Professional Learning Community Strategy In Realizing Quality Education At The Kindergarten PLC And Improving Education Quality

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Abstract: This study aims to find the strategy of Professional Learning Community (PLC) activities to make improvements in teaching practices. The problem is the lack of development of PLC activities carried out for the level of kindergarten education. The research use a qualitative case study method and conducted in 2 private HIBER Kindergarten for 6 months by conducting interviews, observations, documentation, and studying field notes. The results of the study indicate that creating a learning community, collaborative leader, and building school identity values are the keys to PLC growth strategies in schools to create excellent schools. The implications of the results of this study are: 1) PLC must be continuously developed in kindergarten to achieve the quality; 2) there needs to be a common understanding of school culture and values; 3) the presence of leaders who are able to build trust and openness to dialogue.

Keywords: Professional Learning Community (PLC), Quality, Education, and Kindergarten.

Introduction

Quality early childhood education encourages the improvement of children's cognitive, socio-emotional abilities, and academic achievements (Barnett, 2010; Schweinhart, 2013). The results showed that early academic skills and school readiness could be used as predictors of future academic success (Duncan et al., 2007), and the quality of early childhood education correlates with long-term education and success in the economy (Campbell et al., 2012; Schweinhart, 2013). Providing professional educators for early childhood education is one way to achieve those goals. Specific training can improve teachers' knowledge and skills (Fukkink & Lont, 2007). However, most teachers do not have access to quality training (Ã et al., 2008; Gomez et al., 2015; Linder et al., 2016; Rusby,

2002). Constraints that often occur are limited in time, places that are far and difficult to reach, and transportation are often reported to be inhibiting factors, especially schools located in rural areas (Ã et al., 2008; Linder et al., 2016; Rusby, 2002). Teachers as one of the components in education must continue to improve their abilities and skills in the teaching and learning process, so that they have the insight and attitude of teacher professionalism. This increase will be achieved if teachers have facilities that can be used to exchange information and experiences and help each other to solve the challenges which are faced by each teacher at school, so they are able to solve several problems related to professional educational tasks and PCL is one of the media

that can be used to overcome these problems (Schuck et al., 2013; Sjoer & Meirink, 2016).

The basis for the formation of PLC is the existence of a shared vision with the aim of being able to synergize with each other to achieve the desired goals together (Antinluoma et al., 2018). PLC can be described as a group of people who support each other, collaborate, reflective, and be oriented towards improving teaching practices which is aimed to improve student learning outcomes (Stoll et al., 2006). Part of PLC activities that can be carried out consisting of self-evaluation, reflective discovery, dialogue, collaborative learning, and problem solving (Hipp, K. and Huffman, 2010) have proposed five dimensions of an effective PLC based on Hord's thinking that includes supportive leadership and share; shared values and vision; collective learning and application; shared private practice and supportive conditions. The existence of a special time division, focusing on learning problems, initiation from the leadership, the existence of innovation, and the school as a change are an effective PLC implementation strategy (Stoll et al., 2005). The main purpose of the formation of PLC is to be able to provide and broaden the teacher's perspective on the reality and problems faced, improve organizational skills and capabilities (Hord, 1997). Basically, the biggest goal to be achieved is the creation of quality schools. This can only be achieved if teachers are motivated to carry out their duties well so that principals can involve and engage teachers in various school activities and provide great responsibility.

PLC encourages openness between teachers so that they can bring about change towards continuous improvement and become a value in the organization. The success of implementing PLC can be seen from the emergence of activities that can have a positive impact on teachers, such as in discussion activities that relates to the implementation of learning in the classroom which can create an exchange of new and innovative thought or ideas than when teachers do other activities such as reading books, following seminars or further studies.

This can happen because PLC encourages teachers to build concepts within themselves through identifying all the problems encountered in educational practices and being able to provide solutions to these problems (Hord, 1997).

