FACTORS AFFECTING TEACHERS' PARTICIPATION IN

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD):

FROM HONG KONG PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES

Sally Wai-Yan WAN[1]
Pui Kiu College, Hong Kong

Patrick Hak-Chung LAM[2]
Victoria Shanghai Academy, Hong Kong

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[1] Email address: **sallywwyan@gmail.com**

[2] Email address: **21ed@patricklamhc.org**

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents the findings from a small-scale case study of Hong Kong primary teachers' perceptions of the factors affecting teachers' participation in continuing professional development (CPD). The study applies a multiple approach with mixed research methods, including using a self-developed survey questionnaire on the basis of the CPD framework as proposed by Advisory Committee on Teacher Education and Qualifications (ACTEQ, 2003) and focus group interviews with two groups of teachers. The study was conducted in two primary schools, in order to explore teachers' perceptions of the factors affecting teachers' participation in continuing professional development (CPD). The implications of school-based professional development and government policies related to CPD are discussed in the paper.

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INTRODUCTION

Lifelong education has been highly emphasized in the global world. Facing complex and dynamic changes and challenges in the school nowadays (Herrity and Morales, 2004), teachers' continuing professional development (CPD) has been highlighted in the new education policy in Hong Kong. The term continuing professional development (CPD) has been widely used to refer to ongoing education and training for the professions (Earley and Bubb, 2004). There are some other associated concepts, such as teacher development, staff development and professional development, related to continuing professional development. Day (1999) has clarified the distinction between these terms and continuing professional development. He states that most of the definitions of professional development stress the acquisition of subject or content knowledge and teaching skills as its main purpose. Much emphasis has to be put on the nature of CPD as a "continuing" process for improvement in addition to the knowledge and skills gained. As an ongoing process of any kinds of education, training, learning and support activities engaged in by teachers alone or with others (Bolam, 1993; Day, 1999), CPD enhances their knowledge and skills and enables them to consider their attitudes and approaches to the education of children, attempting to improve the quality of learning and teaching. In short, CPD focuses on fostering individual competence to enhance practice and so forth facilitate dynamic changes in education (Blandford, 2000).

WHAT IS CPD?

There is no unique definition upon teachers' CPD as it is varied from different educational traditions and contexts. Teachers' CPD, in a general term, means teacher learning in an ongoing way. CPD implies the improvement of the school as well as the professional advancement of individuals; in other words, CPD can embrace personal development (individualized learning) and staff development (the collegiality of group learning/co-learning)' (Bell, 1991a). On this point, Day (1999) gives a similar but useful definition about professional development, stating that:

> *professional development consists of all natural learning experiences and those conscious and planned activities which are intended to be of direct or indirect benefit to the individual, group or school and which contribute to the quality of education in the classroom.* (Day, 1999: 4)

Thus professional development encompasses all activities that cater both for the individual needs of teachers and for the institutional needs of the whole school (Bell, 1991). The teacher, the school and the pupils thus benefit from such a process of professional development (Bell, 1991).

APPROACHES TO CPD

Due to changing demands on the new roles of teachers in the 21st Century, traditional approaches to CPD such as formal courses or one-off seminar are criticized for their shortcomings of being unable to get teachers prepared for the new role of knowledge facilitator rather than knowledge transmitter (e.g. Darling-Hammond, 1998; Lieberman, 1996). Instead, two theoretical perspectives lead the alternative approaches to CPD which support teacher learning more effectively (Kwakman, 2003). These two perspectives include cognitive psychological and professional development perspectives that are briefly discussed as follows.

Cognitive Psychological Perspective

Student learning and teaching learning are the same from a cognitive psychological perspective (Borko and Putman, 1996; Putnam and Borko, 2000). Teachers are assumed to learn like what students do in which teachers are considered as constructors of knowledge who learn actively in a self-directed way. Such kind of learning occurs when interacting with the learning context and it is strongly affected by prior knowledge of individual learner (Borko and Putnam, 1996). In other words, this kind of learning is situated and influenced by the interplay of the individual's existing knowledge and the learning environments. Thus, teacher learning takes place when favorable learning environments are provided in which teachers are responsible for their own learning (Bransford, Brown and Cocking, 1999) whereas staff developers play an important role in creating favorable learning environments for teacher learning.

Professional Development Perspective

Instead of emphasizing the provision of favorable learning environments for enhancing teacher learning, from professional development perspective, it stresses that teachers have to learn how to teach for understanding where they ought to learn new conceptions of content and pedagogy and take on new roles (McLaughlin, 1997). Hence, the working context is understood to be the best place for teachers to acquire competencies that they need to fulfill their new roles through practice (Hargreaves, 1997; Kwakman, 2003; Retallick, 1999). The working context for teachers can be the daily teaching context, including classrooms, schools, school clusters, and other forms of communities such as partnership with universities, networks, etc. In other words, teacher learning occurs at the workplace in which their learning is situated and closely aligned with teachers' work in classrooms and schools (Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, and Yoon,

2001; Huffman, Thomas, and Lawrenz, 2003; Sparks and Loucks-Horsley, 1989), and it can be at individual level and collaboration level (Kwakman, 2003).

