



A model of continuing professional development for Vietnamese lecturers

Thanh Vo Dan Nguyen^{a,b,c,*}, Arisara Leksansern^{a,†}

^a Department of Education, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Mahidol University, Nakhon Pathom 73170, Thailand

^b Faculty of Education, University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh City 70000, Viet Nam

^c Doctoral program of Educational Management, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Mahidol University, Nakhon Pathom 73170, Thailand

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Abstract

Continuing professional development is a must-have for lecturers when working at any university. This research aimed to construct a model of continuing professional development (CPD) for lecturers at Vietnam National University – Ho Chi Minh City (VNUHCM). To reach the research objectives, a mix-method was employed. The quantitative study investigated 340 respondents, stratified by drawing from lecturers at VNUHCM, regarding their perceptions and opinions of CPD. An adaptable instrument with 32 items and one open question was used for data collection. SPSS software was applied for data analysis. With the Priority Needs Index, modified values would be considered in the interpretation of findings and further discussion. With the qualitative approach, 15 participants who have experience in CPD, selected by snowball sampling technique, were invited to semi-structured interviews with a self-developed protocol regarding the effective model for CPD. The data collected from the interviews were analyzed by the content analysis method. The research results showed the model of CPD which includes shared responsibility; teacher and administrator roles; forethought and preparation; effectiveness and expenditures, and three factors from the priority needs in CPD, including CPD types, contents, and locations. These findings may bring benefits to stakeholders, such as policymakers and administrators, in strengthening human resources in VNUHCM.

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* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: danthanh@hcmussh.edu.vn (T. V. D. Nguyen).

† Co-first authors.

E-mail address: arisara.lek@mahidol.ac.th (A. Leksansern).

Introduction

Currently, Vietnam is on the way toward global integration. The high quality of human resources is in urgent need for Vietnam's development. Hence, much attention should be paid to developing the workforce with real talent and skill.

Vietnam National University—Ho Chi Minh City (VNUHCM), with over 60,000 students, is a national disciplinary university formed by the merger of existing universities in Ho Chi Minh City. Chartered by the Government, its mission has been to become Vietnam's premier institution of higher education; VNUHCM is currently a system comprised of 37 institutions. To maintain the reputation and endeavour to provide high-quality human resources for society, VNUHCM must have a "highly qualified" workforce in which "lecturer" is one of the key factors.

At present, with the vision of becoming a prominent university and reaching international standards, VNUHCM has been building up strategies with innovative programs and measures in developing professional staff, improving the quality of teaching, and upgrading its service to maximize the student's potential; hence, preparing them well for the requirements of a global economy. One of the most important strategies was fostering and retraining civil servants. It shows that the workforce in teaching and doing research must be developed not only by the number but also by the professional qualifications. However, as stated in the VNUHCM strategic plan 2016-2020, in recent years, the contingent of cadres, civil servants, and lecturers of VNUHCM is still short in quantity and not synchronized in terms of structure and quality. The number of lecturers with doctoral degrees, professors, and associate professors is not high; the ratio of lecturers per student is still low compared to other universities in the region; leading experts are in short supply; training programs do not meet social requirements. Additionally, there still exists a sense of self-satisfaction, unmotivated to strive for improvement among part of the human resources; the application of new technology in teaching has been limited; the quality of training and scientific research remains modest, not strongly associated with the country's socio-economic development.

These current issues lead to the result that VNUHCM has not achieved high rankings in Asia and worldwide. Most of the staff usually focus on teaching and few researchers are looking for international research grants with high requirements; several research papers are

published in high-index journals yet still less than in some neighbouring countries, like Thailand, Singapore, and Malaysia. Students were less satisfied when learning in the traditional environment with weak technology system support. Graduate unemployment is still high for the curriculums in the mismatched labour market and has a negative influence on stakeholders. These underprivileged results raise questions about finding effective solutions and strategies to enhance the professional competence of Vietnamese lecturers to adapt to the requirements of universities' development toward international trends.

