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Managing Primary School Teachers' Professional Competence Development in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam: Current Status and Implications for School Leadership

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Abstract

Vietnam's 2018 General Education Curriculum places growing demands on primary school teachers' professional competence and on school leaders' capacity to manage continuing professional development. Despite growing attention to teacher professional learning in Vietnam, limited research has examined professional competence development as an integrated management cycle, particularly in primary schools in the Mekong Delta. This study examined the perceived extent of implementation of four management functions - planning, organizing, directing, and monitoring and evaluating - and compared perceptions between teachers and school administrators. A quantitative cross-sectional survey design was employed, using descriptive statistics and independent-samples t-tests. The sample consisted of 750 respondents from 20 primary schools across 13 Mekong Delta provinces and cities, including 550 teachers and 200 administrators. Data were collected using a 20-item, four-point Likert questionnaire covering planning, organizing, directing, and monitoring and evaluation. Internal consistency coefficients ranged from .81 to .85. Planning and monitoring/evaluation were perceived as having been more extensively implemented than organizing and directing. No significant differences between teachers and administrators emerged across the four overall dimensions. However, administrators rated information technology (IT) and foreign-language training significantly higher than teachers did ($p < .001$). Consequently, schools should strengthen needs-based planning, school-based professional learning, stakeholder coordination, supportive leadership, and the developmental use of evaluation evidence.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Teacher professional competence (TPC) is widely recognized as a critical determinant of educational quality and the successful implementation of curriculum reform (Bertschy et al., 2013; Caena, 2011; Darling-Hammond, 2017; Shulman, 1987). Contemporary expectations of teachers extend beyond subject-matter knowledge and routine pedagogical skills to include competency-based teaching, assessment for learning, digital competence, collaborative practice, professional reflection, and the capacity to respond to increasingly diverse learning needs (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Caena, 2011; Lopes et al., 2024; Ministry of Education and Training [MOET], 2018b). Consequently, TPC cannot be regarded as a fixed attribute acquired solely during initial teacher education; rather, it requires continuous development throughout their professional careers (Day & Sachs, 2004; Evans, 2008; Postholm, 2012).

International research has consistently emphasized the importance of continuing professional development in improving teacher knowledge, instructional practices, and capacity to support student learning (Darling-Hammond, 2017; Day & Sachs, 2004; Guskey, 2002; Postholm, 2012). Effective professional development (PD) is generally characterized by a strong focus on relevant content, active learning, collaboration, coherence with curriculum and policy, sustained duration, opportunities for feedback, and follow-up support (Desimone, 2009; Garet et al., 2001; Kuijpers et al., 2010). Teacher development is also shaped by organizational conditions within schools, including leadership, professional culture, collegial collaboration, access to resources, and opportunities to apply newly acquired knowledge in practice (Atwal, 2013; Earley & Bubb, 2004; Evans, 2014; Nawab et al., 2021; Whitworth & Chiu, 2015). These findings suggest that improving TPC depends not only on the provision of training opportunities but also on how professional competence development is planned, organized, directed, monitored, and continuously improved at the school level (Earley & Bubb, 2004; Guskey, 2000; Tallerico, 2005).

This issue has become particularly important in Vietnam following the implementation of the 2018 General Education Curriculum, which represents a significant transition from predominantly content-oriented education toward competency-based teaching and learning (Ministry of Education and Training, 2018a). The reform requires primary school teachers to undertake new professional responsibilities associated with curriculum implementation, student competency development, innovative pedagogical approaches, assessment, technology integration, and school-based educational planning (Ho, 2024; MOET, 2018a, 2018b). Research on Vietnamese primary schools has indicated that curriculum reform creates substantial changes in teachers' work and requires corresponding changes in school leadership and professional support systems (Ho, 2024). Similarly, research on instructional leadership in Vietnamese primary schools has highlighted the importance of strengthening principals' capacity to support teaching, learning, and teacher development rather than concentrating primarily on administrative responsibilities (Nguyen et al., 2018).

The need for systematic professional competence development is particularly relevant in the Mekong Delta. The region encompasses schools operating under varied socioeconomic, geographical, infrastructural, and professional conditions. Differences in access to professional learning opportunities, specialist support, digital infrastructure, and institutional resources may affect teachers' ability to participate in and benefit from professional development (Dang, 2018; Nawab et al., 2021). Previous studies in the region have identified continuing needs for teacher and educational workforce development in response to curriculum reform and changing professional requirements (Dang, 2018; Ho et al., 2023). Evidence from An Giang Province, for example, indicates continuing challenges in developing

primary school teachers to meet contemporary professional expectations (Ho et al., 2023). These contextual characteristics make the Mekong Delta an important setting for examining how professional competence development is actually managed within primary schools.

Managing TPC development is important because PD does not automatically improve classroom practice (Guskey, 2002; McChesney & Aldridge, 2019). Its effectiveness may be limited when activities are disconnected from teachers' actual needs, implemented as isolated events, insufficiently supported by school leaders, or not followed by monitoring and feedback (Earley & Bubb, 2004; Evans, 2014; Guskey, 2000; Nawab et al., 2021). Effective PD should be sustained, collaborative, practice-based, and supported by reflection and feedback (Desimone, 2009; Evans, 2014; Garet et al., 2001; Lambirth et al., 2021; Nawab et al., 2021). From a management perspective, professional competence development requires four interconnected functions: planning, organizing, directing, and monitoring and evaluation (Earley & Bubb, 2004; Guskey, 2000; Tallerico, 2005). These functions enable schools to identify needs, allocate resources, coordinate implementation, provide guidance, and improve activities based on evidence (Earley & Bubb, 2004; Guskey, 2000; McChesney & Aldridge, 2019). School leaders are therefore central to creating supportive professional learning conditions and linking teacher development with curriculum implementation and school improvement (Evans, 2014; Tallerico, 2005; Whitworth & Chiu, 2015). This role is particularly important in Vietnamese primary schools undergoing continuing curriculum reform and instructional change (Ho, 2024; Ministry of Education and Training, 2018a; Nguyen et al., 2018).

Although teacher professional development has been extensively studied, the evidence base is uneven across contexts and levels of analysis. International research has largely examined the characteristics and outcomes of professional development programs, including content focus, active learning, collaboration, coherence, duration, and feedback (Desimone, 2009; Garet et al., 2001; Guskey, 2002; Kuijpers et al., 2010). In the Mekong Delta, Dang (2018) surveyed 61 EFL teachers from seven localities and examined opportunities and challenges associated with government-supported language training, rather than school-level management of primary teachers' professional competence. Ho et al. (2023) surveyed 1,116 managers and teachers in Dong Thap Province and proposed a professional competence development process; however, the sample included only high schools and preschools and did not examine the four management functions used in the present study. Research on Vietnamese primary schools has also addressed curriculum reform and instructional leadership (Ho, 2024; Nguyen et al., 2018), yet these studies did not focus specifically on how professional competence development is perceived to be managed through planning, organizing, directing, and monitoring and evaluation in Mekong Delta primary schools. Accordingly, the present study applies an established management-function perspective to provide context-specific descriptive evidence from primary school teachers and administrators in the region. It does not propose a new universal management theory; rather, it examines relatively strong and weak management practices and derives evidence-informed implications for school leadership. The study was guided by two objectives:

RO1. To assess participants' perceptions of the implementation of four management dimensions-planning, organizing implementation, directing implementation, and monitoring and evaluation-in primary school teachers' professional competence development.