FACTORS AFFECTING TEACHERS' PARTICIPATION IN CPD

Few studies were conducted to examine factors affecting teachers' participation in CPD activities over the decade in different countries. Kwakman (2003) conducted an empirical study about a number of factors affecting teachers' participation in CPD in the Netherlands. In her study, three factors, personal factors (i.e. professional attitudes, appraisals of feasibility, appraisals of meaningfulness, emotion exhaustion, loss of personal accomplishment), task factors (i.e. pressure of work, emotional demands, job variety, autonomy, participation), and work environment factors (i.e. management support, collegial support, intentional learning support) were used to examine the effects on teachers' participation in CPD. As a result, of these three factors, personal factor seemed to be more significant in predicting teachers' participation in CPD activities than task and work environment factors. However, this study may over-generalize the factors affecting teachers' CPD (i.e. personal, task and working environment), and some factors may be understated (e.g. family factor) and not context-specific to other situations or cultures.

Another study conducted by Lee (2002) identified a number of factors facilitating and inhibiting effective professional development in Taiwan. Amongst the factors contributing to effective professional development, 'relevant/realistic content' was the most important factor (34%), whilst the least important factors were 'presenter with recent experience' (9%) and 'based on practice' (9%). The details of the results are listed in Table 1. He also examined factors inhibiting effective professional development. The most commonly cited factor that inhibits effective professional development was 'insufficient resources to implement learning' (21%), whilst the least frequently cited factor was 'school not supportive of CPD' (13%) (see Table 2). Some other factors related to CPD providers, including contents, formats, and presentation of CPD activities, should be considered in affecting teachers' participation in CPD activities, and they should be supplementary to the factors in Kwakman's (2003) study as mentioned above.

To sum up, the above studies examined a number of factors that affect teachers' participation in CPD activities. This study takes an exploratory approach to further explore the factors affecting teachers' participating in CPD activities in the Hong Kong context.

Table 1: Factors contributing to effective professional development (Lee, 2002)

Factors	Percentage of respondents
Relevant / realistic content	34
Opportunity to share ideas	32
Relevant to needs identified by teachers themselves	25
'Hands-on' activities	25
Sufficient resources	20
Good delivery	18
Focused content	17
Participants committed	13
School supportive of CPD	11
Presenter with recent experience	9
Based on good practice	9

Remarks:　Based on 255 respondents.　Respondents could give more than one response.

Table 2: Factors inhibiting effective professional development (Lee, 2002)

Factors	Percentage of respondents
Insufficient resources to implement learning	21
Insufficient money to pay for courses	19
Teacher workload preventing / deterring teachers from taking up CPD	18
Content not well focused / structured	18
Irrelevant / unrealistic content	14
School not supportive of CPD	13

Remarks:　Based on 255 respondents

CPD POLICY IN HONG KONG

In alignment with the global trend in CPD, Hong Kong has put more emphasis on CPD. In recent years, the need for higher accountability and improvement in the quality of teaching has been of great concern in Hong Kong. The government has recognized that schools should be given more responsibility for planning and organizing programs to develop their own teachers so as to satisfy their own needs. The School Management Initiative (SMI) (Education and Manpower Branch and Education Department, 1991) first announced that in an effective school the principal is concerned with his own and his staff's professional development, whilst schools were encouraged to organize staff development days. In 1997, Education Commission Report 7 (ECR7) (Education Commission, 1997:37) affirmed the crucial role of the school in CPD, stating that "every school should examine its own needs for teacher development". In 2003, the Advisory Committee on Teacher Education and Qualifications (ACTEQ) has initiated the *Towards a Learning Profession: The Teacher Competencies Framework and the*

Continuing Professional Development of Teachers (ACTEQ, 2003). The framework works out a map of generic teacher competencies for both teachers and those facilitators of teachers' learning and development. Specifically, all serving teachers are required to undertake at least 50 hours of structural CPD activities and/or other modes of CPD activities. As stated, "the basic premise of the framework is the personal growth and development of teachers" (ACTEQ, 2003:24). There is no doubt that CPD is vital to all stakeholders in the process of education.

Facing the new CPD policy, understanding how teachers perceive CPD and what factors affect their participation in CPD is an extremely important segment for it provides schools with accurate information to use in making effective decisions regarding CPD programs (Fitch and Kopp, 1990). It is important for the researchers to more thoroughly understand what favorable or unfavorable factors affecting teachers' participation in CPD activities are as the researcher works as CPD coordinator in a primary school in Hong Kong context. Besides, there are currently very few studies concerning teachers' perceptions upon CPD in Hong Kong. It is therefore worthwhile to explore this topic more deeply. Hence, the research question of this study is *What are the factors affecting teachers' participation in CPD as perceived by teachers?*, aiming to explore teachers' perceptions of the factors affecting their participation in CPD.

