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Professional Development and Teacher Self-Efficacy: Learning from Indonesian Modern Islamic Boarding Schools

AZAM OTHMAN and ALI MASUM

Abstract

This study highlights teachers' involvement in professional development (PD) activities teachers in the Darussalam Modern Islamic Boarding School (DMIBS), East Java, Indonesia. It evaluates the implementation of PD programs by identifying teachers' perception toward PD they participated in. The study used a survey research approach to investigate professional development and the level of teacher's self-efficacy at the boarding school. The majority of teachers have a high level of satisfaction toward the implementation of PD activities in DMIBS in terms of course content, instructor, relevancy to teaching practice and course management. Also, teachers reported that the school had given them an adequate opportunity to participate in different types of PD activities. However, the study did not find significant differences between the length of teaching experience and teachers' academic qualifications in teachers' perceptions towards PD activities. Some studies found that teachers with higher levels of academic qualification, showed higher and increased levels of efficacy. However, the current study did not show similar results as teachers with degrees and DMIBS qualifications respectively showed no significant differences in their levels of efficacy. This indicates that having different academic qualifications did not affect the increase in teachers' efficacy.

Keywords: professional development, teacher's self-efficacy, modern Islamic boarding school.



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Introduction

In recent years some researchers have developed a new understanding of professional development (PD). They perceive PD as an ongoing process in which teachers consistently improve their professional knowledge, skills and attitudes along with their career through various development programs, either formally or informally (Guskey, 2003).

Fullan's (1991) definition specifically describes PD as long-term activities from the beginning until the end of a teachers career as; "the sum of formal and informal learning experience throughout one's career from pre-service teacher education to retirement" (p. 326). As such from this viewpoint, PD is not only about the short-term activities or training, but it provides teachers with a variety of learning opportunities which allows teachers adequate time to develop.

Professional Development (PD) is simply defined as a series of programs and activities designed to improve the professionalism of teachers in terms of knowledge, teaching competency, and attitude, which in turn enhances student learning capabilities (Guskey, 2003). Thus, any program or activities that assist teachers to be better in practice, more knowledgeable in a subject area they teach, to become more skillful and to have a good attitude, can be regarded as professional development.

Professional Development Framework

Professional development (PD) has been studied more and more by many researchers from different fields of social science. It is well known that Sparks and Hirsh (1997) were the researchers who introduced the concept of professional development and defined its role in education today. Many current-day researchers concerned with PD grounded their theory based on the concept of Sparks and Hirsh (1997).

According to Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick (2007), every program should at least be evaluated at the reaction level. This level gains knowledge about whether or not the participants liked the program and if it was relevant to their work. The current study aims to evaluate PD in terms of course management, content, instructor, and relevancy to job role. The perception of teachers in these four dimensions will determine the possibility of learning through programs. A positive perception about the programs will increase the possibility of learning, while negative perception will reduce the possibility of learning. Figure 1 describes how the perception of the teacher indicates the possibility of learning.

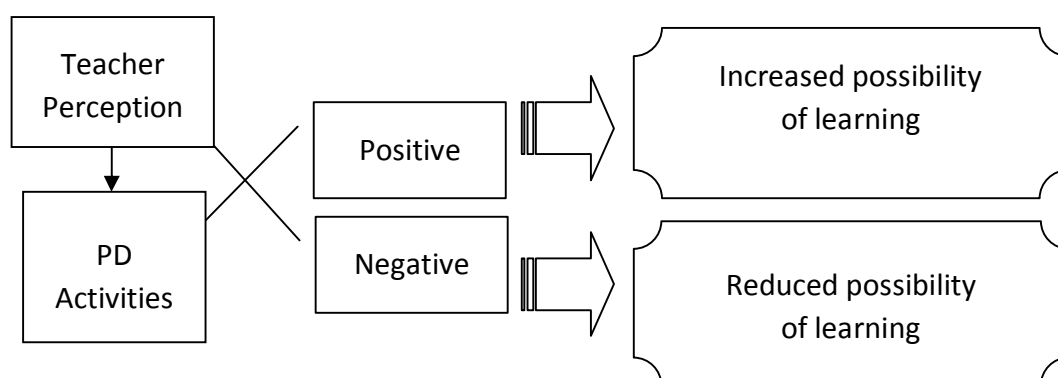


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework for Evaluation of PD based on Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick's (2007) Evaluation Model at Reaction Level

Self-efficacy is a perception of a person that he/she is able to accomplish a certain standard. Bandura (1977) suggested that there are four sources of information that could increase a level of self-efficacy such as enactive mastery experience, verbal persuasion, vicarious experience, and physiological and affective stress. Tshannen-Moran and Wolkfolk Hoy (2007) and Putman (2012) conducted studies on whether some factors such as teaching experience contributes to a high or low level of efficacy. As Figure 2 shows, teachers with different teaching experience and academic qualifications might exhibit differences in their levels of self-efficacy.