PLC is designed as a forum for teachers to engage in exploring strengths and weaknesses with colleagues, developing collaborative solutions for teaching practice problems, and implementing new ideas collectively for the benefit of students (Brodie, 2017). PLC opens teachers' knowledge and shares it with others and becomes a medium of shared learning (Katz et al., 2014). However, the facts that occur in the field of using and developing PLC in the scope of early childhood education are still rare. So that this PLC activity has not been able to provide an optimal contribution in empowering teachers. The factors that become the benchmark for the non-optimal role of PLC are teachers' understanding of sustainable development (PKB) which is still lacking, teacher participation in PLC activities is low, and the root of the problem is PLC activities that are not carried out in a sustainable manner (Samoot et al., 2015; Schaap & de Bruijn, 2018). In the context of early childhood education, effective professional development is related to improving children's pedagogy and learning outcomes (Cubey, 2003). A capaple PLC strategy is needed to overcome the obstacles that occur. Sometimes the leadership factors become the main focus of supporting the continuity of an effective PLC. Based on this idea, the main objective of this research is focusing on three things as PLC's main strategy, such as 1) building a learner culture; 2) developing collaborative leadership; 3) forming the organizational culture of values.

Literature Review

Characteristics of Professional Learning Community

It is necessary to identify more specific elements that influence PLC development, such as reflective dialogue, shared vision and

collaborative activities (Brouwer et al., 2012). These elements refer to collective learning in the context of PLC (Decuyper et al., 2010; Grossman et al., 2001; Lomos, 2011; Sigurðardóttir, 2010). PLC as a whole refers to a group of people who want to share and critically carry out continuous development, reflective, collaborative, inclusive, and oriented towards learning improvement (Stoll et al., 2006). PLC has basic components such as shared goals and reflective dialogue (Ã et al., 2008; Stoll et al., 2006). The concept is rooted in the knowledges and experiences that teachers have over the year to be shared with colleagues and collaborated to improve and develop them (Alma Harris. Jones, 2010; Lieberman & Mace, 2010).

Previous research has used five interrelated variables to define the PLC concept (Lomos, 2011). The first is reflective dialogue, regarding the extent to which teachers are involved in professional dialogue on matters related to teaching tasks. Second, deprivatization which refers to the activity of observing each other in the classroom with the aim of giving and receiving improvement feedback. Third, collaborative which refers to the extent to which teachers are professionally involved with others in PLC activities. Fourth, shared goals which refer to the extent to which teachers agree with the school's vision and strive to achieve that vision together. Fifth, collective focus which refers to the growing commitment with teachers to improve students achievement (Lomos, 2011). But the PLC concept is considered to be quite complex, so that the existing concept is still not enough, some researchers have added some characteristics to define a more developed concept, such as leadership (J. Huffman & Jacobson, 2015; Katz et al., 2014), program structured exercise (Voogt et al., 2011), and trust (Katz et al., 2014; Stoll et al., 2005, 2006). All these elements are interconnected, the changes that occur in one element will effect changes to other elements. This means that the characteristics are interrelated and operate together (Stoll et al., 2006; Sutherland & Katz, 2005).

A strong and sustainable PLC must be an integrated part of the school (Andy Hargreaves and Dean Fink, 2006; Stoll et al., 2006). Structural support and collaboration of systems and networks are needed to make changes towards school improvement (Alma Harris. Jones, 2010; Prenger et al., 2020). School networks can mobilize a wider range of resources and capacities, thus providing greater opportunities for personal and collective reflection for promoting more active and interactive engagement as a form of professional learner (Andy Hargreaves and Dean Fink, 2006; Katz et al., 2014; Lieberman & Mace, 2010). For PLC networks, schools can take their ideas and put them into practice in PLC depending on the strength of the school's capacity. Schools can also derive ideas and practices from PLC to create and share knowledge within schools (Katz et al., 2014). The role of the individual can be seen as a link between the school and PLC through active participation (Katz et al., 2014; Stoll et al., 2005). Therefore, PLC can be a potential choice to improve teacher professionalism which affects the improvement of student learning outcomes. Although it is considered that PLC features can have a positive effect on students achievement, there are still gaps in its implementation such as policies, expensive and complex structures, job challenges, culture, and professional attitudes (Alma Harris. Jones, 2010; Chapman et al., 2014; Sammons et al., 2007).