RO2. To identify the relatively higher- and lower-rated management practices within the four dimensions and examine whether teachers and administrators differ in their overall dimension ratings.

These objectives were addressed through the following research questions:

RQ1. How did primary school teachers and school administrators perceive the implementation of planning, organizing implementation, directing implementation, and monitoring and evaluation in teachers' professional competence development?

RQ2. Which management dimensions and practices received relatively higher and lower ratings, and were there statistically significant differences between teachers' and administrators' composite ratings?

Contextual and Practical Significance

This study does not claim to develop a new theoretical model for teacher professional development. Instead, it applies an established management-functions perspective—comprising planning, organizing, directing, and monitoring and evaluation—to the context of primary school TPC development. Its contribution lies primarily in providing context-specific empirical evidence from a large convenience sample in the Mekong Delta during the implementation of the renovated 2018 General Education Curriculum. The findings can help school leaders identify which management functions are perceived as more or less fully implemented and thereby prioritize feasible improvements. Furthermore, they can inform education authorities and PD providers, while acknowledging that resource conditions and professional learning opportunities vary significantly across schools and localities.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Concepts

2.1.1. Teachers' Professional Competence

Teachers' professional competence refers to the integrated capacity to perform teaching responsibilities effectively and responsibly in accordance with professional standards and contextual requirements. Rather than consisting of isolated knowledge or skills, it encompasses the coordinated application of subject knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, assessment and classroom management skills, communication and collaboration, professional ethics, reflective capacity, and the ability to respond to changing educational demands (Caena, 2011; Danielson, 2007; Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards NSW, 2013; Ministry of Education and Training, 2018b). In contemporary teaching contexts, professional competence also includes the capacity to use digital technologies appropriately for pedagogical purposes. The TPACK framework highlights the interrelationship among technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge required for meaningful technology integration in teaching (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). For primary school teachers, professional competence further requires an understanding of children's cognitive, social, and emotional development and the ability to integrate learning across subject areas. Accordingly, in this study, primary school TPC is defined as the integrated capacity to apply relevant professional knowledge, pedagogical skills, attitudes, values, judgment, and reflective and technological capabilities to perform teaching and related professional responsibilities effectively in accordance with professional standards and the educational needs of primary school pupils.

2.1.2. Professional Competence Development

Professional competence development refers to the continuous process through which teachers improve, extend, and transform their professional knowledge, skills, beliefs, practices, and capacities in response to professional requirements and changes in educational contexts. It is therefore concerned with teachers' professional learning and change, rather than merely their participation in training activities (Evans, 2008; Postholm, 2012). Such development may occur through formal and informal learning activities, including

professional training, mentoring, coaching, peer observation, collaborative inquiry, professional learning communities, reflective practice, self-directed learning, and workplace-based learning (Atwal, 2013; Lieberman & Pointer Mace, 2010; Lambirth et al., 2021; Postholm, 2012). Research further indicates that PD is more likely to influence teaching practice when it is sustained over time, focused on relevant professional content, connected to classroom practice, collaborative, and accompanied by opportunities for active learning, feedback, application, and reflection (Desimone, 2009; Garet et al., 2001; Guskey, 2002). Thus, professional competence development should not be understood as a series of isolated short-term courses. In this study, it is defined as a continuous and purposeful process of professional learning through which primary school teachers strengthen and adapt their professional capacities through learning, practice, collaboration, reflection, and feedback in order to meet current and emerging educational requirements.

2.1.3. Management of Primary School TPC Development

Management of primary school TPC development differs conceptually from teachers' professional development itself. Whereas professional competence development refers to the learning and professional change occurring at the teacher level, its management refers to the school-level process through which managers create conditions, organize resources, coordinate activities, and provide support for such development to occur effectively. Effective management of teacher professional development requires alignment between teachers' learning needs, school development priorities, curriculum requirements, and professional standards. It involves identifying professional development needs, setting objectives and priorities, planning appropriate learning opportunities, assigning responsibilities, mobilizing resources, facilitating collaboration and professional support, monitoring implementation, evaluating outcomes, and using feedback to improve subsequent development activities (Earley & Bubb, 2004; Guskey, 2000; Tallerico, 2005; McChesney & Aldridge, 2019). Leadership support is particularly important because professional learning is more sustainable when teachers are provided with time, resources, collegial opportunities, instructional guidance, and organizational conditions that enable new knowledge and practices to be applied in classrooms (Garet et al., 2001; Whitworth & Chiu, 2015; Lambirth et al., 2021). In the context of primary schools, such management also needs to be responsive to teachers' existing competence levels, pupils' developmental characteristics, curriculum changes, digital transformation, and local school conditions. Therefore, in this study, management of primary school teachers' professional competence development is defined as a planned, continuous, and context-responsive management process through which school leaders assess development needs, establish objectives, organize and coordinate professional learning activities, provide necessary conditions and support, monitor implementation, evaluate outcomes, and use feedback to continuously strengthen TPC.

2.2. Management of Primary School TPC Development

In the context of this study, management of primary school TPC development is understood as a purposeful and systematic process through which school leaders plan, organize, direct, monitor, evaluate, and continuously improve professional learning activities in order to enhance teachers' professional knowledge, skills, attitudes, and capacities in accordance with professional standards, curriculum requirements, and the developmental needs of the school and individual teachers (Earley & Bubb, 2004; Guskey, 2000; Tallerico, 2005). This conception emphasizes two important features. First, professional competence development is continuous rather than episodic (Day & Sachs, 2004; Evans, 2008; Postholm, 2012). Second, school leadership plays a central role in creating the organizational conditions that enable teachers to learn, collaborate, experiment, receive feedback, and apply new professional knowledge in practice (Evans, 2014; Tallerico, 2005;

Whitworth & Chiu, 2015). Studies of school leadership show that principals can influence teacher learning by setting clear professional goals, supporting collaboration, coordinating professional development, and building organizational capacity (Earley & Bubb, 2004; Evans, 2014; Whitworth & Chiu, 2015). Based on the management framework adopted in this study, managing primary school TPC development comprises five major functions: planning, organizing, implementing, directing, and monitoring and evaluation (Earley & Bubb, 2004; Guskey, 2000; Tallerico, 2005).

2.2.1. Planning Professional Competence Development

Planning underpins professional competence development because it sets objectives, priorities, resources, activities, timelines, and expected outcomes (Earley & Bubb, 2004; Tallerico, 2005). Effective planning should begin with systematically identifying teachers' professional learning needs and the gaps between existing competencies and the curriculum, professional standards, school goals, and student needs (Caena, 2011; Earley & Bubb, 2004; Ministry of Education and Training, 2018a, 2018b). Professional development is more effective when it is coherent with teachers' needs and school priorities and is sustained and practice-oriented (Desimone, 2009; Garet et al., 2001; Nawab et al., 2021). In this study, planning includes identifying development needs, setting objectives, selecting appropriate content and methods, allocating human and material resources, establishing implementation schedules, and ensuring that professional development plans are feasible and aligned with the 2018 General Education Curriculum (Earley & Bubb, 2004; MOET, 2018a; Tallerico, 2005).