RESEARCH METHODS

This is an exploratory study that is not aimed at examining hypotheses or testing the conceptual model. The main purpose is to elicit factors affecting teachers' participation in CPD. A multiple approach with the use of mixed methods was used in the study for the purpose of getting a more accurate and holistic representation of the teachers' perceptions concerning CPD. The study was conducted in two government subsidized primary schools located in Hong Kong. Convenient sampling was applied because the researchers gained access to the school site where the researchers built up the trusting relationship with the teachers. Mixed methods were thus used to explore the perceptions of the factors affecting teachers' participation in CPD in this study. Two research methods were applied in the study, including an open-ended questionnaire and two focus group interviews with teachers. The questionnaire was first conducted in April 2006. Focus group interviews were then carried out in May-June 2006.

The survey questionnaire mainly focused on exploring teachers' perceived factors that affect their participation in CPD. Respondents were asked to write about their perceived factors affecting their participation in CPD. Two focus group interviews were conducted to two groups of three teachers from case school A and case school B, consisting of two groups of a small homogenous sample of teachers. The selection of the teachers involved in the focus

group interview was based on teaching rank, years of teaching experience, role responsibilities, age, etc. The group was asked questions along the same lines as the questionnaire in a focus group interview. This allowed the participants to elaborate their responses as well as the survey analyses. It helps enrich a deeper understanding of what the questionnaire results actually said. The interviews were arranged at a suitable time (i.e. after school hours) and they were conducted at the schools which the participating teachers worked in so as to be more convenient for all participants in the focus group interview. Each participant was given a copy of the survey results.

The interviewer checked the tape and wrote down observations so as to ensure the validity of the qualitative inquiry (Patton, 1990). Data gathered from the focus group interview was reported and analyzed with the help of the constant comparative method as suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985). This is a naturalistic process that is useful for data gathered from the interviews, whilst data analysis leads to reconstruction of those sources. During the process, the interviews were color-coded and grouped into themes and issues that were numbered and generated. The themes and relationships were then categorized and identified as emerged from different data sources or participants. The complete process of categorization was done with reference to the research question and the literature review.

FINDINGS

Demographic background

The response rate of case school A and case school B was high, with 94.6% (N=35) and 100% (N=43) respectively. It reflects that teachers of different schools may have varying views or responses towards CPD. A majority of the sample is female (80.5%) with 19.5% being male. It exactly reflects the teaching population in primary school sector (Government Secretariat, Hong Kong Government, 1981).

Overall teachers' perceptions of facilitating and inhibiting factors affecting CPD

The teachers were asked to write two facilitating factors and two inhibiting factors affecting their CPD. Table A summarized the response rate of the survey question relating to teachers' perceived facilitating factors contributing to CPD. Table B showed the facilitating factors that were categorized under six themes, namely, school factor, personal factor, financial factor, time, CPD provider, family factor, relationship with others and government factor. As shown in Table B, personal factor was regarded as the most important facilitating factor affecting CPD by school A teachers. However, school B teachers held a different view, whilst they considered school factor and financial factors as the most important facilitating factors contributing to CPD. In the literature, time and workload are associated factors leading to obstacle towards CPD (Day, Sammons, Stobart, Kington and Gu, 2007). However, in this

study, there were just few teachers (N=2) who would put time and workload as obstacles towards CPD at the same time.

Besides, there is great difference in numbers of teachers giving and not giving opinions to favorable and unfavorable factors affecting CPD. Teachers in the sample seemed to be indifferent to CPD, and they mostly gave a brief description for their perceptions in the open-ended questions.

Table C summarized the response rate of the survey question relating to teachers' perceived obstacles to CPD. Table 6 showed the inhibiting factors that were categorized under six themes, namely, time, heavy workload, financial factor, CPD provider, school factor and personal factor. With reference to Table D, heavy workload was the most inhibiting factor affecting CPD to school A teachers, whilst school B teachers regarded time factor as the most inhibiting factor affecting their participation in CPD.

Teachers' perceptions of facilitating factors affecting CPD in two case schools
Case school A

Questionnaire Results

There were 19 respondents (54.3%) responding to the survey question relating to their perceived factors favorable to CPD in case school A. Six common themes were emerged according to the views from the respondent teachers. The six common themes include: school factor, personal factor, CPD provider, financial factor, family factor and government factor.