For school-based PLC, they have distinctive characteristics, such as having a shared vision and values; supporting shared leadership; collective learning; shared practice; having structural and relational support; and focusing on continuous improvement and oriented to student achievement (Dufour, 2007; Hipp, K. and Huffman, 2010; Hord, 1997; Schaap & de Bruijn, 2018). While Stoll highlights by adding mutual trust, respect and support between members, inclusive mutual openness, building networks and partnerships (Stoll et al., 2006). Creating a shared vision and values in building a school-based PLC requires a shared

commitment among PLC members. Developing a vision is the first step in PLC activities because it leads to the setting of norms that bind the behavior of the members (Hipp, K. and Huffman, 2010). Here the leader plays a very important role (Cherrington & Thornton, 2015; Dufour, 2007; Hipp, K. and Huffman, 2010). Leaders must be able to engage members in creating a shared vision and values, then they use them as a focus for continuous change. The leader here is defined not merely as a position but there is a distribution model which authority, power, decision-making and responsibility are shared to encourage shared commitment. (Hipp, K. and Huffman, 2010; Stoll et al., 2006)

The characteristics of collective learning are centered on continuous learning and the goal of collaborative learning is improving student learning outcomes. This activity is manifested in teacher activities observing either directly or through video recordings of how other teachers teach and creating and developing new practices, providing feedback, and reflecting on their teaching practices (Ingram, 2017). An effective and sustainable PLC requires structural and relational support. This structural support includes providing time and space for members to meet and discuss regularly as well as facilitating the arrival of external facilitators and their networks. At the main of this relationship is trusting and respecting between group members (Hipp, K. and Huffman, 2010; Stoll et al., 2006). Likewise, managing group dynamics and power relations among members is considered important (Jones et al., 2013). Teachers as professional learners aim to improve teacher performance in current and future teaching practices (Desimone, 2015). Building networks between teachers to collaborate in PLC is one of ways for teachers to learn (Ã et al., 2008; Katz et al., 2014; Stoll et al., 2006).

Collaborative Leadership

PLC requires support from school organizations and this is closely related to the principal's leadership factors (J. B. Huffman et al., 2015;

Katzenmeyer & Moller, n.d.; Muijs & Harris, 2006). The form of collaborative leadership in PAUD has been the focus of studies in several studies (Denee & Thornton, 2013; Heikka & Waniganayake, 2012; Krieg et al., 2014; Stamopoulos, 2011; Thornton, 2010) it is stated that collaborative leadership is often associated with distributive leadership. With this kind of collaborative approach, it reinforces the idea that the leader is not only seen as a position but there is a collective process that frames leadership as a form of shared responsibility for a change (Heikka & Waniganayake, 2012; Stamopoulos, 2011; Thornton, 2010). Leadership requires professional skills to build capacity and recognize the importance of collegial relationships. Even so, the leader in a positional sense is still considered important in building relationships because the role inherent in this leader can use the influence of his position to interact with his members.

Participation in PLC provides an opportunity to understand and apply this collaborative leadership practice. This leadership model is considered to be more flexible than hierarchical leadership. Collaborative leadership is more inspiring because it is willing to involve sharing responsibilities and joint decision making. Principals with a collaborative leadership style provide broad opportunities for teachers by giving great responsibility. Principals who are directly involved, open up opportunities, and provide resources in participatory decision-making to develop school-based PLC are more likely to improve school quality (Gurr & Drysdale, 2018; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2010; Li, 2014; Liu & Hallinger, 2018). Participatory decision making can be used to more understand the school's vision and values (Hipp, K. and Huffman, 2010). Teachers show more personal interest in teaching through discussions with peers, so teachers will be more supportive of this leadership pattern (Angelle et al., 2014; Fevre & Robinson, 2015). Practicing collaborative leadership is not easy, it requires mutual trust among community members. Reluctance to share can be a major obstacle to this leadership practice. As a result, many

communities spend the first time for discussing trust and how they build trust within the group. Sharing experiences helps to develop an attitude of trust.

Focus on Improving Students' Learning

A review of the PLC literature shows that the teacher's focus improves students' learning through empowering teachers' professional growth (Ã et al., 2008). Development of teacher leadership skills, when they set learning targets and create a learning environment that opens wider opportunities for students to receive constructive feedback, develop self-confidence in the learning process, and improve students achievement (Stoll et al., 2006). Building an effective PLC can also help teachers develop shared responsibility for enhancing student learning and collaboration is a key (Poekert, 2012). When teachers are engaged in collaborative learning, they come together to find ways of teaching that suit the diverse needs of students and improve student learning outcomes (Hairon & Tan, 2016; J. B. Huffman et al., 2015; Wallen & Tormey, 2019). The effective collaboration creates great opportunities for the growth of reflective dialogue (J. B. Huffman et al., 2015).