2.2.2. Organizing the Implementation of Professional Competence Development

Organizing implementation involves translating PD plans into coordinated structures and activities (Earley & Bubb, 2004; Tallerico, 2005). School leaders must assign responsibilities, mobilize resources, coordinate participants, and create suitable conditions for teacher learning (Earley & Bubb, 2004; Evans, 2014; Whitworth & Chiu, 2015). Effective PD commonly occurs through collaborative forms such as professional learning communities, lesson study, mentoring, peer observation, coaching, and school-based inquiry (Atwal, 2013; Lambirth et al., 2021; Lieberman & Pointer Mace, 2010; Pugach, 1999). In this study, organizing implementation includes establishing responsible teams, allocating human and material resources, arranging teachers' participation, coordinating internal and external stakeholders, and ensuring sufficient time, facilities, and professional support (Earley & Bubb, 2004; Tallerico, 2005). Effective organization helps integrate professional development with school improvement and enables continuous, meaningful learning within teachers' working contexts (Atwal, 2013; Evans, 2014; Nawab et al., 2021).

2.2.3. Directing the Implementation of Professional Competence Development

Directing implementation involves leadership activities that guide, support, motivate, and coordinate teachers in developing professional competence (Earley & Bubb, 2004; Tallerico, 2005). School leaders are expected to communicate objectives, clarify responsibilities, implement relevant policies, provide professional guidance, and address implementation challenges (Earley & Bubb, 2004; Evans, 2014; Whitworth & Chiu, 2015). Effective directing also requires encouragement, feedback, collaboration, and conditions that promote teacher autonomy and sustained professional learning (Cong-Lem, 2021; Evans, 2014; Wilcox & Lawson, 2018). Research indicates that leadership and organizational support can influence teachers' motivation, professional learning, and instructional improvement (Evans, 2014; Nguyen et al., 2018; Whitworth & Chiu, 2015). In this study, directing includes communicating requirements, guiding implementation, motivating participation, facilitating coordination, and providing timely support to make PD a meaningful process of continuous professional improvement (Earley & Bubb, 2004; Evans, 2014; Tallerico, 2005).

2.2.4. Monitoring and Evaluating Professional Competence Development

Monitoring and evaluation determine whether professional development is implemented as planned and produces meaningful improvements in teachers' competence (Guskey, 2000; McChesney & Aldridge, 2019). Monitoring examines participation, progress, activity quality, resource use, and implementation difficulties, while evaluation assesses changes in teachers' knowledge, skills, practices, and related outcomes (Guskey, 2000; McChesney & Aldridge, 2019). Guskey (2000) emphasizes evaluating participants' reactions, learning, organizational support, application of new knowledge and skills, and student outcomes. In this study, monitoring and evaluation include tracking implementation, assessing achievement of development objectives, gathering feedback, evaluating professional growth, and using results to improve subsequent activities (Guskey, 2000; McChesney & Aldridge, 2019). This function, therefore, creates an evidence-based feedback loop that supports continuous professional competence development (Guskey, 2000; McChesney & Aldridge, 2019).

2.2.5. Relationship Among the Four Management Functions and the Role of School Leaders

The four management functions are interdependent and form a continuous cycle of professional competence development (Earley & Bubb, 2004; Guskey, 2000; Tallerico, 2005). Planning identifies teachers' needs and objectives; organizing establishes responsibilities, resources, and implementation conditions; directing provides guidance, motivation, and support; and monitoring and evaluation generate evidence for improvement. Weakness in one function may therefore reduce the effectiveness of the entire process (Desimone, 2009; Earley & Bubb, 2004; Guskey, 2000). School leaders play a central role in integrating these functions by translating policy and curriculum requirements into school-level priorities, coordinating resources, supporting professional learning, and monitoring teachers' progress (Earley & Bubb, 2004; Evans, 2014; Nguyen et al., 2018; Whitworth & Chiu, 2015). Effective leadership combines managerial and instructional responsibilities and creates organizational conditions for sustained teacher development (Evans, 2014; Nguyen et al., 2018; Whitworth & Chiu, 2015). Thus, professional competence development should be managed as a continuous, school-based improvement process rather than as isolated training activities (Earley & Bubb, 2004; Evans, 2014; Postholm, 2012).

2.2.6. Theoretical Framework

Grounded in general management theory and the literature on teacher PD, this study conceptualizes the management of primary school TPC development through four interrelated management functions: planning, organizing implementation, directing implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. These functions form a continuous cycle in which the results of monitoring and evaluation provide feedback for subsequent planning, and each function is necessary for the effective implementation of the next (Guskey, 2000; Desimone, 2009; Postholm, 2012). The framework distinguishes between TPC development and its management. TPC development refers to the continuous process through which teachers improve their knowledge, skills, attitudes, and professional practices. In contrast, management refers to the actions undertaken by school leaders to create conditions, organize resources, provide guidance and support, and monitor progress to ensure that PD activities are systematically implemented and lead to meaningful professional growth (Earley & Bubb, 2004; Tran et al., 2026). Based on the 20-item questionnaire used in this study, the construct "management of primary school teachers' professional competence development" is operationalized through four dimensions: planning (six items), organizing implementation (five items), directing implementation (four items), and monitoring and evaluation (five items). Figure 1 illustrates the theoretical framework and the specific contents of each dimension as measured in the instrument.

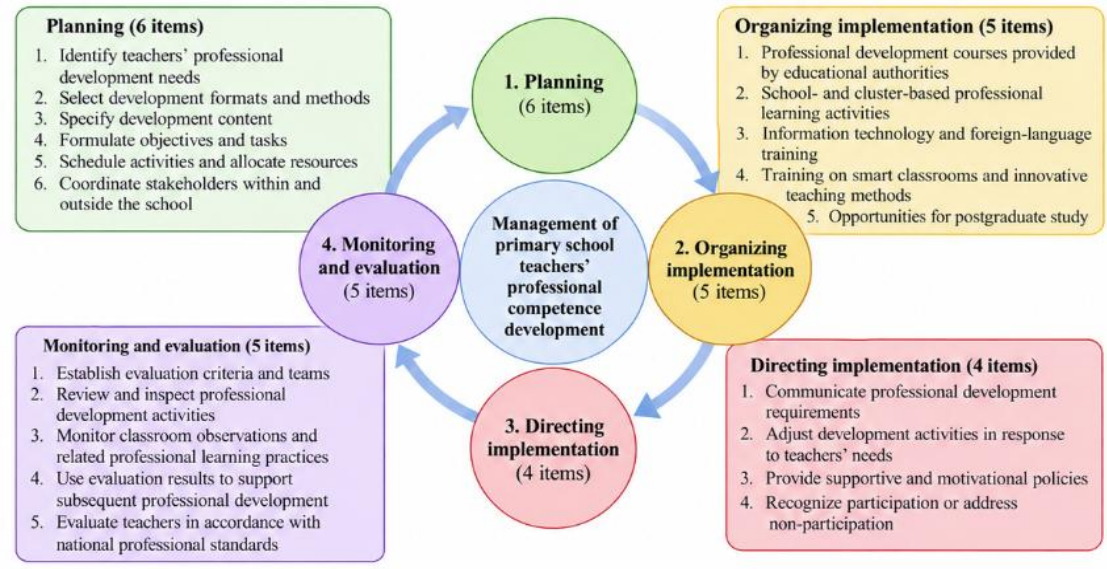


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework: Four Management Functions