Although the previous reviews indicate the solutions to improve professional skills for academic lecturers in Vietnamese Universities (Dau, 2020; Leong & Nguyen 2011; Ngoc et al., 2020; Nguyen et al., 2018), these studies' findings narrowly focus on separate strategies for each subject's lecturers or staff in the library in professional development. There is a lack of studies investigating the model in which there is a combination of several elements to promote CPD implemented effectively in Vietnam. This study will fill this gap with the research objective of proposing a model of professional development for lecturers in Vietnam.

Literature Review

Continuing professional development (CPD)

The concept of CPD associated with education is poorly defined. In other words, it is often confusing to conduct further research with separate concepts of formal training and learning at the workplace. Nevertheless, according to Day (1999), the definition of CPD includes all behaviours that might affect changes during lessons. Day also added that professional development comprises all experiences of studying naturally as well as conscious and planned activities whose purposes are to benefit directly or indirectly each person and group, contributing to better quality education of the class. In this process, teachers review and improve the commitment to support the moral aim of teaching.

Thanks to this, the teachers can gain and broaden their abilities and emotional skills to attain professional competence in planning, analyzing, and practising with adolescents, the young, and co-workers during their teaching lives.

From the viewpoint of teachers, activities that are considered as CPD often involve participation in courses, conferences, and whole-school inset days, which aim at meeting national requirements. Teachers frequently

consider professional learning, or “on-the-job” learning as different from CPD (Edmonds & Lee, 2002; Hustler et al., 2003; Robinson & Sebba, 2004). Nonetheless, the literature mentions some parts of efficient CPD, lots of which are eliminated from common ideas of CPD.

Guskey (2000) stated that CPD is a process that is intentionally designed, systematic, and ongoing. This process aims to develop the professional knowledge, skills, and aptitude of an individual so that the learning outcome of a student will be improved. Kelchtermans (2004) also defines CPD as a learning process which is the result of meaningful interaction with the context and ultimately leads to changes in teachers’ actions and their thoughts on the practice. Besides, teachers’ professional development is specified as “activities that develop teachers’ knowledge, skills, expertise and other characteristics as a teacher” (Organisation for International Cooperation and Development [OECD], 2009, p. 49). Moreover, the Care Council for Wales (2016) indicated that CPD is a shared responsibility with all practitioners whether working independently, within or outside an organization, needing to take responsibility for their learning and to continue to develop their skills and knowledge.

Notably, Trehearn (2010) formulated the professional development model, which consists of four components relating to teachers and administrators: (1) Shared responsibility: Teachers and administrators need to share professional development responsibilities; (2) Teacher and administrator roles: Their roles directly affect the effectiveness of professional development; (3) Forethought and preparation: Teachers and administrators trust that forethought and preparation are essential for the success of professional development; and (4) Effectiveness and Expenditure: Teachers and administrators think that professional development effectiveness does not depend on expenditure.

This model indicates how all four components work together and are dependent on one another. Without any of these components, professional development is ineffective. Administrators have important positions in the success or failure of professional development programs. In planning, they must think of teachers with concern for what they need to be facilitated and prepared for in their classroom learning. Administrators need to understand and allow teachers to choose their professional learning. Teachers should be encouraged to submit their professional learning plans at the beginning of the school year. After that, administrators work with teachers to determine how teachers will perform learning, what responsibilities will be required, and how they will be measured in their professional development. Continuing

professional development must be transformed through strict testing, analysis, and rearrangement to make it an important agent needed to improve teacher effectiveness. Teachers can make changes when they are provided with what they need. Control issues, planning time, and finance must be reviewed by administrators when conducting professional development. This will assist teachers in truly becoming masters in their profession.