Methodology

Research Design

Research selected to answer the problems that arise is using a case study approach. The choice of this approach aims to gain deeper insight into the form of PLC strategy to achieve the desired quality and answer why and how questions regarding process-related problems (Sahlin & Styf, 2021). The case study design was chosen based on the idea which the case study is able to describe holistically a certain phenomenon. Where the phenomenon is unique and this case is understood as a unique phenomenon. In this study, we wanted to find out how PLCs are

developed intensively and sustainably by looking at the form of learner groups that are developed, the role of collaborative leadership to build trust and commitment, and identifying values as forming school identity in relation for achieving the desired quality of kindergarten education units through the involvement of PLC in it.

Sample and Data Collection

In selecting the research site, we used a purposive sample for this study. The kindergarten education unit that was deliberately chosen was the private kindergartens which was located in Bandung, West Java, with the reason that private kindergartens had different characters and conditions from state kindergartens. From the total number of kindergartens in Bandung, 487 have private status and just 4 ones have state status. The reason the number of comparisons between private and public kindergartens is too far, because the level of kindergarten education has just been recognized as a formal education level. Therefore, the government's priority to equalize the levels of the kindergarten education pathway has not long been started. Later on, each district will be established one state kindergarten. For the private kindergarten that was used as the research sample, it will be chosen which has advantages and distinctive characters that becomes the identity of the school. Based on those considerations, we chose 2 private kindergartens to serve as pilot kindergartens in Bandung, such as Al Muhajir Islamic Kindergarten and Ashfiya Kindergarten. The first kindergarten is affiliated with religion and the second one belongs to the general kindergarten category. The number of teachers who are taken from both schools equal 22 people, which all of teachers were female with the highest education level of bachelor. Every teacher has the different experiences in terms of teaching.

Table 1 Level of Education and Teaching Experiences

The 1st Islamic Kindergarten		The 2nd Islamic Kindergarten	
Education	Experience	Education	Experience

High school: 2	1-5 years: 2	High school:2	1-5 years:1
S1: 6	6-10 years: 5	S1: 7	6-10 years: 4
	11-15 years: 1		11-15 years:4

The level of education and teaching experience by researchers need to be included in the data because they are considered as one of the supporting components of PLC empowerment efforts. The steps of critical thinking and finding problem solutions in the classroom are unwittingly directly related to level of education where the higher someone's education level, it's expected that she has been accustomed to think critically and systematically. The length of teaching is also expected to shape someone into a professional teacher who is wealthy in experiences in various situations and conditions.

Two kindergartens that were selected as the research samples were chosen to be PAUD HIBER by Bandung City PAUD Education Department. PAUD HIBER is one of the innovations to optimize early childhood education. This movement is an effort to develop holistic and integrated PAUD education which includes the aspects of education, health, nutrition, and welfare protection. The development of PAUD HIBER shows the social, cultural, and economic dimensions. Every sub-district only has one PAUD HIBER. Apart from being appointed as PAUD HIBER, these schools are also used as INTI schools, which are obliged to foster the other kindergartens in the same area. This fostered kindergarten is called TK IMBAS.

The data were obtained through interviews with principals, teachers, and administrators of the GUGUS PAUD, either in individually or group; formal and non-formal; making observations about PLC activities and studying documentation that related to PLC documents; and field notes. The different data collection methods are often used in case study research due to their complexity (Simon, 2016) and to gain depth of data and broad contextual understanding of the case to be studied. The data collection process was carried out for 6 months to 2 kindergartens that were used as research sites.