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

3.1. Research Design

This study used a quantitative cross-sectional survey design to examine participants' perceptions of the implementation of management practices to develop primary school TPC in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam. The study focused on four management dimensions: planning, organizing, implementing, directing, and monitoring and evaluation. Data were collected using a structured 20-item questionnaire administered to primary school teachers and school administrators. The cross-sectional design was selected because it enabled the collection of standardized data from a relatively large sample at a single period of time and supported a descriptive assessment of the perceived implementation of the four management dimensions. Accordingly, the study aimed to identify higher- and lower-rated management practices rather than establish causal relationships or determine the effects of TPC management practices.

3.2. Participants

The study involved 750 participants from 20 primary schools across 13 provinces and centrally governed cities in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam. Data were collected between December 2023 and March 2024. The final sample comprised 550 primary school teachers (73.3%) and 200 school administrators (26.7%). Eligible participants were teachers and administrators who were directly involved in, or had experience with, professional competence development activities in their schools. This combination of respondents enabled the study to capture perspectives from both those who participate in professional development activities and those who are responsible for organizing, directing, and monitoring such activities. Participants were recruited using convenience sampling from schools accessible to the research team. This approach was adopted because of practical considerations related to access, geographical coverage, and voluntary participation rather than with the intention of obtaining a probability-based representative sample of all primary-school personnel in the Mekong Delta. Accordingly, the demographic diversity of the sample strengthens the breadth of perspectives represented in the dataset, but it should not be interpreted as evidence of statistical representativeness. Findings should therefore be generalized beyond the participating schools with appropriate caution.

Table 1. Summary of Participants' Demographic Characteristics (N = 750)

Classification Criteria	Detailed Classification	Quantity (N)	Percentage (%)
Professional position	Primary school teachers	550	73.3%
	School administrators	200	26.7%
Gender	Female	480	64.0%
	Male	270	36.0%
Educational attainment	Bachelor's degree	712	95.0%
	Postgraduate (Master's, Others)	38	5.0%
Years of experience	Under 5 years	113	15.1%
	From 5 to 15 years	337	44.9%
	Over 15 years	300	40.0%
Location	Rural	525	70.0%
	Urban	225	30.0%

As shown in Table 1, female constituted 64.0% (n = 480) of the sample, whereas male accounted for 36.0% (n = 270). Regarding educational attainment, 712 participants (95.0%) held bachelor's degrees, and 38 (5.0%) held postgraduate qualifications, indicating that all respondents had at least a bachelor's-level qualification. The sample also included participants with varied levels of professional experience: 113 (15.1%) had fewer than five years of experience, 337 (44.9%) had between five and 15 years, and 300 (40.0%) had more than 15 years. Thus, 84.9% of participants had at least five years of professional experience, providing substantial exposure to school practices and professional development activities. Geographically, 525 respondents (70.0%) worked in rural schools, while 225 (30.0%) worked in urban schools. This distribution enabled the study to incorporate perceptions from different school contexts within the region, although no claim of population proportionality is made because probability sampling was not employed. The questionnaire was administered online. A total of 762 completed questionnaires were received, of which 750 were retained after data screening, corresponding to a 98.4% retention rate among returned questionnaires. Twelve responses were excluded because they did not satisfy the study's data-screening criteria. Overall, the final sample provided substantial variation in professional position, gender, educational attainment, work experience, and school location, supporting the descriptive analysis of professional competence development management practices across the participating primary schools.

3.3. Instruments

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire comprising 20 items designed to assess participants' perceptions of the extent to which professional competence development management practices were implemented in their schools. The instrument covered four dimensions: planning (six items), organizing implementation (five items), directing implementation (four items), and monitoring and evaluation (five items). The 20 items were developed by the researcher rather than adopted verbatim from a single existing instrument. Item development was guided by the four management functions presented in the theoretical

framework and by the literature on teacher professional development, school-level professional learning, and PD evaluation. In particular, the initial item pool drew on research emphasizing needs-based and coherent PD, organizational support, sustained professional learning, leadership involvement, and evaluation and feedback (Desimone, 2009; Garet et al., 2001; Guskey, 2002; Postholm, 2012). The content was further contextualized to the Vietnamese primary-school setting with reference to national requirements concerning teachers' professional standards and continuing professional development (MOET, 2018). Thus, the questionnaire operationalized the theoretical framework in ways that reflected both the international literature and PD practices relevant to Vietnamese schools.

The planning dimension assessed six aspects: "the identification of teachers' professional development needs; the selection of development formats and methods; the specification of development content; the formulation of objectives and tasks; the scheduling of activities and allocation of estimated resources; and coordination among stakeholders within and outside the school. These items reflected the literature emphasizing coherence between professional development, teachers' needs, school priorities, and available organizational conditions" (Desimone, 2009; Garet et al., 2001; Postholm, 2012). The organizing implementation dimension assessed five types of professional learning opportunities that schools facilitated or organized: "participation in professional development courses provided by educational authorities; school- and cluster-based professional learning activities; information technology and foreign-language training; training related to smart classrooms and innovative teaching methods; and opportunities for postgraduate study." This dimension was intended to capture how professional-development plans were translated into concrete learning opportunities for teachers.

The directing implementation dimension contained four items assessing "school leadership practices related to communicating professional development requirements, adjusting development activities in response to teachers' needs, providing supportive and motivational policies, and recognizing participation or addressing non-participation." These items reflected the view that teacher professional learning is influenced not only by the availability of activities but also by organizational and leadership conditions that support participation and professional change (Guskey, 2002; Postholm, 2012). The monitoring and evaluation dimension comprised five items concerning "the establishment of evaluation criteria and teams; the review and inspection of professional development activities; the monitoring of classroom observations and related professional learning practices; the use of evaluation results to inform subsequent professional development; and teacher evaluation in accordance with national professional standards."This dimension was informed particularly by the principle that PD evaluation should extend beyond activity completion and should provide evidence that can be used to improve subsequent professional learning and practice (Guskey, 2002).