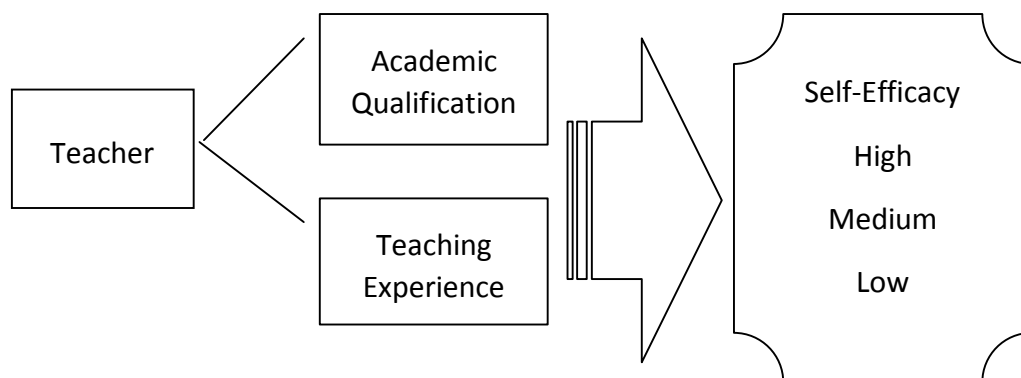


Figure 2. Theoretical Framework of Factors that Contribute to Teacher Self-Efficacy

Professional Development in Indonesia

In the context of Indonesia, PD is a key area of critical planning and agenda of the Ministry of National Education (MONE) to improve the quality of teachers. To do so, the Government of Indonesia (GOI) implemented the 'Teacher and Lecture Act' in 2005, which requires Indonesian teachers to meet the standard qualification set by MONE. Those who are not qualified and who do not meet the established criteria of teaching are given the opportunity to undergo training to teach through participation in certain PD courses such as certification, portfolio, seminar, and training programs.

However, recent studies on PD in Indonesia show that the program is applied top-down and MONE functions as the main PD provider, while teachers and schools act as receivers. Access to such a program is still restricted to teachers who teach in public schools. As for private schools, such as *pesantren* in particular, there is a lack of opportunity to get involved in PD programs set by MONE since the curriculum, system and management are different from that of public schools. Some private schools provide their own PD programs to ensure that their teachers have equal opportunity to be trained in a similar way to the development programs of the government.

Kulliyat al-Mu'allimĒn al-IslĒmiyyah (KMI Gontor) is an educational institution under the jurisdiction of Darussalam Modern Islamic Boarding School in Gontor, Ponorogo (DMIBS). This institution is responsible for the management of the educational activities at school level, i.e. high school education level (Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor [PMDG], 2010). KMI was established ten years after the establishment of DMIBS (December 19th, 1936) at Gontor, Ponorogo, East Java by three founders called *Trimurti*; K.H. Ahmad Sahal, K.H. Zainuddin Fannani, and K.H. Imam Zarkasyi to actualize the modernization of the education system at *Pesantren* which is part of the indigenous culture of Indonesia (PMDG, 2010).

Unlike other schools in Indonesia, KMI Gontor obligates students to undertake teaching practice for at least one year after graduation. Therefore, all teachers of KMI Gontor are alumni from this school, singled out on the basis of their dedication, achievement and attitude. Besides teaching, they carry out other tasks within the schools as students of Darussalam University and as assistants to head teachers (PMDG, 2010). As a private school, KMI Gontor through Teacher Career Development (TCD) sets up its own programs and activities to develop teachers' competences, skills and attitudes. This is to ensure the quality of teachers as well as to instill the school's values and philosophy into teachers (Zarkasyi, 2005).

In the context of Indonesia, professional development programs such as training, workshops and seminars are driven mainly by the MONE. The top-down approach in managing professional development means some schools in Indonesia do not function as a place of learning and development for teachers. As a result, some programs designed by the MONE are not relevant to the objectives of schools and the skills of teachers gained through programs do not meet expectations. Therefore, professional development of teachers is sometimes found ineffectual with this approach.

