Title: Developing an On-the-Job Training Program for School Principals

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Abstract

In Taiwan, we have not established a national system for school principals' professional development yet. However, there are pre-service training programs for principals offered by National Academy for Educational Research (NAER) in cooperation with local educational authorities, in addition to Centers for School Principals within universities. The methods of action research and Fuzzy Delphi were adopted as the method for this study, and a panel of 25 experts was invited to help the design of a program of professional development for primary school and junior high school principals. The initial program, designed by the authors, which was based on the following rationales of "a theory-based and practice-oriented design", "community learning model", "continuity of lifelong education" and "innovation operation and professional administration", and made of four components: 1) educational policy and important educational issues; 2) core curriculum; 3) seminar; 4) comprehensive activity. And, the main subjects of the training program contain principals' honesty and legal literacy, campus bullying and gender equity education, implementation of policy of 12-year basic education, international education, featured schools, benchmarking learning, emotion and stress management, environment and sustainability, media relationship and interaction, important educational issues, opening ceremony and program description, and life manners. Based on the results of the survey of Fuzzy Delphi, the final program for primary school and junior high school principals' professional development was revised and confirmed on the consensus of the panel, and the relevant suggestions for the application of the program are made accordingly.

Keywords: professional development, in-service training program, school leadership

1. Research Background and Purpose

The increasing complexity of the role of school principal is widely acknowledged(Campbell, Lindsay, & Phillips, 2002; Christopher, 2001; Woods, Woods, & Cowie, 2009). The U. S. has established the standards of Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2009), and the U. K. has founded the National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services (NCLSCS) (National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services, 2009). Thus, the principals' professional development is based on professional systems. Lewis highlighted that the importance of training "the best talent" for principal jobs(Lewis, 1998). This is confirmed by the following statement that professional development of principals is increasingly viewed as a fundamental ingredient of successful school improvement(Prather & Field, 1988; Vandenberghe, Kelchtermans, & Maes, 2000). It is indicated that an evaluation of in-service training programs for secondary school principals in the light of their tasks performance is essential, and especially the government-sponsored job-training programs must be subject to evaluation to assess whether their effectiveness justifies their cost to the public(Jones, 2001; Sakhi, 1983; Stroud, 2004; Zhang, Rubin, & Mealli, 2009). In Taiwan, regarding the professional development of school leaders, although there has been no national professional system, the universities start to establish principal education centers. The National Academy for Educational Research (NAER) also cooperates with the cities and counties, and launches the training and professional development programs for the principals. Although the legal system of principals' professional growth is not established, it is making the progress. Based on the above, this study aims to construct training program for primary school and junior high school principals by action research and Fuzzy Delphi approach.

2. Literature Review

In recent years, some countries, especially some English-speaking countries, have started to establish "national standards" to guide primary school and junior high school principals' professional development and inspect principals' knowledge and abilities they need. In the U. K., National Standards for Headteachers are developed corporately by Teacher Training Agency, teachers, principals, directors of local government, professional associations, school teacher training personnel, local educational authorities, institutions of higher education, and other institutions. Hereafter, National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services (NCLSCS) was established (National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services, 2009).

The standards were set up related important fields of principal's affairs, including knowledge, perception, skills and attitude and became the basis for planning future and in-service principals' professional development. The standards consisted of principal's core purposes, important outcomes of principal's affairs, professional knowledge and perception, skills and attitude, important fields of principal's affairs (National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services, 2009).

According to the book "Proposition for quality professional development of school leaders" published by Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISSLC), the propositions of quality professional development for school leaders are as follows (Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium, 2000).

1. Quality professional development validates teaching and learning as the central activities of the school.
2. Quality professional development engages all school leaders in planned, integrated, career-long learning to improve student achievement.
3. Quality professional development promotes collaboration to achieve organizational goals while meeting individual needs.
4. Quality professional development models effective learning.
5. Quality professional development incorporates measures of accountability that direct attention to valued learning outcomes.

Although pre-service trainings of school principals has been one of the centerpieces of educational discussions in the last several decades, such training has had a long history in the U.S(Gumus, 2015). The U. S. is a typical country of decentralization of education. However, after ISLLC was established in the middle of 1990s, it stimulated every state to

develop corporately the common framework of training and professional development of primary school and junior high school principals (Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium, 2000). Nevertheless, every state had different practice in the professional development of primary school and junior high school principals.

From the above, we can see that countries of decentralization of education usually faced the more difficult problem on establishing and popularizing consistent principal profession system nationally. From the 1990s on, the U. K. and the U. S. devoted to establish national or interstate standards of primary school and junior high school principals to guide national training of primary school and junior high school principals and the implement of professional development program. However, the U. S. is a country of decentralization of education. Although the U. S. developed the standards of primary school and junior high school principals by interstate cooperation, it cannot enforce every state to implement the standards. Relatively, the education of the U. K. was heading apparently to centralization since the Education Reform Act 1988 went through. It appeared national consistent systems on formulation and implement of National Standards for Headteachers in the U. K. And, National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services (NCLSCS) cooperated with more than ten centers of principals' assessment and training nationwide to plan and implement national training of primary school and junior high school principals and the implement of professional development program. Therefore, the U. K. has established nationally consistent training and professional development program of primary school and junior high school principals. In the future, if we can formulate and establish the policies and systems of professional development of primary school and junior high school principals, they will be quite helpful and promote the professional development of primary school and junior high school principals in Taiwan.