Table 2 Interview, Observation, and Contextual Data of the Case

Individual interview	2 principals (4 interviews)/formal and informal
Individual interview	5 teachers (3 interviews)/formal and informal
Individual interview	2 leaders of GUGUS PAUD (3 interviews)/formal and informal
Group interview	17 teachers (4 interviews)/formal informal
Observations and other supporting data	- School visits - PLC activity observations - Field notes

Data was collected for 6 months (December 2020-June 2021). This data consists of interviews with 2 kindergarten principals from 2 different schools and 5 vice principals from 3 vice principals of the first Islamic kindergarten and 2 vice principals from the second one regarding to PLC program and its implementation and how they operate the PLC. Qualitative research interviews were conducted in schools and lasted about 60-90 minutes. Individual interviews were also conducted with 2 heads of the GUGUS PAUD in different areas. The interview was aimed for gathering information related to the role of the GUGUS PAUD in PLC activities and how collaboration was formed between GUGUS PAUD and schools. Group interviews were conducted with 17 teachers, consisting of 8 teachers from the

first Islamic Kindergarten and 9 teachers from the second one. The researcher deliberately created discussion groups for teachers to get in-depth and large amounts of data. The main topic of discussion in this discussion group is related to the form of PLC activities provided for teachers, the way they are involved, what kind of leadership factors that play in mobilizing resources and how school culture is able to form an effective learning community. The interviews were conducted based on the interview guide that had been prepared previously by conducting developments in the field. Interviews were recorded and stored in digital audio files, then it was transcribed verbatim. During the data collection period, the school has conducted several PLC activities. The data collected during the activity was carried out by observing and studying documents related to PLC activities. We followed the activities of principals and teachers, this is used as a way to gain a deeper understanding in the context of the case.

Table 3 Data Collection Process

Data sources	Focus	Duration
Audio and video recordings of PLC activities which was carried out by teachers such as workshops, training, class meetings, and the other meetings	- The form of PLC activities both internal and external - Teacher involvement in PLC activities - Interaction and discussion between PLC members	Three times in a week
Observation ffield notes	- Behavior and gesture of participants in PLC activities - Interaction and communication that occurs - Developed collaboration	- 7 sessions of observation process - 18 total field notes
Semi-structured interviews with principals, teachers, and GUGUS PAUD administrator	- Experience serving as a school principal - Teaching experience as a teacher - Educational level of school principals and teachers - The role of leadership in PLC empowerment - The role of the PAUD Cluster in PLC - The form of PLC activities carried out by the teacher - Assessment of the teacher's response to the PLC activities carried out	- The total of 10 interviews with different informants - Duration varies between 60-90 minutes
Activity documentations	All documents that related to PLC activities	35 total documentations are collected

By conducting semi-structured interviews, the researchers aim to collect information and data more deeply and broadly. The interview guide is still made by the researchers as a guide to the interview protocol and expands the questions as a follow-up if it's necessary by the researchers, because of the answers given by the informants require further clarification.

Analyzing of Data

Data analysis is based on an approach to examine the important components of a phenomenon under study (Patton, 2015). Data analysis was carried out through four steps. The first phase of analysis involves an initial review and then coding (Patton, 2015). Every result of observations and interviews that have been carried out, both audio and video were collected to be transcribed into writing and given coding. All documents were analyzed using meaningful codes. Empirical data are read repeatedly to get an overall understanding. Texts about participants' experiences and perceptions of PLC were extracted and put together into a common theme. The entire text is then read to identify groups of meanings. The second step identifies key concepts to find recurring information points and analyze the interconnections between codes. After the data is separated according to its meaning, the integrity of the whole data will be found (Patton, 2015). In the third step, the researcher examines the inference meaning. The researchers analyzed every action, speech, gesture, and perception that was considered the best to answer the research questions. The analysis was done manually in the data processing program. This work requires an iterative reading of the transcription of the first draft. All t ranscripts were reread to assess category validity. The final one is using data triangulation to increase the validity of the data. To validate data sources from various data collection methods that have been used such as observation, interviews and artifact collection by exploring thoroughly and in depth to reduce the bias potential. Extended observations are also carried out to collect and redevelop data that are deemed necessary to be completed.

Findings / Results

Creating a Learning Culture

Quality demands on teachers are not limited to aspects of mastering teaching materials and being able to teach well, but also having the competence to develop their competencies and lead students to grow by having good competency standards. For this reason, teachers are required to continue to improve their professionalism, one of which is through internal coaching towards peer groups in their community. One of the obstacles that faced by teachers in following this self-improvement is related to time. Teachers will have limited time and opportunity to improve their quality, especially if they have to go through a formal or non-formal education process. They only have the opportunity to improve the quality of professionalism through an informal process, without classes, teachers, and maybe even without a binding schedule. The only way they can improve themselves is through professional group mentoring. This process can be done in the middle of their work time, with co-workers, and can be done in their work place. Therefore, teachers must be involved in PLC activities.