Personal factor was perceived to be one of the major factors contributing to teachers' participation in CPD. Seven teachers mentioned about personal factor such as their own goal, enthusiasm and belief that was believed to contribute to their CPD. Here are some of the examples of what teachers said:

> *"My enthusiasm and interest." (S10)*
> *"Sense of responsibility does have effects on teachers' participation in CPD." (S10)*
> *"In time of dealing with changes and making progress." (S10)*
> *"I am still young." (S18)*
> *"One's own belief, including colleagues' common beliefs about education." (S21)*
> *"Personal belief of its urgency." (S30)*
> *"When facing new challenges in work and fulfill personal interest." (S33)*

School factor is one major facilitating factor to CPD to school A teachers. Six respondents reported that the school is one kind of support to their participation in CPD. Here are some of

the examples of what the teachers mentioned:

> *"The school has provided some workshops or seminars for teachers to participate." (S3)*
> *"School support." (S5)*
> *"More promotion chances should be given to teachers." (S4)*
> *"[There is a need for] some school measures of corporation." (S24)*
> *"The school's encouragement." (S26)*
> *"The working time is regular, and this is more favorable to arrange personal continuing professional development." (S29)*

One teacher suggested,

> *"The school has to understand and support teachers' continuing education, should reduce teachers' workload, in order to let them have much time to study and do the related research." (S32)*

Another teacher wrote,

> *"The school encourages teachers to have CPD; at the same time, but not able to fulfill teachers' need of time, always arrange activities that lead to teachers being absent from CPD courses." (S35)*

Five teachers perceived CPD provider as a factor favorable to their choice of CPD.
1. *"Lots of choices of CPD course." (S7)*
2. *"Course contents can suit my needs." (S30)*
3. *"When it helps enhancement of subject knowledge and grasp more latest news." (S22)*
4. *"When I can learn about some updated educational information." (S32)*
5. *"Workshops are mostly held on Saturdays so I can join them." (S8)*

Three teachers mentioned about financial factor can be an impetus to CPD. One teacher stated, *"When tuition subsidy can be available for teachers."* (S35) Another teacher also responded, *"When there is a provision of paid leave for CPD."* (S33)

One teacher mentioned about *"Family support is important to support her participation in CPD"* (S11). Only 1 respondent perceived that government's encouragement played a role in contributing to teachers' CPD. As one teacher mentioned, "encouragement from the

government" (S33).

Focus Group Interview

During the focus group interview with case school A teachers, teachers pointed out the importance of school support to CPD. For example, this teacher suggested, "I hope there will be a reduction in the number of lessons. The workload is so heavy. If employing more teachers, we can have much time." (Teacher J, case school A) Another teacher commented, "Financial support. I remember formerly the school can assist us to pay some money on CPD. It can be helpful." (Teacher E, case school A)

Case school B

Questionnaire Results

For case school B, 16 teachers (37.2%) gave responses to facilitating factors affecting CPD, whilst 27 teachers (62.8%) did not give any responses. The following are the six emerging facilitating factors that were identified by school B teachers as facilitating factors affecting CPD. These factors included: school factor, financial factor, CPD provider, personal factor, relationship with others, and family factor.

Six teachers considered sufficient school support as one important facilitating factor to CPD. Four teachers mentioned about time as an impetus to CPD such as CPD being conducted within school hours and school can arrange time for teachers to have more space. One teacher outlined that good management of the use of school resources is helpful to support CPD. Three teachers mentioned about financial factor can be an impetus to CPD. One teacher mentioned about "in-service continuing education with salary" that is supportive to her CPD. Four teachers mentioned about "money" as their supportive factor for CPD. One teacher mentioned about the availability of government subsidy would be beneficial to CPD. Four teachers perceived CPD provider as a factor favorable to their choice of CPD. Personal factor was perceived to be a major factor contributing to teachers' participation in CPD. Three teachers regarded time, opportunity and personal needs as their personal consideration for CPD. Two teachers mentioned about good relationship with others helps to facilitate CPD, whilst there is support from colleagues and friends and harmony relationships amongst colleagues. One teacher mentioned about "without burden for the family" (37) as one important factor supporting his CPD.

Focus Group Interview

In the focus group interview, case school B teachers, like case school A teachers, mentioned about the importance of school support to CPD. This teacher mentioned,

> "*The school is very willing to support us to take courses. When the school knows*

that there is a need. So when there is a need to substitute lessons, there will be some special arrangements. The principal will not give you any 'colored face' or say 'again?'? She knows you are willing to learn for the school." (Teacher F, case school B)

She continued,

"*The school also holds different types of CPD activities co-organized by different institutions. That is also one kind of support to CPD. Just like we went to CUHK (Chinese University of Hong Kong) to attend the conference which was actually not free, however the school had paid for us.*" (Teacher F, case school B)

Another teacher pointed out the importance of getting support from others. She said,

"*Actually the support also comes from colleagues. They do not complain about their extra work because of others having CPD within school hours.*" (Teacher Y, case school B)

Besides, teachers also reflected some opinions to promoting CPD. They suggested that more resources to be given by the government. These suggestions are similar to favorable factors for CPD.

"*And we are in a whole-day school and we have our families. If there is really a need for CPD, there should be more resources and this thus helps release us to share work. We not only have jobs, we still have families. There should be some space for us…less teaching periods.*" (Teacher T, case school B)

"*When teaching can be separated from administrative work… It is not the school to provide more space and time to us; it should be the EMB (Education Manpower and Bureau) to give us more extra resources. The school can thus have more resources to support us.*" (Teacher Y, case school B)

Teachers' perceptions of inhibiting factors affecting CPD in two case schools
Case school A

Questionnaire Results

A total of 24 teachers responded to the question regarding the inhibiting factors affecting their CPD. There were eleven teachers who did not give any responses to the question. Six common themes were emerged according to the views from the respondent teachers. The six common themes include: time, heavy workload, financial factor, CPD provider, school support and personal factor.

