop oneself to become a better person and professional.

4. CONCLUSION

Findings in this study suggested that CPD is essential for teachers or staff to advance in their teaching careers. It can be explained that continuing professional development is an essential process of helping teachers upgrade themselves from the inexperienced past to present and future success. Moreover, teachers can be promoted to another job position that suits with him or them based on their CPD development. The teaching effectiveness perceived by students and close colleagues comes first, followed by the benefits to the whole school of teachers investing in their professional growth, and finally, broader social benefits outside of the school's walls. Such advantages are especially apparent when the philosophy guiding an organization's approach to continuing professional development (CPD) is less focused on learning new skills to the management's specifications and more linked to the development of invested learning communities within settings and of individuals who are curious about how developing themselves has positive effects that are not limited to the self but have broader implications.

A CPD-informed attitude toward one's profession gives advantages over others in terms of career and makes the current role easier because the educator is well-versed in changing contexts and absorbs information throughout the school year rather than being burdened with forced Learning when updates are imposed. CPD is important because not all educationalists embark on career-long development. Institutional impediments are sometimes a factor in why people choose not to participate in CPD, and it can also be more straightforward for educators to stop pursuing their professional development once they have a job. It might be more helpful to view earning a teaching credential as the start of a CPD journey rather than the culmination of training and development.

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