Some private schools in Indonesia have initiated their own programs and activities in order to improve teachers' skills and competencies, i.e. KMI Gontor. The school provides teachers PD activities which will enable them to undertake some functions within the school, teaching skills in particular. PD activities have since long been established in KMI Gontor. The programs have been planned, designed and conducted based on the school objectives and needs of the school, as well as those of the teachers. Also, the programs are conducted independently without government support since curriculum, system and management of the private schools are different from the public schools. Thus, KMI Gontor has initiated the new model of PD in Indonesia, in which the professional development programs are set by the school in which they are conducted.

This study attempts to answer the following research questions: (1) What is the teachers' perception toward professional development activities in KMI Gontor? (2) What are the current levels of teacher self-efficacy in each of the three following aspects: a. Classroom Management, b. Instructional Strategies, and c. Student Engagement.

Methodology

The quantitative approach was used for this current study. The survey design uses a questionnaire as an instrument to collect data and information from respondents. A sample of respondents was selected by the researcher and then a questionnaire was administered to collect data and information for analysis. This is deemed to be an appropriate method for a social science researcher who is interested in collecting original data to describe a population that is too large to be observed directly.

A stratified sampling method was employed in which the subjects were selected from strata or groups of the population. It is an appropriate sample procedure for this particular study for two reasons. First, the sample will be more representative of the population than if taken from the population as a whole. Second, it is used to ensure that an adequate number of participants are selected from different subgroups (McMillan, 2000). This current study

stratified the population of teachers into years of teaching experience and their academic teaching qualification, and then selected participants from each subgroup.

The sample size of the study is based on the table which is applicable to any defined population. Table 1 shows the table of Krejcie and Morgan which describes the numbers involved in this research population and the appropriate sample size. The population of this study composed of 124 teachers, so the representative sample size should therefore be 92 teachers.

Table 1. Sample size from any population

N	S	N	S	N	S
10	10	100	80	280	162
15	14	110	86	290	165
20	19	120	92	300	169
25	24	130	97	320	175

Results and Discussion

Teacher's Perception of Professional Development

Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick's (2007) model of evaluating training at reaction-level was used to identify teachers' perception of several aspects relating to PD such as course content, instructor effectiveness, relevance to the job/teaching, and course management. The instrument employed a six-point, Likert-type scale with options of "strongly disagree", "disagree", "slightly agree", "slightly disagree", "agree", and "strongly agree".

In addition, descriptive analysis was utilized to address this question. The researcher categorized the perception of participants in relation to the implementation of PD in KMI Gontor into three levels; namely "very good", "good", and "poor". It was mentioned that to identify whether the mean score obtained is at the level of very good, good, or poor, researchers should apply this formula:

$$\frac{\text{Highest score} - \text{lowest score}}{\text{index score}}$$

Based on this formula, the highest score in this section was 6 and the lowest was 1, the index score was 3. Thus, the interval of mean score for this particular study was: $\frac{6-1}{3} = 1.66$. The detailed breakdown is as follows:

1. 1.00 - 2.66 = poor
2. 2.67 - 4.33 = good
3. 4.34 - 6.00 = very good

The researcher also analyzed respondents teaching experience and their academic background in relation to their perception of implemented PD activities. One-way ANOVA test was used to examine the teachers' perception based on the length of their teaching experience. Independent sample *t*-test was utilized to examine the difference in their academic result to the difference of their perception in PD activities in KMI Gontor.

In regard to teaching experience category, Table 3 shows descriptive analysis of mean score and standard deviation of each category of teaching experience. The five-year teachers

reach mean score = 5.2704, while both the three-year and four-year teachers reached = 5.2469 and = 5.2376 respectively.

Table 3. Mean and Standard Deviation of Teacher Professional Development Activities based on Years of Teaching Experience

Teaching Experience	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
3 years	30	5.2469	.6168	.1126	5.0346	5.4952
4 years	33	5.2376	.6213	.1082	5.0173	5.4579
5 years	29	5.2704	.6288	.1168	5.0312	5.5096
Total	92	5.2577	.6223	.1125	5.0277	5.4876

To identify significant differences among teachers with different years of teaching experience regarding the implementation of PD in KMI Gontor, one-way ANOVA was applied. ANOVA involves one independent variable (referred to as a factor), which has a number of different levels. These levels correspond to the different groups or conditions. For the current study, the independent variable or factor is the number of years teaching experience (3-5 years), while the dependent variable is the overall score of PD.