Heavy workload was also one of the most common factors acting as an obstacle to CPD.

There were thirteen teachers who expressed heavy workload caused them not to participate in CPD. Here are some of the examples of what they said about workload:

> *"Work pressure is too large, hope to have some rest." (S2)*
> *"Heavy school workload." (S4)*
> *"Too busy teaching work and private affairs." (S6)*
> *"School work is too tiring." (S9)*
> *"Daily work is too busy." (S24)*
> *"Too much non-teaching workload in the school." (S26)*
> *"Too much school work, it greatly diminishes time for leisure." (S29)*
> *"Too much pressure from work, leading to no interest in CPD." (S33)*

Time factor was the most common factor that inhibits teachers from CPD. Twelve teachers expressed that they lacked time to join CPD. Here are some examples of what they said about time factor affecting their participation in CPD:

> *"Family responsibility, no time to do so." (S1)*
> *"Too much workload, no time." (S1)*
> *"School teaching work or lesson periods, no time to participate." (S3)*
> *"Lack of time." (S27)*
> *"Too busy with work, cannot have time for CPD." (S33)*

Four teachers from case school A expressed financial factors also could inhibit them from CPD. Here are the examples of what they said:

> *"Tuition fee is too expensive." (S7)*
> *"Money." (S10)*
> *"Financial problem." (S32)*
> *"Financial pressure." (S33)*

Three teachers expressed that the quality of the provision of CPD can affect their participation in CPD. One teacher wrote, *"The quality of CPD course is too diverse."* (S7). Another teacher wrote, *"Practicality of the course, e.g. teaching Mandarin as a medium of instruction."* (S10). School support was also identified as an obstacle to CPD. As One teacher mentioned,

> *"The school suggested teachers not joining those workshops within school days, except in the case that the school recommends to do so, hence, participation in*

those workshops on school days is difficult." (S8)

Another teacher wrote,

"Sometimes school development needs would be obstacles to personal continuing professional development." (S25)

Personal factors like health problem or feelings or thoughts also play a role in affecting teachers' participation in CPD. One teacher mentioned about personal factors affecting his participation in CPD. These factors included: *"Personal health."* (S33) and *"Sudden changes in the family."* (S33). She also wrote that, *"too 'directive' (from EMB and the School) but not for self-interested CPD"* (S33).

Focus Group Interview
During follow-up focus group interviews with teachers from case school A, there were consistent views to the quantitative findings in the questionnaire. One teacher pointed *"It is common to encounter those obstacles as stated here. Everyone has different levels of obstacles."* (Teacher F, case school A). This is in line with the obstacles as found in the questionnaire results. However, this particular teacher gave an example of heavy workload and time as her obstacles towards her CPD. She expressed that,

"Busy…so much work …at 7 p.m. I am in a hurry to go to study. On Saturdays and Sundays, we don't have time to do assignment because we sometimes need to be on duty for doing some activities like open campus days or extra-curricular activities. I am not spiritual and am physically tired." (Teacher E, case school A)

Another teacher explained why teachers have heavy workload, stating that, *"As a teacher today, we do have a lot of work. You need to put a lot of efforts on it."* (Teacher F, case school A) Another teacher shared a very similar view, stating that, *"Much work needs to do it in details. There is so much clerical work to do."* (Teacher J, case school A) This teacher also pointed out that some factors like personal interest can be favorable or unfavorable to CPD. She said,

"Interest can have two sides. It may be a favorable factor or an unfavorable factor. I think CPD should be continuing, beneficial to teaching and learning to bring about satisfaction and teaching better."

Case school B

Questionnaire Results

For case school B, 15 teachers showed some obstacles towards CPD. 28 teachers did not express that they had any obstacles towards CPD. Four common themes were emerged according to the views from the respondent teachers. The four common themes include: time, heavy workload, financial factor and CPD provider. As identified by thirteen teachers in case school B, time was one major factor leading to obstacles to their participation in CPD. Here are some of the statements they wrote on the questionnaire.

> *"Time constraint." (L1)*
> *"Busy school work." (L2)*
> *"Time arrangement for CPD is difficult." (L22)*
> *"Because of after-school meetings, I have no time to participate." (L34)*
> *"Serious lack of time." (L41)*

There were only three teachers who mentioned heavy workload as an obstacle to their CPD. One teacher wrote, "Busy work" (L15). Only two teachers responded that "*expensive tuition fees*" (L15) and "*money*" were obstacles to their participation in CPD. One teacher mentioned about the quality of professional development courses could affect her participation in CPD (L33).

Focus Group Interview

In the focus group interview with teachers, teachers discussed about heavy workload and time as major inhibiting factors affecting CPD.