Recently, some studies have continued to explore a model for CPD. Ohr et al. (2021) emphasize three principles in education and training development for staff development, inclusive of (1) collaborative partnerships, (2) rapid resource development, and (3) effective leadership within virtual teams. Necknig et al. (2020) preferred the mentoring program, which provides residents with career planning in various roles for staff in CPD, such as junior staff members, developers, and networkers. Loyko et al. (2015) suggested the global society principally, studying international practices and new trends is essential for the modernization of vocational education and improving the qualifications of staff and worker development. Besides, interest has been reignited, and staff members are excited about future professional development opportunities (Loucks-Horsley et al., 2010).

The researcher chose Trehearn’s model to apply in this research because it includes the components of fundamental importance in organizing CPD activities or programs, such as stakeholders’ responsibilities and roles, preparation, and costs. These components are used to investigate lecturers’ perceptions of the way to conduct CPD programs effectively for member universities in VNUHCM.

Generally, in this study, CPD is defined as activities that maintain and enhance lecturers’ knowledge and skills which are achieved for both personal and career development. It comprises all types of learning opportunities, from formal coursework to informal learning opportunities such as adaptable chances for studying both outside and inside of the workplace that aims to adjust to being compatible with future work. Additionally, the relationship and the role of both teachers and administrators are very important and essential to the success of professional development programs or plans. When administrators construct professional development plans, teachers’ needs or inventive ideas need to be considered.

Theories Relating to Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

The theoretical framework has supported this study with three main theories, consisting of the theory of Motivation, Adult Learning, and Lifelong Learning.

The well-known theories of motivation emphasized that employers need to provide enough basic demands to employees, such as physical demands, safety demands, relationship demands, respect demands, and self-actualization demands (Maslow, 1981; Oloube, 2006). Besides that, they should make every effort to help motivate their employees and make sure that their employees feel they are valued and supported. Employers need to provide lots of feedback and help employees understand how they will develop and progress through the organization. In addition, to prevent job dissatisfaction, organizations need to ensure that their employees have the feeling of being well-treated by providing them with the best working conditions and fair wages if possible (Maslow, 1981; Herzberg et al., 1959). Similarly, Herzberg indicated that two important factors affect job satisfaction. These are hygiene factors (including organization policies, supervision, salary, interpersonal relations, and working conditions) and motivation factors (consisting of work itself, achievement, recognition, responsibility, and advancement (Alshmemri et al., 2017).

The theory of learning by Malcolm Knowles discusses the transition of active learning for adults. The motivation for adults to keep themselves engaged will help adults in active learning and bring achievement. Knowles (1970) indicated that the rules suggested for effective learning are (1) the content should be related to the learners' experience; (2) engaged learners will gain knowledge more quickly; (3) adult learners can obtain the information more efficiently if they have opportunities to explore the lessons' content and have a scenario to practice; and (4) those conventional methods teach and provide learners with needed knowledge for examinations and other tests to measure their learning process.

According to London (2012), lifelong learning is a flexible process that can be varied depending on an individual's skills and motivation for self-reliance, generative studying, and life events. Lifelong learning requires challenges and sometimes needs incremental or adaptive change and transformative learning. The basic foundation of lifelong learning is that learners will not receive the necessary knowledge from their high schools, colleges, or universities. Instead, they need to develop the knowledge and skills throughout their lives. Thus, people need to continually improve their knowledge and skills to deal with immediate problems and participate in the CPD process.

Besides, the cognitivist theory of learning developed by Ausubel, Gagne, Koffka, Lewin, and Piaget (Traditional learning theories, 2007) affirms that the learning content is gained based on learners' cognitive ability and that learning is considered a process that is similar to the intellectual and cognitive processes of an individual. In this theory, learning is understood as the connection between an individual's new and old knowledge. It states that knowledge is constructed by individuals or groups through their experience of life. This theory also mentions that learning is a collaborative process and all knowledge is constructed from interactions between individuals' culture and society (McLeod, 2019).

With the keyword of continuing professional development for staff in higher education or universities, the Scopus databases show the result of 508 documents. The graph describes the documents by year showing that there was a significantly increasing number of studies regarding CPD in 2005, which showed fluctuation until now. In the bar graph of documents by country, the highest number of papers published in Scopus was from three developed countries, namely, the UK, the US, and Australia.