The output of the ANOVA analysis on teachers' perception towards professional development can be seen in Table 5. If the "p" value (sig) < 0.05, it means that there is a significant difference among teachers with different years of teaching experience. However, if the "p" value (sig) > 0.05, it means that there is no significant difference among teachers with different years of teaching experience. Based on Table 4.8, the significance level was 0.933 ($p=.933$), which was above 0.05, and therefore, there is no statistically significant difference among the mean scores about the perception of teachers to PD activities, based on the length of teaching experience. Thus, the differences among the three different groups of teaching experience (three/four/five years) were considered not significant.

Table 5. ANOVA of Teachers' Perception toward Professional Development

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig. (P)
Between Groups	.019	2	.010	.069	.933
Within Groups	12.322	89	.138		
Total	12.341	91			

Table 6 shows the result of descriptive analysis for teachers' perception based on academic qualification. The table provides mean score and standard deviation of each category (KMI and Degree level). It can be observed from Table 4.9 that teachers with a KMI academic level have mean = 5.2539 and SD = .6299, while teachers with a bachelor's degree level have mean score = 5.2565 and SD = .6158.

Table 6. Mean and Standard Deviation of Teachers` Perception toward PD based on Teachers Academic Qualification

Academic Qualification	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
KMI	63	5.2595	.6299	.0833
Bachelor	29	5.2503	.6158	.1123

To analyze the significance of difference among teachers of different academic qualification regarding the implementation of PD in KMI Gontor, an independent sample *t*-test was applied. If the “*p*” value (sig) < 0.05, it means that there is a significant difference among teachers with different academic qualification. However, if the “*p*” value (sig) > 0.05, it means that there is no significant difference among teachers with different academic qualification.

The output for Levene’s test for equality of variances shows (see Table 7) a *p* value of .485, which is larger than 0.05. Based on this, estimates from the equal variances assumed are consulted. The results indicated that the difference between the means for KMI and bachelor’s degree was not statistically significant (*t* (df = 90) = .110, *p* =.912). Thus, there is no significant difference between KMI and bachelor’s degree on teachers` perception toward professional development programs. These results showed that all teachers who have participated in PD activities, regardless of their academic qualification exhibit similar perception towards the program.

Table 7. *t*-Test Analysis Results for Teachers of Different Academic Qualification

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		<i>t</i> -test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff.	Std. Error Diff.	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.492	.485	.110	90	.912	.00918	.08309	-.15589	.17425
Equal variances not assumed			.110	54.477	.912	.00918	.08310	-.15740	.17575

Current Level of Self-Efficacy Among Teachers of KMI Gontor

This section attempts to address the current levels of teacher self-efficacy in each of three following aspects; classroom management, instructional strategies, and student engagement. This research question was addressed by employing a descriptive statistic to analyze the current level of teacher efficacy among teachers in KMI Gontor. As previously mentioned, the teacher self-efficacy survey designed by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk-Hoy (2001) is comprised of three dimensions. Each dimension consists of six or seven items. The three main dimensions were:

- Efficacy in instructional strategies
- Efficacy in classroom management
- Efficacy in student engagement

The five-point, Likert-types scale was used in this survey with options of (1) poor, (2) not too good, (3) adequate, (4) quite good, and (5) extremely good. The researcher categorized the response of teachers in regard to their confidence in teaching into three levels namely low, moderate and high. Mustika (2009) mentioned that to identify whether the mean score obtained in this section is at the low, moderate or high level of confidence the researcher needs to use the formula: $\frac{\text{Highest score} - \text{lowest score}}{\text{index score}}$. Based on this formula, the highest score in this section was 5 and the lowest one was 1, the index score was 3. Thus, following the formula above the interval of mean score for this section was: $\frac{5-1}{3} = 1.33$. The detail information is as follows:

- 1.00 – 2.33 = low level of efficacy
- 2.34 – 3.66 = moderate level of efficacy
- 3.67 – 5.00 = high level of efficacy

Table 8 shows the mean and standard deviation of each item of the questionnaire. The 19 items were distributed to measure the level of self-efficacy among teachers in KMI Gontor. Table 8 shows the result of descriptive statistics for each item of efficacy which comprises of frequencies, mean score and standard deviation. Table 8 reveals the overall mean score of teachers of KMI Gontor regarding self-efficacy was 5.256 and standard deviation was .624.