> "*Maybe not just related to workload. It's mainly just because of shortage of time to do so many things as mentioned at the same moment. Time and money are very common obstacles.*" (Teacher K, case school B)
> "*Most of Hong Kong people are like the same. It is very common in Hong Kong. Time is always not sufficient.*" (Teacher F, case school B)
> "*And we still need time to spend on family. If we can much space, that will be better.*" (Teacher Y, case school B)

However, one teacher's view about workload and time is quite different from that of case school A teachers.

> "*This may not be just related to workload. It's mainly just because of shortage of time to do so many things as mentioned at the same moment. Time and money are very*

common obstacles... I think it's not related to workload. It actually is related to insufficient time here, and we felt hat CPD is what we need to do. But because we just have two hands and we can't do it at the same time." (Teacher T, case school B)

The above teacher's comment may be related to his school background. At the time of survival, most of housing estate schools are facing 'being killed' problem due to shortage of students enrolling in schools whilst the government reduces the number of schools which cannot have officially recognized number of students (i.e. at least 23 students per class). Case school B is a famous school in the district, which always attracts sufficient students, however, case school A is a less famous school that faces the problem of having less students. This school factor may affect teachers' CPD indirectly as teachers in case school A need to do some more extra work such as promotion in order to keep its attractiveness to parents. That means, school factor to some extent affects teachers' CPD directly and indirectly.

Another teacher also pointed out that time and school arrangement has a relationship that affects teachers' participation in CPD. She said,

"That's time, I think. How to manage time. Because I am responsible for WEBSAMS. When taking WEBSAMS class, it is always held within school hours. I don't want my colleagues to substitute my class always. So in this case I need to change the schedule for my classes and my classes will be put together in a crowded block and it actually shortens my working time." (Teacher F, case school B)

Heavy workload, time, and school factors are thus major factors that affect teachers' participation in CPD. School factor plays a crucial influential factor affecting teachers' participation in CPD activities and their satisfaction in CPD. In other words, if school allows time for teachers' CPD and distributes workload to teachers equally, this greatly can help facilitate teachers' CPD.

Demographic characteristics and teachers' perceptions of the facilitating and inhibiting factors
Frequency counts were used to count the total number of responses to the facilitating and inhibiting factors affecting CPD. Chi-Square tests were used to explore if there existed any significant differences between demographic characteristics and teachers' perceptions of facilitating and inhibiting factors affecting CPD (see Appendix I). Chi-Square tests showed that there were no significant differences between demographic characteristics, i.e. gender, age, the highest academic qualifications, years of teaching experience, teaching rank, school, and teachers' perceived factors facilitating affecting CPD. However, Chi-square test indicated that there existed significant difference between school and heavy workload (Factor 6) that

inhibits CPD (x^2=18.830, *df*=2, p<0.05). There also existed significant difference between gender and Financial (Factor 3) (x^2=6.846, *df*=1, p<0.05) as well as gender and heavy workload (Factor 6) (x^2=4.826, *df*=1, p<0.05).

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

CPD is an essential process for school improvement, helping teachers' personal growth and self-actualization, accompanied by improvement of school structures and processes that promote continuous development. This paper presented the teachers' perceptions of facilitating and inhibiting factors affecting CPD. The facilitating factors included school factor, personal factor, financial factor, time, CPD provider, family factor, relationship with others and government factor. The inhibiting factors consisted of time, heavy workload, financial factor, CPD provider, school factor and personal factor. Interestingly, the overall response rate to the facilitating factors by school A and school B was 44.9%, whilst there was 50% response rate to the inhibiting factors. The similar response rate may reflect that both facilitating and inhibiting factors co-exist in schools.

There existed minor differences in their perceived facilitating and inhibiting factors affecting CPD in the two case schools. For school A teachers, workload was the most inhibiting factor affecting CPD, whilst personal factor was the most important factor contributing to their CPD. However, for school B teachers, time was the most inhibiting factor to them, whilst school and financial factors are the most important factors contributing to their CPD.

Besides, heavy workload was perceived to be a barrier to male teachers. It is noted that nine male teachers out of 24 teachers with ranking of APSM or above belonged to the middle management level, so their workload may be heavier than female teachers. At the same time, this is also probably related to role expectation in the Chinese society. There rooted a deep conception of that males are responsible for bearing the living of a family while females are expected to take care of the family. Further study can be conducted to examine the impact of cultural factor on teachers' CPD opportunities.

Outstandingly, school factor seems to play an influential and determinant factor affecting teachers' CPD. Heavy workload, time and school arrangements are all controlled and managed by the school. There existed another significant difference between school and heavy workload (Factor 6) (x^2=18.830, *df*=2, p<0.05). This reflected that workload varied from different school contexts. And it implied that there could be some effects of the Hong Kong government's initiative, "School Based Initiative," on schools which are allowed to have their own rights to formulate their policies and practice differently. Meanwhile, it

represents that different teachers of different schools are treated differently towards CPD opportunities. It is thus worthwhile to further study about this diversity and its impact on teachers' CPD opportunities and effectiveness on schools and teacher learning.