The results of research conducted in 2 Kindergartens imply that in order to participate in this professional community, every teacher must have an attitude of empathy for their fellow teacher colleagues, be willing to adapt and be accepted by their professional environment, be responsive to various shared problems, also be contributive and willing to listen to others. PLC activities that have been carried out so far have become like routines. As seen in table 4.

Table 4 PLC Activities

The 1st Islamic Kindergarten	The 2nd Islamic Kindergarten

- ISMUA (Islam, Modern, Ukhuwah, Action) - Activities: Workshops, training, seminars, meetings, and class meetings - Assembly Duration: 60-120 minutes (3 times in a week)	- ELE (Explore-Live in Expose) - Activities: Workshops, trainings, seminars, meetings, moving classes, and comparative studies - Duration: 60-120 minutes (2 times in a week)

All teachers are involved and play an active role in PLC activities. Starting from the preparation of the PLC work program which will be carried out for 1 semester of the academic year. At the beginning of the semester, a meeting was held to discuss training and self-development activities that all teachers can participate in. This activity becomes a routine at the beginning of each semester and they call it ISMUA (Islam, Modern, Ukhuwah, Action). This is the basis for thinking and acting in the first Islamic Kindergarten. They call it ISMUA (Islam, Modern, Ukhuwah, Action) because Islam is the foundation and values that are embraced and upheld by schools, Modern means that schools continue to innovate and try to always keep abreast of current developments, Ukhuwah means always building good relationships with others, and Action means there needs to be real actions that being taken by teachers to make improvements and other efforts to improve their abilities in improving student learning outcomes.

ISMUA establishes PLC activities as a means of realizing a shared vision to achieve quality that being expected through joint self-development. The realization of PLC in schools can be in the form of activities carried out by the teacher working group (KKG) or the principal working group (KKS). Both of these activities are external in nature carried out at the sub-district level. This activity includes the work plans for the GUGUS PAUD including seminars, training or workshops. Indeed, in terms of cost, time and capacity, the PLC program carried out together with the GUGUS PAUD is larger and been planned, but the effectiveness of this activity is still considered very low in terms of teacher capacity building. Based on the opinions that have been summarized, this is mostly caused by technical

factors, the limited time that teachers have to take part in activities outside of school and leave the teaching schedule, accommodation and access which somehow makes it difficult for teachers because the location used as a meeting place is too far away sometimes, and the need is not in accordance with the training theme that has been prepared by the GUGUS PAUD. Anticipating the obstacles that cause the ineffectiveness of PLC activities is organized by the GUGUS PAUD, schools must be able to develop internal PLCs with the advantages of time flexibility, suitability between needs and the theme of activities, full participation of all teachers. The involvement of teachers in compiling PLC work programs is the main key in the continuity of PLCs in schools. The teachers are more aware of the obstacles they encounter in class and their weaknesses, so they can share the knowledge and experiences that they know and have.

This second kindergarten is one of the HIBER Kindergartens and becomes the core Kkndergarten which is tasked for providing guidance to the surrounding kindergartens within its working area. This requires the school to prove its existence as well. Quality is the main point in all school activities. The learning culture is reflected in the activities called ELE (Explore-Live in Expose) which are one of the school's strategic activity plans. ELE is the identity of teachers' attitudes and behaviors that can be described as active, creative, innovative, and constantly learning. The involvement of teachers in this activity is manifested in the form of actively participating in seminar activities. Workshops, comparative studies, training, and other self-development activities as a form of PLC activities both carried out in the school's internal and external environment. This activity is routinely held, in a semester it is

usually carried out 3-4 times by bringing in the trainers/resource people from outside.