3. Research Method

This study adopted both action research and Fuzzy Delphi. It is suggested that the priorities of training needs and the principals' views should be taken into consideration in the course of planning the training programs, and not only the opinions of experts (Amel, 2001; Taylor, 2001). The subjects included 25 experts, who are scholars and primary school and junior high school principals. An action research team was established in the National Academy for Educational Research to plan the training program for principals. There were totally two expert conferences. After planning the framework and content of training program for principals in Taiwan, this study integrated the experts' common consensus by Fuzzy Delphi approach to construct training program for primary school and junior high school principals in Taiwan.

4. Results and Discussion

By Max-Min, 25 experts' opinions are integrated. When there is common consensus, the researcher calculates the Triangular Fuzzy Numbers of importance of the measures. If the first expert's evaluation on the importance of k measure is $\tilde{W}_{lk} = \left(a_{lk}, b_{lk}, c_{lk} \right)$, $l = 1,2,3,...m$, fuzzy weight of k measure will be $\tilde{W}_k$. The calculation is shown below:

$$\tilde{W}_k = \left(a_k, b_k, c_k \right), \ k = 1,2,3,...n$$

$$a_k = \underset{l}{Min}\{a_{lk}\}, \ b_{lk} = \sqrt[m]{\prod_{l}^{m} b_{lk}}, \ c_k = \underset{l}{Max}\{c_{lk}\}$$

($\tilde{W}_k$: Fuzzy Weight; lk: the first expert's evaluation of importance of k measure; n: number of measures; m: number of experts)

This study sets total effectiveness value of Triangular Fuzzy Number as 0.6. It is the threshold value

$(\alpha = 0.6)$ for evaluating the measures. The researcher demonstrates that total effectiveness values of "four-day study" and "life manners" are 0.578 and 0.594 which are below the threshold value 0.6. Thus, they are eliminated. The rest measures are higher than threshold value 0.6. Therefore, the rest 24 measures are proper for training program for primary school and junior high school principals in Taiwan. Table 1 below is The result of Fuzzy Delphi analysis of measures of this research tool.

Table 1 The Result of Fuzzy Delphi Analysis

numbers	measures	a_k（L）	b_k（M）	c_k（U）	total effectiveness values	threshold value (0.6)
1-1	cultivation of primary school and junior high school principals with vision and practical education backgrounds	0.5	0.886	1	0.769	V
1-4	enhancement of professional knowledge and capability of primary school and junior high school principals	0.4	0.872	1	0.74	V
1-2	study of current education related issues	0.4	0.793	1	0.699	V
1-3	construction of professional community network and platform for primary school and junior high school principals	0.3	0.781	1	0.674	V
2-4	innovation operation and professional administration	0.5	0.867	1	0.759	V
2-1	a theory-based and practice-oriented design	0.5	0.840	1	0.744	V
2-2	community learning model	0.4	0.803	1	0.704	V
2-3	continuity of lifelong education	0.3	0.793	1	0.68	V
3-2	benchmarking learning (principals' dialogue)	0.4	0.835	1	0.72	V
3-3	development of community and group operation	0.4	0.825	1	0.715	V

numbers	measures	a_k (L)	b_k (M)	c_k (U)	total effectiveness values	threshold value (0.6)
3-1	central study	0.3	0.698	1	0.634	V
3-4	four-day study	0.1	0.644	1	0.578	X
4-10	important educational issues	0.5	0.844	1	0.746	V
4-6	benchmarking learning	0.5	0.829	1	0.739	V
4-1	principals' honesty and legal literacy	0.3	0.854	1	0.711	V
4-5	featured schools	0.4	0.808	1	0.706	V
4-8	environment and sustainability	0.4	0.807	1	0.706	V
4-9	media relationship and interaction	0.4	0.793	1	0.699	V
4-4	international education	0.4	0.768	1	0.687	V
4-3	implementation of policy of 12-year basic education	0.3	0.802	1	0.684	V
4-2	campus bullying and gender equity education	0.3	0.787	1	0.677	V
4-7	emotion and stress management	0.2	0.803	1	0.668	V
4-11	opening ceremony and program description	0.2	0.671	1	0.605	V
4-12	life manners	0.1	0.679	1	0.594	X

5. Conclusion

From the results, there are two conclusions below: Firstly, 24 consensuses of in-service training program for primary school and junior high school principals in Taiwan are derived from the findings of this study. According to the above findings, this study screened the original 26 measures of training program for primary school and junior high school principals, and divided them into 24 measures.

Second, an in-service training program for primary school and junior high school principals in Taiwan was designed by effectiveness value. Based on the results of the survey of Fuzzy Delphi, the objectives of training program included "cultivation of primary school and junior high school principals with vision and practical education backgrounds", "enhancement of professional knowledge and capability of primary school and junior high school principals", "study of current education related issues" and "construction of professional community network and platform for primary school and junior high school principals". The framework of training program includes "innovation operation and professional administration", "theory-based and practice-oriented design", "community learning model" and "continuity of lifelong education". The implementation of training program refers to "benchmarking learning (principals' dialogues)", "development of community and group operation" and "central study". The content of training program includes

"important educational issues", "benchmarking learning", "principals' honesty and legal literacy", "featured schools", "environment and sustainability", "media relationship and interaction", "international education", "implementation of policy of 12-year basic education", "campus bullying and gender equity education", "emotion and stress management" and "opening ceremony and program description". The subjects of training program are "in-service primary school and junior high school principals".

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