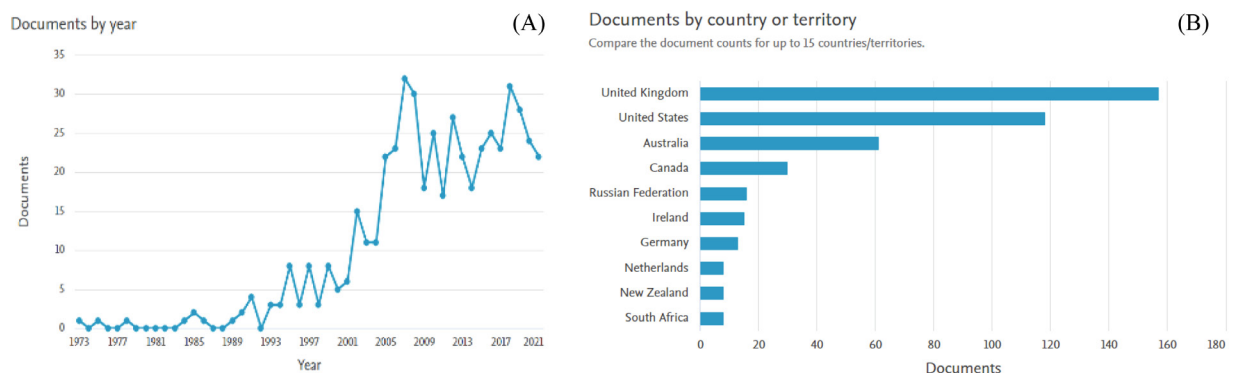


Figure 1 Continuing professional development for staff in Higher education: (A) Documents by year, (B) Documents by country or territory

Source: Scopus database, accessed in November 2021.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in Vietnamese Universities

Methodology

Phase 1: The quantitative study was used to investigate 340 respondents, stratified by drawing lots from lecturers

Phase 2: With the qualitative approach, 15 participants with experience in CPD were selected by snowball sampling technique. These participants had to be both lecturers and administrators in six member-universities. They had to have a doctoral degree and at least 10-year experience in VNUHCM. The participating lecturers ranged in age from 40 to 55 years old. Six were male, nine were female. All participants were invited to semi-structured interviews with a self-developed protocol regarding the effective model for CPD. Besides, the interview aimed to investigate lecturers' thinking and comments about the components of CPD in the Trehearn model (2010). The data collected from the interviews were analyzed by content analysis. The contents were categorized and classified for building up deductions, and then the data were summarized and interpreted.

Results

Respondent Profile

All 340 questionnaires were distributed, and after that, they were collected and analyzed to present the personal factors of the sample.

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the personal data of the participants. The findings are presented in Table 1 below:

As presented in Table 1, the average age of all lecturers in this study is 36, and the average year of working experience is 10 years.

Table 1 Mean age and years of working experience of the participants

Personal factors	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Age	340	24	66	36.47
Years of working experience	340	1	41	10.00

The data in the Table 2 indicates that the percentage difference between males and females is insignificant (51% and 49%). The number of married lecturers (63.2%) is much higher than single lecturers and others (36.8%). The findings showed that there are more lecturers with a master’s degree than ones with a doctoral degree (61% and 39%). Regarding lecturers’ monthly income, nearly 76 percent of the lecturers self-assessed that their income was at a medium level or lower. The highest number of questionnaires collected was

from the University of Technology (31.18%) and the lowest was from the International University (4.41%).

The Priority Needs Index of lecturers’ Continuing Professional Development – CPD Types

Table 3 points out the result of the priority need index (PNI) of CPD types for lecturers. It shows PNI_{modified} between .0542 and .2317, ranging from the most needs to the least. Six types of CPD ranked from 1 to 6 that need to be focused on are: (1) Teacher networks or collaboration; (2) Coaching done for other teachers; (3) University-accredited courses; (4) Coaching done by other teachers; (5) Observation of peers teaching; (6) Cooperating with other teachers on researching the school.