Weekly meetings are also routinely held, at least 2 times in a week are held after learning hours are over. This session discusses a lot of daily problems which is faced by teachers related to their teaching tasks. All teachers are given the opportunity to present problems. Here, it can be seen that their teaching experiences can contribute to solving problems by providing suggestions and alternative solutions. Open dialogue and high participation from teachers are able to create a professional learning environment that is able to create meaningful learning content in an effective format and integrate it into learning. Finding new things, encouraging collaboration between teachers by creating innovative learning media in achieving the goal of increasing student learning outcomes. Openness not only serves as an instrument to deal with differences but also to stimulate creativity. When openness becomes an important part in overcoming the obstacles, then openness can become an instrument to be able to improve the situation. Teachers also need to be involved in activities organized by professional groups formed by the local government. This media is called the GUGUS PAUD. Each GUGUS PAUD in 1 sub-district needs to make work plans related to the improvement and professional development of PAUD teachers. At least in a month there is one activity that must be realized. The working mechanism is almost the same as the teacher working group created by the school, where teachers are involved in discussion activities, seminars, workshops, and other development activities. The wider area coverage and more heterogeneous training materials make professional learning groups at the GUGUS PAUD level as complementary learning groups which is formed at the school level.

Developing Collaborative Leaders

Reforming and even improving the quality of schools, PLC requires supportive school organizational conditions. these factors are closely related to the principal's leadership factors. When the principal's leadership is able to increase teacher involvement, it opens opportunities for participatory decision making to teachers. In the two PLC groups, each principal provides opportunities for each teacher to work together by sharing the experiences of each principal's leadership in a collaborative style which is assessed more successful in changing school culture towards learning schools. as the teacher said:

> "The principal is always involved in PLC activities by contributing to provide input on the strategic plans that will be carried out. Monitoring, evaluating, and following-up to the implementation of activities are always routinely carried out every month" (reflection notes).

PLC optimization will help teachers to be more involved and committed together in making changes towards quality schools. Teacher participation in PLC activities starts from the planning, implementation, evaluation stages, to jointly carry out follow-up improvements. This stage needs to be done gradually to increase the teacher's confidence as a successful implementer. Principals have a central role in advancing educational institutions. In practice, it takes continuous efforts to match the interests of the organization with its members. In organizations, including schools, a leader who can inspire, stimulate intellectually, and be able to provide a strong impetus is very required, so the value of this leader is able to give meaning as a whole organization and members that he leads. By building collaboration, you can create positive relationships with teams and work organizations. To achieve these desired goals, principals must be able to mobilize, cooperate, and empower teachers through the utilization of PLC activities. This collective work is more capable of generating many creative and constructive ideas.

Principals who are able to support teachers and professional learning are able to improve the quality of schools and student learning (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2010; Liu & Hallinger, 2018). When school programs are developed

from a participatory decision-making process, teachers may show personal interest and discuss with other teacher colleagues in relation to teaching and learning tasks. One way the principals can promote PLC is sharing leadership with teachers through involvement in both program planning, decision making, and acknowledging their contributions.

Concerns still remain about the apparent competition among PLC members. There is a tendency to show "who is better". Some teachers want to show competition with one another and be the center of attention. This competitive focus makes other teachers who don't want to compete feel uncomfortable and unsure if they are doing it right. Principals must be able to turn unbalanced competition into a moment to foster self-confidence and motivation for other teachers to have a role in PLC activities. Every teacher should be given the same opportunity to expose and grow the confidence of other teachers. Dimensions is related to shared vision, values, and collective learning are emphasized to help teachers engage in collegial learning. Both principals expressed their desire to make changes which faced by several obstacles, such as management capacity, limited teacher time, and the existing structure. The desired changes include building teacher relational trust, fostering teacher confidence in their abilities, listening more to teacher concerns, encouraging collaborative learning. Joint decision making and opening up opportunities for other teachers to become the next leader.

Building School Identity Values

The study revealed that the success of PLC implementation in the two kindergartens was determined not only by the dimensions of openness and collaboration, but also by the values that were re-aligned by incorporating religious values as the school's identity. This value can be observed in the behavior of teachers and students such as discipline, neatness, helpfulness, honesty, politeness, quality, and 'ukhuwah Islamiyah'. Alignment of school values with individual views requires a shared understanding that results in unity of purpose within the organization. The problems that often occur are the failure of individuals to understand the structure and culture of the organization where the organization is not able to integrate its values and culture into the view point of its members. Organizational structure can also cause different perspectives. The system is full of bureaucracy. The more variations in levels and complexity of the organizational structure will potentially hamper organizational performance. A system that is too bureaucratic and has too many levels makes it more difficult for principals and teachers to communicate and this leads to a low level of participation from individuals making it difficult to empower, especially in decision making. Principals and teachers need to emphasize that the common goal to achieve school quality which is contained in the vision becomes unified attitude, thinking, and action for its members. The values which is adopted by the organization can be used as benchmarks that guide the behavior of members in all conditions. These values will be cultured and become the distinctive identity of the organization.