Before the main survey, the draft questionnaire underwent a two-stage review and pretesting process. *First*, the instrument was submitted to three experts for review. The experts were asked to examine whether the proposed items adequately represented the four management dimensions, whether the wording was clear and appropriate for the primary-school context, whether any items were redundant or overlapping, and whether the content was consistent with the purposes of the study. Expert review is commonly used during instrument development to assess the relevance, representativeness, and clarity of proposed items before field administration (Boateng et al., 2018; Lynn, 1986; Polit & Beck, 2006). Comments from the three experts were used to revise item wording and improve the correspondence between individual items and their intended dimensions. Because the review was used qualitatively and no formal content validity index was calculated, it was treated as

evidence supporting content relevance and item refinement, rather than as a statistical test of construct validity. *Second*, the revised questionnaire was pilot-tested with 25 primary school teachers before the main data collection. The pilot test focused on the comprehensibility of the instructions and items, the clarity and appropriateness of terminology, the interpretation of the four-point response scale, and any wording that appeared ambiguous, repetitive, or difficult to answer. Pretesting respondents from the target population is recommended because it can identify problems in question comprehension and response processes that may not be apparent during expert review alone (Boateng et al., 2018; Presser et al., 2004). Feedback from the pilot participants was used to make final wording and presentation adjustments before administration of the full questionnaire. The dimensional structure and the total number of items remained consistent with the theoretical framework: six planning items, five organizing implementation items, four directing implementation items, and five monitoring and evaluation items.

All items were rated on a four-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (not implemented) to 4 (fully implemented). Higher scores therefore represented a greater perceived extent of implementation. The same response construct - extent of implementation - was retained throughout questionnaire administration, statistical analysis, and interpretation. Internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The coefficients were 0.81 for planning, 0.83 for organizing implementation, 0.85 for directing implementation, and 0.84 for monitoring and evaluation. These values indicated satisfactory internal consistency among the items within each dimension. Cronbach's alpha was interpreted specifically as evidence of internal consistency reliability, rather than as evidence of content or construct validity.

3.4. Data Analysis

Data collected from the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics, particularly mean scores (M) and standard deviations (SD), were used to determine participants' perceptions of the extent to which professional competence development management practices were implemented in their schools. Each observed variable was measured on a four-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*not implemented*) to 4 (*fully implemented*). Higher mean scores therefore indicated a greater perceived extent of implementation. To facilitate interpretation, the possible score range was divided into four equal intervals of 0.75. Mean scores were interpreted as follows: $1.00 \leq MS < 1.75$ = Level 1, not implemented; $1.75 \leq MS < 2.50$ = Level 2, implemented to a limited extent; $2.50 \leq MS < 3.25$ = Level 3, implemented to a considerable extent; and $3.25 \leq MS \leq 4.00$ = Level 4, fully implemented (Nguyen & Pham, 2013). These categories referred exclusively to the extent of implementation and did not represent the frequency or quality of the practices. The same interpretive criteria were applied consistently to individual items, the four management dimensions - planning, organizing implementation, directing implementation, and monitoring and evaluation - and the overall scale. To address RO1 and RQ2, independent-samples t-tests were conducted to examine whether teachers and school administrators differed significantly in their perceptions of the extent of implementation across the four management dimensions. For each dimension, the mean scores of teachers and administrators were compared, and the t-value and p-value were reported. Statistical significance was assessed using a two-tailed criterion of $p < .05$. Mean scores were used to identify management practices perceived as being implemented to relatively greater or lesser extents, whereas standard deviations indicated variation in participants' responses. The t-test results provided additional evidence regarding whether the observed differences between teachers and school administrators were statistically significant. Together, the descriptive and inferential findings provided an empirical basis for identifying strengths and areas requiring further attention in the management of primary school teachers' professional competence development in the Mekong Delta.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Developing plans for the professional competence development of primary school teachers

Table 2 presents teachers' and administrators' assessments of the current status of planning for professional competence development. Overall, both groups reported the same level of implementation, with an identical overall mean of 3.15 (SD = 0.87). The independent-samples t-test confirmed that the difference between the two groups was not statistically significant, $t = -0.116$, $p = .908$. Likewise, no significant group differences were found for any of the six planning criteria, with all p-values exceeding .05. The highest-rated criterion was the development of a comprehensive plan covering political qualities, pedagogical knowledge, and professional skills (teachers: $M = 3.28$, $SD = 0.79$; administrators: $M = 3.29$, $SD = 0.84$). Developing plans with diverse and appropriate formats and methods also received relatively high ratings (teachers: $M = 3.26$; administrators: $M = 3.28$). In contrast, coordination and collaboration among stakeholders inside and outside the school received the lowest ratings (teachers: $M = 2.96$; administrators: $M = 2.89$), followed by the identification of professional development needs ($M = 3.01$ and 3.02, respectively). These findings indicate substantial agreement between teachers and administrators and suggest that planning is implemented to a considerable extent, although needs assessment and stakeholder coordination remain areas requiring further attention.

Table 2. Assessment of the Current Status of Planning for Professional Competence Development (Statistical test: Independent Samples t-test)

Evaluation Criteria	Teachers (N=550)		Administrators (N=200)		t-test	
	Mean (M)	SD	Mean (M)	SD	t-value	p-value
Identifying professional competence development needs	3.01	0.88	3.02	0.79	-0.149	0.882
Developing a plan with diverse and appropriate formats and methods	3.26	0.77	3.28	0.86	-0.289	0.772
Developing a comprehensive and detailed plan covering: political qualities, pedagogical knowledge, and skills	3.28	0.79	3.29	0.84	-0.146	0.884
Clearly articulating the objectives and tasks of professional development	3.16	0.86	3.18	0.85	-0.284	0.777
Clearly outlining the implementation schedule, main activities, and estimated budget	3.20	0.98	3.26	0.97	-0.747	0.456
Ensuring coordination and collaboration among forces inside and outside the school	2.96	0.91	2.89	0.92	0.924	0.356
Overall Dimension Mean	**3.15**	**0.87**	**3.15**	**0.87**	**-0.116**	**0.908**

Source: Authors' own survey and calculations.

4.2. Organizing the Implementation of Professional Competence Development for Primary School Teachers

Table 3 presents teachers' and administrators' assessments of the extent to which professional competence development activities were organized in their schools. Overall, both groups rated this dimension at a limited level of implementation, with mean scores of 2.34 (SD = 0.84) for teachers and 2.43 (SD = 0.88) for administrators. The overall difference was not statistically significant, $t = -1.222$, $p = .222$, indicating generally similar perceptions between the two groups.

The highest-rated activity was facilitating teachers' participation in professional development courses organized by the Department of Education and Training, with mean scores of 2.61 for teachers and 2.72 for administrators, corresponding to implementation to a considerable extent. In contrast, training on smart classrooms and innovative teaching methods received the lowest ratings (teachers: $M = 2.16$; administrators: $M = 2.18$), followed by opportunities for postgraduate study. A statistically significant difference was found only for IT and foreign-language training, $t = -4.381$, $p < .001$. Administrators rated this activity significantly higher ($M = 2.59$, $SD = 0.88$) than teachers ($M = 2.28$, $SD = 0.79$). Overall, the findings suggest that organizing implementation remains uneven, particularly in technology-related training and advanced professional learning opportunities.