The Priority Needs Index of Lecturers’ Continuing Professional Development – CPD Contents

Table 4 presents the results of the priority needs index (PNI) of CPD contents for lecturers. It shows PNI_{modified} between .0678 and .2312, ranging from the most needs to the least. Seven contents of CPD for lecturers ranked from one to seven should be concentrated on, following the order of (1) Produce a research paper, project, or plan; (2) Problem-solving skills; (3) Foreign languages; (4) Leadership development; (5) Thinking skills; (6) Catering to the needs of different student groups; and (7) Time & behaviour management in the classroom.

Table 2 Frequency and percentage of the personal factors of participants

Personal Factors	(n = 340)	
	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	173	50.88
Female	167	49.12
Marital status		
Single	111	32.65
Married	215	63.23
Others (separated/divorced/widowed)	14	4.12
Educational level		
Master’s Degree	207	60.88
Doctoral Degree	133	39.12
Monthly Income (lecturers’ self-assessment)		
Low (< 400 USD)	122	35.88
Medium (= 400 USD)	136	40.00
High (> 400 USD)	82	24.12
Working place		
University of Technology	106	31.18
University of Social Sciences and Humanities	93	27.35
University of Natural Science	68	20.00
International University	15	4.41
University of Economics and Law	34	10.00
University of Information Technology	24	7.06

Table 3 PNI_{modified} of CPD types

(n = 340)

CPD types	AVG. of the current situation (D)	AVG. of the expected situation (I)	PNI _{modified}	Rank
1. Workshops	3.70	3.98	.0757	12
2. Seminars	3.59	4.01	.1170	7
3. Conferences	3.53	3.96	.1218	8
4. University-accredited course	3.29	3.98	.2097	3
5. Non-University accredited course	3.21	3.56	.1090	10
6. Observation of peers teaching	2.97	3.54	.1919	5
7. Coaching done by other teachers	2.98	3.60	.2081	4
8. Coaching done for other teachers	2.95	3.59	.2169	2
9. Teacher network or collaboration	3.28	4.04	.2317	1
10. Doing research	3.94	4.33	.0990	11
11. Co-operating teachers on researching school	3.67	4.24	.1553	6
12. Attend a lecturer or presentation	3.46	3.83	.1069	9
13. Self-study	4.06	4.28	.0542	13

Note: PNI_{modified} $\geq .15$ was chosen.

Table 4 PNI_{modified} of CPD contents

(n = 340)

CPD contents	AVG. of the current situation (D)	AVG. of the expected situation (I)	PNI _{modified}	Rank
1. Design and develop a curriculum	3.69	3.94	.0678	14
2. Teaching and learning methods	3.61	4.09	.1330	10
3. Approaches to assessment	3.56	4.01	.1264	11
4. Time & behaviour management in the classroom	3.32	3.93	.1837	7
5. Use of ICT in teaching and learning	3.75	4.17	.1120	12
6. Foreign languages	3.34	4.08	.2216	3
7. Catering to the needs of different student groups	3.30	3.93	.1909	6
8. Deepening knowledge of the subject	3.51	4.04	.1510	9
9. Leadership development	3.14	3.81	.2134	4
10. Thinking skills	3.39	4.11	.2124	5
11. Problem-solving skills	3.38	4.16	.2308	2
12. Student consultation	3.52	3.91	.1108	13
13. Learning to learn	3.49	4.05	.1605	8
14. Produce a research paper, project, or plan	3.46	4.26	.2312	1

Note: PNI_{modified} $\geq .17$ were chosen.

Priority Needs Index of the Locations for CPD Programs

The results of the priority need index (PNI) of the locations for CPD programs, as displayed in Table 5, show PNI_{modified} between .0907 and .5094, ranging

from the most needs to the least. Three locations that teachers need for their CPD programs ranked from 1 to 3 should be considered closely, following the order of (1) Abroad; (2) Out of school; (3) Online.