Table 8. Mean and Standard Deviation of Each Items in Self-Efficacy Survey

Items	Poor		NTG		Adequate		QG		EG		Mean	SD
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
1). I can get through to the most difficult students			1	1.1	32	34.8	51	55.4	8	8.7	3.717	.635
2). I can help my students think critically			7	7.6	37	40.2	42	45.7	6	6.5	3.511	.734
3). I can motivate students who show low interest in school work			2	2.2	19	20.7	54	58.7	17	18.5	3.935	.692
4). I can get students to believe they can do well in school work			3	3.3	10	10.9	54	58.7	25	27.2	4.098	.712

Items	Poor		NTG		Adequate		QG		EG		Mean	SD
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
5). I can help my students' value learning	1	1.1	3	3.3	21	22.8	52	56.5	15	16.3	3.837	.774
6). I can foster my students to be more creative			3	3.3	35	38	42	45.7	12	13	3.685	.740
7). I am able to answer difficult questions from my students	1	1.1	2	2.2	34	37	46	50	9	9.8	3.652	.733
8). I am able to gauge student comprehension of what I have taught			2	2.2	31	33.7	51	55.4	8	8.7	3.707	.655
9). I am able to create good questions for my students			3	3.3	26	28.3	45	48.9	18	19.6	3.848	.769
10). I am able to adjust my lessons to the proper level for individual students			2	2.2	34	37	44	47.8	12	13	3.717	.716
11). I am able to use a variety of assessment strategies	2	2.2	8	8.7	25	27.2	46	50	11	12	3.609	.889
12). I am able to provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused			1	1.1	29	31.5	43	46.7	19	20.7	3.870	.744
13). I am able to provide appropriate challenges for excellent students			11	12	13	14.1	50	54.3	18	19.6	3.815	.889

Items	Poor		NTG		Adequate		QG		EG		Mean	SD
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
14). I have an ability to control disruptive behavior in the classroom			2	2.2	14	15.2	55	59.8	21	22.8	4.033	.687
15). I have an ability to establish routines to keep activities running smoothly			1	1.1	32	34.8	44	47.8	15	16.3	3.793	.719
16). I have an ability to get children to follow classroom rules			1	1.1	22	23.9	47	51.1	22	23.9	3.967	.762
17). I have an ability to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy	1	1.1	1	1.1	14	15.2	51	55.4	25	27.2	4.065	.753
18). I have an ability to keep a few problematic students from ruining an entire lesson			1	1.1	20	21.7	50	54.3	21	22.8	3.989	.703
19). I have an ability to respond to defiant students			3	3.3	12	13	52	56.5	25	27.2	4.076	.730
Total											5.256	.624

Note: 1: Poor, 2: NTG = Not Too Good, 3: Adequate, 4: QG = Quite Good, 5: EG = Extremely Good.

Efficacy in Student Engagement

Efficacy in student engagement related to the capability of teachers to engage the students in the learning process. This section of the survey asked teachers to identify their efficacy by using a variety of learning approaches to facilitate students` learning.

The overall mean of 3.797 for this category indicates high level of teacher efficacy in regard to efficacy in student engagement. Standard deviation of .714 indicates that all participants fell within a close range of each other. The Item No. 4 was the highest mean score in this category which was 4.098, while the lowest was for Item No. 2 which was 3.511. This indicates that teachers in KMI Gontor are very confident in motivating their students to do well at a particular task in school. However, they are less confident in helping their students to think critically.

Furthermore, each item of efficacy in student engagement was also analyzed. It can be observed from Table 4.12 that 85% (n=79) of teachers, indicate that they can get students to believe they can do well in school work (Item 4), having marked the “quite good” or “extremely good” option. While 10.9% (n=10) of respondents marked the “adequate” option and only 3% (n=3) of them chose “not too good”. In addition, the mean score of this item reached a highest point of 4.098 and standard deviation was .712. Item 3, “I can motivate students who show low interest in school work”, also achieved a high rate from teachers with 77% (n=71) of them indicating “quite good” or “extremely good”, whereas 20.7% (n=19) marked “adequate” and only 2.2% (n=2) chose “not too good”. As for the mean score and standard deviation, this item reached 3.935 and .692 respectively. Thus, the fact determines that teachers of KMI Gontor have a high level of confidence in encouraging their students to believe that they can do well at tasks assigned to them at school. However, teachers of KMI Gontor show a moderate level of confidence in Item 2, that was 52% (n=48) of them indicated “quite good” or “extremely good”. Meanwhile, 40.2% (n=37) of them selected the “adequate” option, while only 7.6% (n=7) chose the “poor” or “not too good” options.