Table 3. Assessment of the Current Status of Organizing the Implementation of Professional Competence Development Activities

Evaluation Criteria	Teachers (N=550)		Administrators (N=200)		t-test	
	Mean (M)	SD	Mean (M)	SD	t-value	p-value
Facilitating teachers' participation in professional development courses organized by the DOET	2.61	0.80	2.72	0.89	-1.537	0.125
Organizing professional activities and developing thematic topics at the group, department, and school-cluster levels	2.46	0.79	2.40	0.88	0.848	0.397
Organizing IT and foreign language training courses for teachers	2.28	0.79	2.59	0.88	-4.381	0.000***
Conducting training on using smart classrooms and innovating teaching methods	2.16	0.86	2.18	0.86	-0.282	0.778
Encouraging teachers to pursue postgraduate studies to improve qualifications	2.20	0.95	2.26	0.91	-0.789	0.431
Overall Dimension Mean	**2.34**	**0.84**	**2.43**	**0.88**	**-1.222**	**0.222**

Source: Authors' own survey and calculations.

4.3. Directing the Implementation of Professional Competence Development for Primary School Teachers

Table 4 presents teachers' and administrators' perceptions of the extent to which professional competence development was directed in their schools. Overall, teachers reported a mean of 2.48 (SD = 0.82), while administrators reported 2.55 (SD = 0.84). The independent-samples t-test showed that this difference was not statistically significant, $t = -0.902$, $p = .368$,

indicating broadly similar perceptions across the two groups. Among the four criteria, the highest ratings were given to principals' issuance of written guidelines for implementing PD in accordance with the 2018 General Education Program (teachers: $M = 2.81$, $SD = 0.84$; administrators: $M = 2.92$, $SD = 0.88$). In contrast, the lowest-rated criterion concerned the timely recognition of exemplary participation or responses to non-participation (teachers: $M = 2.26$; administrators: $M = 2.28$). Supportive and motivational policies also received relatively low ratings ($M = 2.38$ and 2.48, respectively). None of the individual criteria showed a statistically significant difference between teachers and administrators ($p > .05$). Overall, the findings suggest that directing implementation was perceived as stronger in communicating formal requirements than in providing motivational support, recognition, and responsive adjustment mechanisms.

Table 4. Assessment of the Current Status of Directing the Implementation of Professional Competence Development

Evaluation Criteria	Teachers (N=550)		Administrators (N=200)		t-test	
	Mean (M)	SD	Mean (M)	SD	t-value	p-value
The principal issues written guidelines for implementing professional development in accordance with the 2018 General Education Program	2.81	0.84	2.92	0.88	-1.532	0.126
The school promptly adjusts professional development programs, content, and methods	2.48	0.77	2.50	0.80	-0.306	0.760
The school has policies to facilitate and encourage teachers to participate in professional development	2.38	0.82	2.48	0.86	-1.426	0.155
Promptly issuing decisions to reward exemplary individuals or discipline cases of non-participation	2.26	0.86	2.28	0.84	-0.287	0.775
Overall Dimension Mean	**2.48**	**0.82**	**2.55**	**0.84**	**-0.902**	**0.368**

Source: Authors' own survey and calculations.

4.4. Monitoring and Evaluating the Outcomes of Professional Competence Development for Primary School Teachers

Table 5 summarizes teachers' and administrators' assessments of the extent to which monitoring, supervision, and evaluation of professional competence development were implemented. Overall, both groups reported implementation to a considerable extent, with mean scores of 2.90 (SD = 0.83) for teachers and 2.97 (SD = 0.84) for administrators. The overall difference was not statistically significant, $t = -1.009$, $p = .314$, indicating broadly similar perceptions between the two groups. The highest-rated criterion concerned establishing evaluation criteria and forming an inspection or evaluation team, with mean scores of 3.12 for teachers and 3.26 for administrators. This criterion also showed the largest between-group difference, $t = -1.970$, $p = .050$, placing it exactly at the conventional .05 significance threshold

and therefore warranting cautious interpretation. Classroom observations and professional meetings were also rated relatively highly (M = 3.06 and 3.14, respectively). In contrast, evaluating teachers in accordance with Circular 20/2018/TT-BGDĐT received the lowest ratings (M = 2.64 and 2.68), followed by the use of evaluation results to support subsequent professional development. Overall, the findings suggest that formal monitoring structures are more strongly implemented than the use of evaluation evidence to guide continuing professional growth.

Table 5. Assessment of the Current Status of Monitoring, Supervising, and Evaluating Professional Development Outcomes

Evaluation Criteria	Teachers (N=550)		Administrators (N=200)		t-test	
	Mean (M)	SD	Mean (M)	SD	t-value	p-value
Establishing evaluation criteria and forming an inspection/evaluation team	3.12	0.89	3.26	0.85	-1.970	0.050*
Inspecting professional development plans, content, teaching demonstrations, and competitions	2.86	0.79	2.89	0.85	-0.435	0.664
Inspecting classroom observations, professional meetings, and drawing experiences from model lessons	3.06	0.77	3.14	0.88	-1.137	0.256
Using evaluation results to promote teachers' professional competence development	2.80	0.88	2.86	0.78	-0.899	0.369
Evaluating the teaching staff in accordance with Circular 20/2018/TT-BGDDT	2.64	0.82	2.68	0.86	-0.570	0.569
Overall Dimension Mean	**2.90**	**0.83**	**2.97**	**0.84**	**-1.009**	**0.314**

Source: Authors' own survey and calculations.

5. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1. Discussion

This study examined participants' perceptions of the extent to which four management functions for primary school TPC development - planning, organizing implementation, directing implementation, and monitoring and evaluation - were implemented in schools in the Mekong Delta. Overall, the findings reveal an uneven pattern across the four functions. Planning and monitoring and evaluation were perceived as being implemented to a considerable extent, whereas organizing implementation received comparatively lower ratings. Directing implementation occupied an intermediate position, with teachers and administrators differing slightly in the level category assigned by the study's scoring framework. More importantly, the independent-samples t-tests showed broad agreement between teachers and administrators across the four dimensions, with only one clear item-level difference concerning information technology and foreign-language training. These findings should be interpreted as perceptions of implementation, rather than as evidence that the practices were effective or that they produced measurable changes in teachers' professional competence.

The relatively positive perceptions of planning suggest that schools have established formal arrangements for professional competence development, particularly in specifying development content, objectives, and methods. This is broadly consistent with Vietnam's policy environment, in which professional standards and the 2018 General Education Curriculum provide schools with relatively explicit expectations regarding teachers' professional development. Ho's (2024) study of Vietnamese primary schools similarly highlights the strong role of system-level reform requirements in shaping school-level implementation. The present findings may therefore partly reflect the influence of a centralized policy framework that makes formal planning requirements comparatively visible to both teachers and administrators.

At the same time, needs identification and stakeholder coordination were perceived less strongly than other planning activities. This distinction is important. International studies emphasize that PD is more likely to be meaningful when it is connected to teachers' actual professional needs, classroom problems, and school contexts rather than merely aligned with formal policy requirements (Desimone, 2009; Garet et al., 2001; Postholm, 2012). Evidence from Vietnam also supports a more context-sensitive understanding of professional learning. Pham et al. (2024), in their study of professional development among primary school teachers in Vietnam, approached professional learning as socially and contextually situated rather than as a purely administrative activity. Viewed against this literature, the present results suggest a possible tension between formal comprehensiveness in planning and responsiveness to teachers' locally experienced needs.