Table 5 PNI_{modified} of CPD locations

(n = 340)

The location for CPD programs	AVG. of the current situation (D)	AVG. of the expected situation (I)	PNI _{modified}	Rank
1. In-school	3.86	4.21	.0907	5
2. Out of school	3.06	3.99	.3039	2
3. Collaborative network	3.23	4.08	.2632	4
4. Online	3.06	3.95	.2908	3
5. Abroad	2.65	4.00	.5094	1

Note: PNI_{modified} ≥ 0.29 were chosen.

Opinions and Suggestions from the Lecturers towards Effective CPD

There were 112 respondents out of 340 participants of the survey (33%) who answered the open-ended question “*Share your opinions and suggestions for what and how to make effective CPD for lecturers in the VNUHCM based on your experiences.*” Lecturers’ opinions and suggestions were categorized into 5 themes, as follows: (1) Academic activities, (2) Collaboration, (3) Policies and Planning, (4) Finance, and (5) Infrastructure.

Academic activities

Lecturers should be given opportunities and time to participate in research to continuously update themselves with new knowledge and to deepen specialized knowledge by increasing in-depth research. It is necessary to maintain regular short-term and long-term training courses on leadership skills; application of information technology, science, and new technologies in teaching; foreign languages; specialized knowledge; teamwork spirit; student counselling work. Besides, hybrid or blended conferences and workshops should be held to make it easier for lecturers to participate. Lecturers also proposed to be facilitated to take part in internationally certified courses.

Collaboration

The lecturers suggested that VNUHCM should organize exchange programs; cooperate with colleagues and friends inside and outside the university, especially with the member universities in the VNUHCM system. Besides, the collaboration in teaching and in doing research with famous universities should be strengthened and expanded to exchange and share experiences in teaching and research. Furthermore, lecturers also want to join academic forums and groups on the internet so that they can exchange and share experiences of teaching and research with colleagues from all over the world. Additionally, building up relationships with enterprises to survey the needs of society and cooperating in doing projects related to science and technology is an essential task that VNUHCM needs to strengthen.

Policies and planning

Firstly, short-term and long-term plans should be specifically developed to facilitate professional development. Short-term and long-term training courses

should be scheduled annually. Also, the number of scientific articles published in international journals or the number of scientific research works must be clearly defined in regulations. Besides that, to encourage lecturers to actively participate in professional development activities, VNUHCM should give time and financial support to the lecturers for their participation in CPD activities. Emulation and commendation movements should be widely developed to foster lecturers. Secondly, seminars should also be organized periodically to find out the aspirations and needs of lecturers, as well as to learn about measures to increase the sense of initiative and self-awareness of lecturers. From that, planners will have a chance to understand lecturers’ desires. Finally, lecturers and their faculties should be decentralized by the board of management to decide on their professional issues according to the curriculum framework. The role of professional team leaders should also be promoted.

Finance

Lecturers should be provided with material and spiritual support so that they can feel secure in CPD. Funds for the implementation of scientific research should be properly invested so that lecturers are afforded to participate in conferences, workshops, and seminars inbound and outbound, or to publish their works in prestigious journals. VNUHCM should also take better care of lecturers’ lives with adequate salaries; from that, they can focus on CPD. Moreover, in professional development activities, lecturers are also supposed to be supported and rewarded to encourage them to participate enthusiastically.

Infrastructure

Facilities need to be equipped and invested in more, for example, increasing investment in developing working offices, laboratories, laboratory equipment, etc. The central library should purchase the copyright of well-known, high-quality journals or links to foreign libraries so that lecturers can access, search, and download materials from a wider variety of sources.