As a whole, in comparison with case school B, with a response rate of 37.2% (n=16), the response rate of the survey question regarding facilitating factor was higher in case school A. It showed that seemingly case school A respondents had more positive perceptions towards CPD. However, when compared with case school B, the response rate of the survey question concerning inhibiting factors was higher in case school A. Seemingly, case school A respondents had more obstacles to CPD, whilst they included school support and personal factor as obstacles to their CPD.

Interestingly, some of the factors contributing to CPD did not appear in the list of inhibiting factors. These factors included: family, relationships with others and government. That may imply that none of these factors hinder CPD, instead, these factors most probably exist in the reality to support CPD. On the other hand, the factor 'workload' did not appear as one facilitating factor. This may imply that there was no release of workload for assisting teachers' CPD. This brings to the fore idea that schools should formulate school based professional development plans according to teachers' workload and needs.

There existed some limitations of the present study. One of the limitations is lack of generalizability because of a small number of schools getting involved in the study. Besides, other stakeholders' perceptions were not taken consideration in this study. Further research can be done in other schools and involve different stakeholders so as to understand the topic more thoroughly. Other research methods like observation and document analysis can be applied to examine the real situation of CPD practice in order to get a more holistic view of how CPD is put into practice in reality.

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Table A: Frequency of respondents to perceived factors facilitating CPD

	Case school A	Case school B	Total no. of
	No. of respondents (%)	No. of respondents (%)	respondents (%)
With responses	19 (54.3)	16 (37.2)	35 (44.9)
No responses	16 (45.7)	27 (62.8)	43 (55.1)

Table B: Frequency of responses to perceived factors facilitating CPD

Factors	Case school A	Case school B	Total no. of
	No. of responses (%)	No. of responses (%)	responses (%)
1. School factor	6 (25)	7 (30.4)	13 (27.7)
2. Personal factor	9 (37.5)	1 (4.3)	10 (21.3)
3. Financial factor	3 (12.5)	7 (30.4)	10 (21.3)
4. Time	1 (4.2)	4 (17.4)	5 (10.6)
5. CPD provider	3 (12.5)	0 (0)	3 (6.4)
6. Family factor	1 (4.2)	2 (8.7)	3 (6.4)
7. Relationship with others	0 (0)	2 (8.7)	2 (4.3)
8. Government factor	1 (4.2)	0 (0)	1 (2.1)

Table C: Frequency of respondents to perceived factors inhibiting CPD

	Case school A	Case school B	Total no. of
	No. of responses (%)	No. of responses (%)	respondents (%)
With responses	24 (68.6)	15 (34.9)	39 (50)
No responses	11 (31.4)	28 (65.1)	39 (50)

Table D: Frequency of responses to perceived factors inhibiting CPD

Factors	Case school A No. of responses (%)	Case school B No. of responses (%)	Total no. of responses (%)
1. Time	12 (32.4)	13 (61.9)	25 (43.1)
2. Heavy workload	13 (35.1)	3 (14.3)	16 (27.6)
3. Financial factor	4 (10.8)	2 (9.5)	6 (10.3)
4. CPD provider	3 (8.1)	1 (4.8)	4 (6.9)
5. School factor	2 (5.4)	2 (9.5)	4 (6.9)
6. Personal factor	3 (8.1)	0 (0)	3 (5.2)

Table D1: Chi-Square Test for Testing Relationship between Gender and Teachers' Perceived Facilitating Factors Affecting CPD

Facilitating Factors	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Factor 1: School	2.746(b)	1	.097
Factor 2: Personal	.654(b)	1	.419
Factor 3: Financial	.046(b)	1	.830
Factor 4: Time	.497(b)	1	.481
Factor 5: CPD Provider	.395(b)	1	.530
Factor 6: Family	1.208(b)	1	.272
Factor 7: Relationships with Others	1.208(b)	1	.272
Factor 8: Government	.246(b)	1	.620

Table D2: Chi-Square Test for Testing Relationship between Age and Teachers' Perceived Facilitating Factors Affecting CPD

Facilitating Factors	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Factor 1: School	2.418(a)	2	.298
Factor 2: Personal	1.467(a)	2	.480
Factor 3: Financial	4.556(a)	2	.102
Factor 4: Time	5.696(a)	2	.058
Factor 5: CPD Provider	.996(a)	2	.608
Factor 6: Family	1.251(a)	2	.535
Factor 7: Relationships with Others	.713(a)	2	.700
Factor 8: Government	2.815(a)	2	.245

Table D3: Chi-Square Test for Testing Relationship between the Highest Academic Qualifications and Teachers' Perceived Facilitating Factors Affecting CPD

Facilitating Factors	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Factor 1: School	3.181(a)	2	.204
Factor 2: Personal	1.405(a)	2	.495
Factor 3: Financial	2.771(a)	2	.250
Factor 4: Time	.693(a)	2	.707
Factor 5: CPD Provider	1.745(a)	2	.418
Factor 6: Family	.693(a)	2	.707
Factor 7: Relationships with Others	3.585(a)	2	.167
Factor 8: Government	5.758(a)	2	.056