This issue may be particularly relevant in the Mekong Delta. Schools across the region operate under diverse geographical, infrastructural, and socioeconomic conditions, meaning that a standardized professional development plan may not be equally responsive to all school contexts. Dang's (2018) study of EFL teacher professional development in seven Mekong Delta provinces and cities, for example, documented both opportunities and practical constraints associated with PD participation. Although that study focused on English-language teachers rather than primary teachers generally, it illustrates how regional conditions can shape teachers' access to and experience of professional learning. Consequently, the lower ratings for needs assessment and stakeholder coordination in the present study may reflect difficulties in translating centrally defined professional requirements into differentiated school-level development arrangements. This interpretation remains tentative, however, because the current survey did not directly measure the causes of these lower ratings.

The findings concerning organizing implementation reveal the clearest area of comparatively limited perceived implementation. Participation in PD courses organized by educational authorities was rated more highly than several school-based or specialized development activities. This pattern may indicate that professional learning opportunities remain strongly connected to externally organized provision. Such an interpretation is consistent with Vietnam's hierarchical education governance structure, in which schools commonly implement PD requirements initiated or coordinated by higher administrative levels. However, this pattern contrasts with contemporary conceptions of effective teacher PD that emphasize sustained, collaborative, school-embedded learning rather than reliance on episodic external courses (Desimone, 2009; Garet et al., 2001; Postholm, 2012). Vietnamese evidence points in a similar direction. Pham et al. (2024) emphasize the importance of professional learning embedded in teachers' social and school contexts, while Nguyen et al. (2018) highlight the significance of instructional leadership in Vietnamese primary schools. Together, these studies suggest that school-level professional learning structures and leadership support are important complements to centrally organized training.

The comparatively low perceptions of training related to smart classrooms, innovative teaching approaches, postgraduate study, and some technology-related activities are particularly noteworthy given the demands associated with contemporary curriculum reform and digitalization. Yet these findings should not automatically be interpreted as evidence that schools are failing to develop teachers' technological competence. Alternative explanations are possible. Schools may have different levels of digital infrastructure, funding, local expertise, or access to external training providers. Some activities may also be offered irregularly or targeted only at selected teachers, producing lower overall ratings even when they are available in particular schools.

The only clear statistically significant teacher–administrator difference occurred for IT and foreign-language training, where administrators reported a greater extent of implementation than teachers, $t = -4.381$, $p < .001$. This discrepancy is analytically important because it suggests that availability from a managerial perspective may not be experienced in the same way by teachers. Administrators may judge implementation on the basis of whether programs have been scheduled or provided, whereas teachers may base their responses on actual access, participation, relevance, or continuity. Nevertheless, because the present study did not measure these mechanisms directly, the difference should be treated as evidence of different perceptions, not evidence that either group's assessment is more accurate. For directing implementation, the pattern suggests that formal communication of professional development requirements was more visible than motivational or recognition-related practices. This is compatible with findings on educational leadership in Vietnam. Nguyen et al. (2018) found that strengthening instructional leadership among Vietnamese primary school principals is important in a context where leadership has historically included substantial administrative responsibility. The present findings extend this issue by suggesting that participants perceive formal direction more strongly than support mechanisms such as encouragement, incentives, and recognition. However, this does not necessarily mean that principals adopt an ineffective or excessively administrative leadership style. The data capture perceptions of the extent to which particular practices are implemented, not leaders' motives or the effects of those practices. Resource constraints, limited authority over incentives, school regulations, or differences in teachers' expectations could also contribute to the lower ratings for motivational support. Accordingly, the findings are better interpreted as identifying an imbalance in perceived implementation between communicating requirements and providing developmental support.

The absence of statistically significant differences between teachers and administrators for the overall directing dimension, $p = .368$, also suggests considerable convergence in their assessments. This agreement is noteworthy because the two groups occupy different organizational positions. It indicates that the perceived pattern is not confined to a single respondent group, although the use of a common self-report survey means that shared organizational norms or response tendencies could also contribute to the similarity. The findings for monitoring and evaluation likewise reveal a distinction between formal monitoring arrangements and the developmental use of evaluation. Establishing evaluation criteria and teams and monitoring professional activities were perceived relatively positively, whereas using evaluation results to inform subsequent professional development received lower ratings. This distinction is consistent with Guskey's (2000, 2002) argument that professional development evaluation should move beyond documenting implementation toward generating evidence that informs future professional learning and practice.

In the Vietnamese context, professional standards provide a formal basis for teacher evaluation and development. However, the present results suggest that participants perceive the feedback connection between evaluation and subsequent professional learning as less strongly

implemented than the formal monitoring procedures themselves. This is relevant because a management cycle is incomplete when evaluation findings are collected but are not systematically translated into future needs assessment, planning, or individualized professional support. The teacher-administrator comparison for this dimension should nevertheless be interpreted cautiously. The overall difference was not statistically significant, $p = .314$. The item concerning the establishment of evaluation criteria and inspection teams yielded $p = .050$, exactly at the conventional threshold. Rather than treating this as strong evidence of a group difference, it is more appropriate to regard it as a borderline result requiring cautious interpretation, particularly because multiple item-level comparisons were conducted and effect sizes were not reported. The findings provide a more differentiated answer to RQ1 than a simple judgment that management is strong or weak. Participants perceived the four functions as being implemented to different extents: formal planning and monitoring structures were comparatively visible, whereas the organization of sustained professional learning opportunities and some forms of motivational support were perceived less strongly. This pattern is compatible with prior Vietnamese research showing that educational reform requires schools to translate centrally established expectations into locally meaningful professional learning arrangements (Ho, 2024; Nguyen et al., 2018; Pham et al., 2024).

Regarding RQ2, teachers and administrators generally expressed similar perceptions across the four management dimensions. The overall t-tests for planning ($p = .908$), organizing implementation ($p = .222$), directing implementation ($p = .368$), and monitoring and evaluation ($p = .314$) did not indicate statistically significant differences. The principal exception was IT and foreign-language training, for which administrators reported significantly higher perceived implementation than teachers. Thus, the group comparison provides limited evidence of broad teacher-administrator disagreement; instead, it points to a specific area in which managerial provision and teachers' perceived experience may not fully coincide. These conclusions should remain within the scope of the study design. The findings are based on self-reported perceptions collected through a cross-sectional questionnaire and convenience sampling. They therefore do not demonstrate the effectiveness of management practices, actual improvement in teacher competence, or causal effects on teaching and student outcomes. Nor can lower ratings establish why particular practices were perceived as less implemented. Future research could combine surveys with interviews, school documents, observations, and longitudinal evidence to examine how professional development plans are enacted, how teachers experience specific learning opportunities, and whether evaluation information is subsequently used to support professional growth. Such approaches would provide a stronger basis for explaining the mechanisms underlying the patterns identified in this study.