Discussion And Implications

This study found several findings on how efforts were made so that PLC could be implemented optimally in building teacher skills in teaching. There is a positive response regarding the openness dimension that can improve and explore new teaching practices as well as reflective dialogue to discuss situations and challenges faced by the community. The implementation of PLC increases the ability of teachers in terms of teaching, the emergence of new ideas as a result of discussion and sharing, the ability of teachers to understand the character of students, teachers' confidence, and the quality of learning services. This cannot be separated from the principal's leadership role in facilitating PLC activities. The principal in this case acts as a leader, facilitator, motivator, supervisor, and evaluator. Therefore, the style and the ability of the principal to be one of the main   determining   factors   for   the

implementation success of this PLC. Collaborative leadership is the key to changing organizational culture. This type of school principal opens up opportunities to involve teachers in the process of program design, implementation, and follow-up as well as slowly making changes to increase mutual trust in the community. The findings show that considering implementing collaborative leadership requires consideration of the social circumstances and cultural values that are tied to the school. In the discussion that has been stated previously, there is still concern which this community is used as a place to show individual advantages over others. If that perception is allowed and continues to grow, it will become a barrier to the development of PLC in schools. The principal in this study realized the opportunity to develop collaboration by establishing relational trust with teachers. The importance of relational trust in collaborative leadership has been highlighted in several studies (Denee & Thornton, 2013; Heikka & Waniganayake, 2012; Stamopoulos, 2011). Trust is seen as the beginning of collaboration and it takes time to develop.

The findings obtained from the 2 different research settings imply that strategy for achieving school quality can be done through teacher professionalism development and empowerment. This strategic step already exists in the PLC concept and it is hoped that all kindergarten educational institutions in particular are able to develop school-based PLCs in their own institutions. It takes a long time to feel the PLC results. Crystallization of school values, leadership, openness, collaboration, desire to continue learning, and knowledge sharing need to be instilled to implement an effective PLC. For now, we can not just rely on PLC activities which is organized by external parties. Schools need to take initiatives and innovations so that PLC is able to develop at every level of the education unit and become a force for improving school services.

Research Limitations

This study aims to examine how strategies can be used to implement PLC in kindergarten educational institutions, especially private kindergartens. However, as a qualitative research conducted on a small scale covering only 2 Kindergarten educational institutions, it has clear boundaries. There were only 2 Kindergartens consisting of 17 participants from different school groups and they could not represent all PLC groups in other schools that were not the research setting. Differences in school characteristics, school structure, values, management capacity, and leadership are components that need to be considered. Limitations in terms of funds and time did not allow the researcher to conduct the research any longer. Therefore, the addition of samples and research locations was not possible. This has the potential to limit the experience, knowledge and insight that may be gained from these findings. The role of the first author as a researcher has the potential to be biased, but this has also been expressed by other researchers and triangulation of data is useful to reduce the bias (Cherrington & Thornton, 2015; Thornton, 2010).

Conclusion

PLC provides a platform for teachers to be able for developing their competencies which is related to their teaching tasks. If the teacher is not involved in the arrangement of the PLC program, then most likely the level of teacher participation is very low. Schools must be able to develop PLC independently with school-based design. Where PLC program plan needs can be adjusted to the needs and availability of school resources. There are still many schools, especially kindergarten educational institutions, that do not fully understand the functions and benefits that can be felt by developing school-level PLC. PLC activities which so far only emphasize activities held by the GUGUS PAUD are considered less effective in their impact on achieving the quality of learning services in schools. To anticipate the limitations that teachers find if they only participate in PLC

activities which is carried out by GUGUS PAUD, school principals must be able to motivate, develop relational trust, and increase the confidence of teachers to participate, contribute and be committed to implementing PLC on an ongoing basis. School values and culture are understood as part of the dimensions that are able to drive PLC in schools. With these values and culture, they are able to shape the character, identity of the school, and guide all members of the community into a common goal, namely the achievement of school quality as seen from the quality of student learning.

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