Efficacy in Instructional Strategies

This dimension related to teachers` confidence in their ability to apply the appropriate teaching method in the classroom. The seven items of efficacy in instructional strategies were distributed to participants. The descriptive analysis was run to obtain the frequencies, mean score and standard deviation of each item.

The overall mean of 3.745 for this category indicates a high level of efficacy. Standard deviation of .771 indicates that all participants fell within a close range of each other. Item 12 was observed to have a highest mean score in this category of 3.870. While the lowest one was for Item 11 at 3.609. This fact indicates that teachers of KMI Gontor are very confident that they can give an alternative explanation or example when their students are confused. However, teachers have a moderate level of confidence when required to use a variety of assessment strategies.

For Item 12, 67% (n=62) of the respondents rated as “quite good” or “extremely good”. 31.5% (n=29) of them were in the “adequate” option and only 1.1% (n=1) of them indicated the “not too good” option. Another item which has a high rate of response was also found in the statement “I am able to create good questions for my students” (Item 9). The mean score of this item was 3.848 and standard deviation was .769. There were 68% (n= 63) who marked “quite good” or “extremely good”, while 3.3% chose the “not too good” option and 28.3% (n=26) the “adequate option”.

However, the moderate mean score was observed in items seven and eleven, which was 3.652 and 3.609 respectively. 59.8% of KMI teachers marked the “quite good” and “extremely good” option in Item seven and 62% (n=57) of them indicated the same option in

Item 8. As for the “not too good” and “poor” option, the item 7 and 11 gained 3.3% (n=3) and 10.9% (n=10) of response respectively.

Efficacy in Classroom Management

The classroom management items were about the competency of teachers in organizing and controlling student behavior in the classroom. The result of the level of teachers' confidence in this factor is summarized in Table 4.12. The mean of 3.987 for this category indicates a high level of teacher efficacy in regard to efficacy in classroom management. Standard deviation of .725 indicates that all participants fell within close range of each other.

In summary, the total mean of teacher self-efficacy shows that teachers of KMI Gontor had a high level of efficacy, $M = 3.83$ and $SD = .736$. However, a slight difference appeared among three aspects of efficacy in which the classroom management dimension reached a higher score ($M = 3.98$ and $SD = .725$) compared to other factors such as student engagement and instructional strategies.

Conclusion

This study has attempted to investigate professional development and the level of teacher's self-efficacy at Darussalam Modern Islamic Boarding School (DMIBS), East Java, Indonesia. The study suggested that perception of teachers toward PD activities in term of course, content, instructor and relevancy to job is positive. It also shows that school as PD provider manages the programs run appropriately and professionally, so that the participants feel enjoy, comfortable and convenience when participating in programs. This current study found that overall teachers in KMI Gontor are considered to have a high level of efficacy in term of student engagement, instructional strategies and classroom management. However, the study did not show any significant differences between teachers of different teaching experience or academic qualification.

The findings of this study indicate that the school environment is the most appropriate for the encouragement of teachers to have a high level of confidence. Although teachers of KMI Gontor have differences in their number of years teaching experience and academic qualification, they did not exhibit significant differences in their level of self-efficacy. Based on this, school principals and administrators should maintain and improve sources of information that contribute to the rise of teacher self-efficacy in KMI Gontor. Furthermore, the study also extends research in teacher self-efficacy research since KMI Gontor is an Islamic boarding school, while most studies on self-efficacy are conducted in public schools.

Moreover, the study indicated that teachers exhibited a high level of satisfaction with regard to implementation of PD activities in terms of course content, instructors, relevancy to teaching, and course management. Also, the study indicated that teachers with different levels of academic qualification and teaching experience expressed similar reactions toward implementation of PD. However, as the majority of teachers chose the “agree” or “strongly agree” options, they reflected the finding that the school had given them adequate PD opportunities. As the study was conducted in one particular school, the findings cannot be generalized to all Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia. There may be other factors which determine the teachers' perception on the implementation of PD activities in other Islamic boarding schools with larger populations. Therefore, further research in Islamic boarding schools needs to be investigated in order to verify and validate the findings of this study.

Notes

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