Trehearn Model with four Components of Effective Continuing Professional Development

Data analysis was based on the components from the model designed by Trehearn (2010). The findings showed lecturers’ opinions on four components that should be applied in Vietnam National University – Ho Chi Minh City, as follows:

Shared responsibilities

In almost all administrators' opinions, collaboration is the most important factor. Besides, they also wanted to be supported in terms of time and the need to reflect on experiences and expertise with colleagues. "I want to join in CPD activities with colleagues regularly, from that we have chances to analyze a scientific research paper, a theory, or a good book for our development together (L5)." Lecturers and administrators believe that the responsibilities of CPD need to be shared. It is necessary to have close cooperation from the university administrators, faculties, and lecturers. All of them need to be responsible for the design and implementation of the CPD activities or programs which are relevant to lecturers' teaching and learning. The researcher recognized that there are 4 categories related to the aspect of shared responsibilities: collaboration; lecturer participation; leadership; lecturer attitudes.

Teacher and administrator roles

The findings showed that administrator and lecturer roles are very important and directly impact the effectiveness of CPD. There are 4 categories regarding the administrator and lecturer roles based on the interview's results, such as Administrator-Driven; Policies for Stimulation, Self-awareness; and Lecturers' Initiative. With the right directions and appropriate support policies, administrators will help lecturers seriously focus on their CPD. In the meantime, lecturers also need to take responsibility for self-discipline to improve their capacity for teaching and learning.

Forethought and preparation

Most of the participants in the interview mentioned the importance of cautious planning for the most benefit of CPD. They talked about the lecturers' needs, a specific goal, the facilities, the presenter, and the invitation sent to the lecturers. In general, the findings relating to the theme of "forethought and preparation" were categorized into 3 main issues: planning, supervision, and strategy. The lecturers who also serve as administrators realized that CPD programs would be more successful if the university or the Board of Management had careful planning, a strict system of supervision, and a strategy for coordinating resources.

Effectiveness and expenditures

In this theme, most of the lecturers thought that the cost was quite important. Of which, there were 9 lecturers who agreed with the viewpoint "Expenditures and Effectiveness is a proportional relationship." They explained that if the Board of Management invested more in CPD activities, they would approach more kinds of CPD programs; lecturers would also see the maximum benefits when they participated in the programs. Moreover, the lecturers also stated that the budget helps them stabilize their lives so that they will focus on doing scientific research wholeheartedly. Besides, they specified that projects with high profits would attract high-quality human resources. However, there were a few lecturers who believed that although the cost was quite important, it did not completely impact the success or efficiency of CPD activities. Even so, two of these lecturers supposed that the most important thing was to have policies of incentives or mandates for lecturers and to have an appropriate reward mechanism. They also said, "*The university should foster lecturers through salary improvement.*" Generally, lecturers and administrators believed that CPD effectiveness is dependent on expenditures. Expenditures mentioned here are divided into 3 themes: funding investment, benefits, and income. Lecturers will have a chance to access many types and contents of CPD when the Board of Management invests well in CPD activities or programs. Also, lecturers, who see the benefits when participating in CPD programs, will devote all their energies to their work. Finally, with high income, lecturers will no longer have any worries about their livelihood but focus on their CPD.

Discussion

Vietnam National University - Ho Chi Minh City was established in 1995 and currently is one of two big hubs in training and doing research for scientists in Vietnam with over 60,000 full-time students and a team of scholars with more than 300 professors, associate professors, and more than 1,200 doctors working in VNUHCM. Until 2018, VNUHCM consisted of six-member universities, a one-member institute, a one-member school, and various affiliated institutes and organizations. Therefore, this study proposed the model of CPD for lecturers in the VNUHCM is necessary and is an effective strategy to adapt to the requirements of high-skill staff in higher education institutions.

The results presented the model of CPD for lecturers in VNUHCM including the lecturers' priority needs in CPD at the VNUHCM and lecturers' perspectives on effective CPD. They included: CPD types consist of teacher networks or collaboration, coaching done for other teachers, University accredited courses, Coaching done by other teachers, Observation of peers' teaching; Cooperating with other teachers on doing research in school; CPD contents consist of producing a research paper, project or plan, problem-solving skills, foreign languages, leadership development, thinking skills, catering to the needs of different student groups, time and behaviour management in the classroom; and CPD locations include Abroad, Out of school, Online.