Table D4: Chi-Square Test for Testing Relationship between Years of Teaching Experience and Teachers' Perceived Facilitating Factors Affecting CPD

Facilitating Factors	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Factor 1: School	1.710(a)	2	.425
Factor 2: Personal	4.367(a)	2	.113
Factor 3: Financial	2.092(a)	2	.351
Factor 4: Time	3.698(a)	2	.157
Factor 5: CPD Provider	4.749(a)	2	.093
Factor 6: Family	2.766(a)	2	.251
Factor 7: Relationships with Others	3.698(a)	2	.157
Factor 8: Government	1.827(a)	2	.401

Table D5: Chi-Square Test for Testing Relationship between Teaching Rank and Teachers' Perceived Facilitating Factors Affecting CPD

Facilitating Factors	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Factor 1: School	3.439(a)	3	.329
Factor 2: Personal	2.323(a)	3	.508
Factor 3: Financial	3.824(a)	3	.281
Factor 4: Time	.780(a)	3	.854
Factor 5: CPD Provider	3.930(a)	3	.269
Factor 6: Family	3.112(a)	3	.375
Factor 7: Relationships with Others	.780(a)	3	.854
Factor 8: Government	.385(a)	3	.943

Table D6: Chi-Square Test for Testing Relationship between School and Teachers' Perceived Facilitating Factors Affecting CPD

Facilitating Factors	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Factor 1: School	.227(a)	2	.893
Factor 2: Personal	1.438(a)	2	.487
Factor 3: Financial	.201(a)	2	.905
Factor 4: Time	2.095(a)	2	.351
Factor 5: CPD Provider	3.299(a)	2	.192
Factor 6: Family	.260(a)	2	.878
Factor 7: Relationships with Others	2.095(a)	2	.351
Factor 8: Government	1.503(a)	2	.472

Table E1: Chi-Square Test for Testing Relationship between Gender and Teachers' Perceived Inhibiting Factors Affecting CPD

Inhibiting Factors	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Factor 1: School	.497(b)	1	.481
Factor 2: Personal	.246(b)	1	.620
Factor 3: Financial	6.846(b)	1	.009
Factor 4: Time	.094(b)	1	.760
Factor 5: CPD Provider	1.208(b)	1	.272
Factor 6: Heavy Workload	4.826(b)	1	.028

Table E2: Chi-Square Test for Testing Relationship between Age and Teachers' Perceived Inhibiting Factors Affecting CPD

Inhibiting Factors	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Factor 1: School	1.251(a)	2	.535
Factor 2: Personal	2.815(a)	2	.245
Factor 3: Financial	1.986(a)	2	.370
Factor 4: Time	1.858(a)	2	.395
Factor 5: CPD Provider	.713(a)	2	.700
Factor 6: Heavy Workload	5.027(a)	2	.081

Table E3: Chi-Square Test for Testing Relationship between the Highest Academic Qualifications and Teachers' Perceived Inhibiting Factors Affecting CPD

Inhibiting Factors	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Factor 1: School	3.585(a)	2	.167
Factor 2: Personal	5.758(a)	2	.056
Factor 3: Financial	.018(a)	2	.991
Factor 4: Time	.693(a)	2	.707
Factor 5: CPD Provider	.193(a)	2	.908
Factor 6: Heavy Workload	1.745(a)	2	.418

Table E4: Chi-Square Test for Testing Relationship between Years of Teaching Experience and Teachers' Perceived Inhibiting Factors Affecting CPD

Inhibiting Factors	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Factor 1: School	.593(a)	2	.744
Factor 2: Personal	1.827(a)	2	.401
Factor 3: Financial	3.264(a)	2	.196
Factor 4: Time	.004(a)	2	.998
Factor 5: CPD Provider	.593(a)	2	.744
Factor 6: Heavy Workload	4.803(a)	2	.091

Table E5: Chi-Square Test for Testing Relationship between Teaching Rank and Teachers' Perceived Inhibiting Factors Affecting CPD

Inhibiting Factors	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Factor 1: School	4.225(a)	3	.238
Factor 2: Personal	.385(a)	3	.943
Factor 3: Financial	3.157(a)	3	.368
Factor 4: Time	.253(a)	3	.969
Factor 5: CPD Provider	4.225(a)	3	.238
Factor 6: Heavy Workload	.475(a)	3	.924

Table E6: Chi-Square Test for Testing Relationship between School and Teachers' Perceived Inhibiting Factors Affecting CPD

Inhibiting Factors	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Factor 1: School	3.041(a)	2	.219
Factor 2: Personal	1.503(a)	2	.472
Factor 3: Financial	1.325(a)	2	.515
Factor 4: Time	.704(a)	2	.703
Factor 5: CPD Provider	3.935(a)	2	.140
Factor 6: Heavy Workload	18.830(a)	2	.000