5.2. Implications

The findings have several practical implications for the management of primary school TPC development in the Mekong Delta under the 2018 General Education Curriculum reform. These implications should be understood in relation to participants' perceptions of the extent to which management practices were implemented, rather than as evidence that particular practices are effective or directly improve TPC.

First, schools should reinforce professional competence development as a continuous component of teachers' professional work rather than as an activity undertaken primarily to meet periodic administrative requirements. The findings suggest that formal planning and policy communication were relatively visible, whereas some forms of sustained professional support were perceived as less extensively implemented. School leaders may therefore strengthen the connection between PD, curriculum implementation, professional standards, and teachers' everyday classroom responsibilities through regular professional discussions, orientation activities, and school-based learning opportunities (Day & Sachs, 2004; Evans, 2008; MOET, 2018a, 2018b; Postholm, 2012). *Second,* professional competence development

planning should become more systematically needs-based and context-sensitive. Although planning was among the more positively perceived management functions, needs identification and stakeholder coordination received comparatively lower ratings. Schools should therefore draw more systematically on teachers' self-assessments, classroom experiences, professional standards, curriculum requirements, and school priorities when establishing development objectives and activities. Such an approach may help professional development respond more closely to differences among teachers and school contexts rather than relying predominantly on general institutional requirements. This implication is consistent with research emphasizing the importance of relevance, coherence, sustained learning, and connections with teachers' actual practice (Desimone, 2009; Garet et al., 2001; Nawab et al., 2021).

Third, schools and educational authorities should diversify the ways in which professional development opportunities are organized. The findings indicate that participation in courses organized by educational authorities was perceived as more extensively implemented than several school-based or specialized learning opportunities. Formal training may therefore be complemented by mentoring, peer observation, professional learning communities, collaborative inquiry, action research, and reflective practice. These approaches can provide teachers with additional opportunities to connect professional learning with classroom practice and reduce exclusive dependence on externally organized courses (Atwal, 2013; Lambirth et al., 2021; Lieberman & Pointer Mace, 2010; Nguyen, 2020; Pugach, 1999). *Fourth,* greater attention should be given specifically to information technology and foreign-language training, which was one of the areas perceived as less extensively implemented and was also the only organizing criterion for which teachers and administrators differed significantly in their assessments. Administrators perceived this activity as being implemented to a greater extent than teachers did. Rather than interpreting this finding as evidence of inadequate digital competence, schools should examine whether existing IT and foreign-language professional development opportunities are sufficiently accessible, relevant, sustained, and responsive to teachers' needs. In the context of curriculum reform, IT-related training may include the use of digital teaching tools, technology-supported assessment, smart-classroom applications, and appropriate integration of technology into instructional practice, while foreign-language development should remain aligned with teachers' actual professional requirements (Caena, 2011; Ho, 2024; MOET, 2018a, 2018b). Teacher feedback may be particularly useful for identifying why administrators and teachers perceive the extent of implementation differently.

Fifth, school leaders should strengthen the supportive and motivational dimensions of directing PD. The findings suggest that communicating formal requirements was perceived as more extensively implemented than practices involving encouragement, recognition, and supportive policies. School leaders may therefore complement administrative guidance by providing time for collaboration, facilitating access to professional learning resources, recognizing teachers' professional efforts, encouraging teacher agency, and creating conditions for experimentation and reflection. This would position leadership for professional development as both an administrative and developmental function (Cong-Lem, 2021; Evans, 2014; Nguyen et al., 2018; Whitworth & Chiu, 2015; Wilcox & Lawson, 2018). *Finally,* monitoring and evaluation should be more explicitly connected to subsequent professional development. Although formal evaluation criteria and monitoring arrangements were perceived relatively positively, the use of evaluation results to support further professional growth received comparatively lower ratings. Schools could therefore use evidence from classroom observations, professional standards, teacher self-assessment, and professional learning activities to identify subsequent development needs, provide constructive feedback,

and revise future development plans. Such an approach would help strengthen the feedback connection among planning, implementation, direction, and evaluation without reducing monitoring to compliance checking alone (Earley & Bubb, 2004; Guskey, 2000; McChesney & Aldridge, 2019; Tallerico, 2005). These implications point toward a more coherent management cycle in which planning is grounded in teachers' needs, professional learning opportunities are diversified, school leadership provides both direction and support, and evaluation evidence informs subsequent development. Given the study's cross-sectional, self-reported, and convenience-sampled data, these recommendations should be regarded as practice-oriented implications derived from participants' perceptions, rather than as demonstrated solutions with established causal effects.

6. CONCLUSION

This study examined participants' perceptions of the management of primary school TPC development in the Mekong Delta through four interrelated functions: planning, organizing implementation, directing implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. Regarding RQ1, the findings showed that these functions were implemented to different extents. Planning was perceived relatively positively, particularly in relation to defining PD content, objectives, methods, and implementation arrangements. However, needs assessment and stakeholder coordination received lower ratings. Organizing implementation was the least strongly perceived dimension overall, with greater emphasis on PD courses organized by educational authorities than on school-based learning, smart-classroom training, innovative teaching methods, postgraduate study, and IT and foreign-language training. Directing implementation also showed an imbalance: formal communication of requirements was more evident than motivation, recognition, and supportive policies. Monitoring and evaluation were comparatively well established in terms of formal criteria and inspection procedures, but the use of evaluation results to inform subsequent professional development was less strongly perceived. Regarding RQ2, teachers and school administrators generally reported similar perceptions. Independent-samples t-tests showed no statistically significant differences between the two groups for the overall dimensions of planning, organizing implementation, directing implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. The main exception concerned IT and foreign-language training, for which administrators reported a significantly greater perceived extent of implementation than teachers. This result should be interpreted as a difference in perceptions of implementation rather than as evidence of differences in teachers' actual technological or foreign-language competence. The study contributes by conceptualizing professional competence development management as an integrated school-level cycle linking planning, organization, direction, monitoring, evaluation, and feedback. The findings suggest several practical priorities: strengthening needs-based planning and stakeholder coordination; expanding school-based professional learning opportunities; improving access to relevant IT and foreign-language training; combining administrative direction with motivation and professional support; and using evaluation evidence more systematically to guide subsequent development activities. These implications reflect participants' perceptions and should not be interpreted as proven causal solutions. Several limitations should be acknowledged. *First*, the study relied on self-reported perceptions, which may be affected by response tendencies and institutional expectations. *Second*, convenience sampling limits the statistical generalizability of the findings beyond the participating schools. *Third*, the cross-sectional design does not permit conclusions about causal relationships or changes over time. *Finally*, although the questionnaire was expert-reviewed and pilot-tested, further psychometric validation is desirable. Future studies should use longitudinal and mixed-method designs, include observations and document analysis, and compare different regions and school contexts to examine how these management functions operate over time.

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Transparency: The authors confirm that the manuscript is an honest, accurate, and transparent account of the study; that no vital features of the study have been omitted; and that any discrepancies from the study as planned have been explained. This study followed all ethical practices during writing.

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