The theme that emerged as the most important factor, supported by almost all participants, was collaboration. They do believe that academic or professional cooperation, such as organizing exchange programs; cooperating with colleagues and friends inside and outside the university, especially in the member universities in the VNUHCMC system, will bring significant benefits to lecturers in CPD. In addition, the collaboration in teaching and scientific research also creates good opportunities for lecturers to build relationships with enterprises, strengthen skills in doing projects, improve mutual understanding, and enhance their ability to work together, communication skills, leadership skills, project management skills, etc.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The findings provide solutions and strategies for VNUHCM to overcome the weakness mentioned above to improve existing policies in human strategies, academic space, and communication activities. It is also a condition to increase the staff's income while the salary in the education sector is still too low. When staff with strong competence in working get a high salary, they will have good conditions in healthcare, both physical and mental, to have a happy life. Besides recruiting new high-qualified lecturers, a policy of enhancing the capacities of existing staff through the model of continuing professional development is necessary and plays a crucial role in encouraging and fostering lecturers in continuous career development. The power of human resource plays the backbone for universities to move higher toward international standards. Moreover, in the context of industrial revolution 4.0, there are many challenges for lecturers who need the changes to meet the requirements of the times, such as effective application of information technology, digital technology, networking, and big data to teaching, etc. Therefore, this model is essential to the success of the VNUHCM. The findings of this study will help lecturers and the Management Board in the VNUHCM have a better understanding of lecturers' expectations in their professional development and which are the most

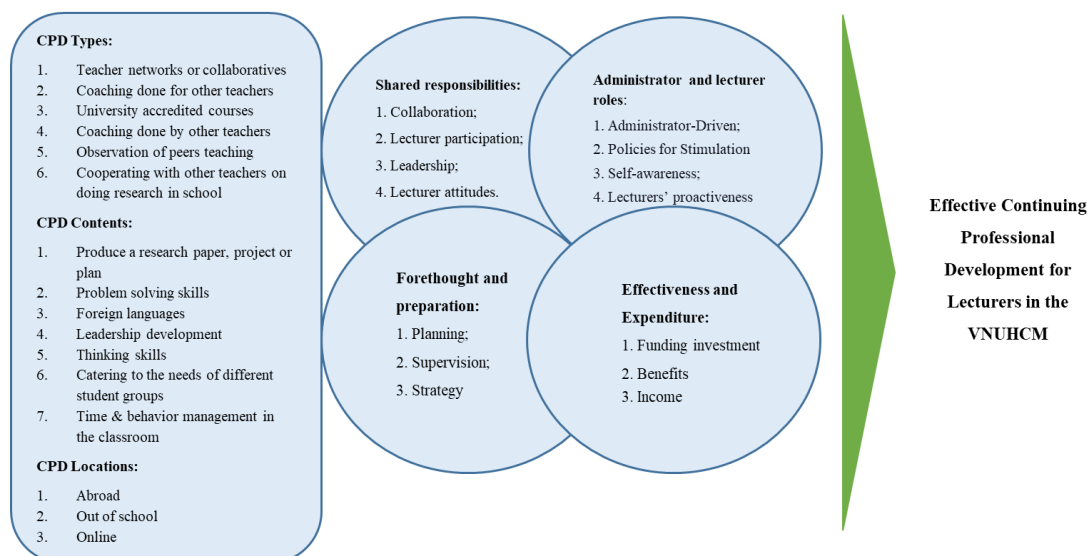


Figure 3 Model of continuing professional development for lecturers in the VNUHCM

important components affecting such professional development. Moreover, an appropriate model of professional development for lecturers will be suggested to VNUHCM as a reference to plan a specific strategy and implement it effectively to improve teacher qualification.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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