




Transformation and Strategy in Improving Teacher Professionalism

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Abstract

A professional is an individual who is an expert in their field, such as a doctor, athlete, musician, or educator. They carry out their duties with full dedication and responsibility because they have in-depth knowledge and skills in their field of work. The research approach used in this research is a qualitative approach, namely research that uses information data from various theories obtained from the literature. The research in this scientific work also uses a descriptive approach. The author uses a research method with the type of library research. Research is carried out by reading books or magazines and other data sources in the library. To increase the professionalism of educators, educational innovation is a strategic step. Through the use of technology, training, collaboration, and developing a conducive environment, educators can continue to hone their skills, innovate in teaching methods, and meet the demands of the times. Educational innovation not only acts as a tool to achieve learning goals but also as a means to increase the professionalism of educators in realizing quality, relevant education and having a positive impact on the future of students and the nation.

INTRODUCTION

Every education system needs to move towards improving and increasing the quality of education (Nicol, 2010). This involves empowering various elements of education, such as learning programs, teachers, students, learning facilities, funds, community environment, school principal leadership, and others. Teachers play a central role in the learning process, which requires special skills or professionalism (Nurulloh et al., 2020). They play an important role in guiding and motivating students, with the main aim of preparing them to become successful individuals in the world of work. Since 2007, the government through the Ministry of National Education has emphasized that a teacher must have four essential competencies, namely pedagogical, personal, professional, and social. Teachers must demonstrate competence and professional attitudes in delivering learning material, including in planning, implementing, and reflecting on the learning process (Gunawan, 2017; Caena & Redecker, 2019). Preparation of materials, tools, learning models, and evaluation must be prepared carefully to achieve optimal learning objectives.

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It is important to carry out transformation to become a superior individual, especially as an intelligent and qualified teacher (Blindenbach-Driessen & Van Den Ende, 2014; Appio et al., 2017; Del Giudice et al., 2021; Wang & Yoon, 2022). Professionalism is an essential need that must be followed in development. Teachers are needed who have high abilities in carrying out their duties professionally (Dixon et al., 2014; Kunter et al., 2013; Schleicher, 2016). Professional development can be understood as a long process in which educators continually improve their teaching skills to meet students' needs. In principle, the main goal of education is to achieve optimal preparation for a future career. The existence of professional and competent teachers is very important to achieve effective learning goals. Professional teachers will reflect the quality of their teaching by having extensive knowledge and various competencies that support their duties. To become professional teachers, teachers must prioritize their quality and professionalism as the main principles in carrying out their professional duties.

Professional teachers have different attitudes to non-professional people even though they are in the same job or, say, in the same workspace. Professional teachers always strive to improve teacher quality and constantly update their competencies. Professional competence is related to mastery of the scientific structure of the subjects taught extensively and in-depth so that it can help teachers guide students to master knowledge or skills optimally (Marselus Ruben Payong, 2011). A professional teacher has a different attitude from a non-professional teacher even though they are in the same job or, say, in the same workspace. This is what will distinguish professional teachers with only a diploma or professional teachers with skills or expertise as a teacher. Professional teachers always strive to improve teacher quality and constantly update their competencies. Teacher professional development is carried out as an improvement in the quality of teacher competence. Several main dimensions of teacher competence are pedagogical competence, personality competence, social competence, and professional competence (Ana-Maria Petrescu, 2015).

METHODS

The research approach used in this research is a qualitative approach, namely research that uses information data from various theories obtained from the literature. The research in this scientific work also uses a descriptive approach. The author uses research methods with types of research library research (Musthafa & Meliani, 2021; Weir et al., 2022; Sahli et al., 2023; Jamaluddin, 2023). Research is carried out by reading books or magazines and other data sources in the library. This research activity was carried out by collecting data from various literature, both in libraries and in other places. Library research or literature review is an effort to reveal new concepts by reading and recording information that is relevant to needs.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Below, the author will explain how the professional development of educators can be achieved through educational innovation, which in turn will have a positive impact on the quality of education and student achievement. Apart from the factors above, several experts also mentioned that there are factors that hinder the achievement of increasing the professionalism of educators. Some of these things are lack of time, lack of work motivation, and lack of support from the school environment or colleagues (Zalnur et al., 2022; Febriani et al., 2023). Several things that can influence the professionalism of educators include reorganization and reconceptualization of supervision or supervisory activities so that these activities can become an alternative means of improving the quality of educators; optimization of Subject Teacher Conference activities; and educator certification programs. To make

it more interesting, the author tries to explain it starting from the terminology aspect, then continuing with expert opinions and related theories. The author also discusses the results of this research with the results of research by recent educational researchers who discuss this problem in more or less the same context and issues.

Concept of Educator Professionalism

Referring to the professional definition in Law No. 14/2005 concerning teachers and lecturers, namely a job that is a person's main source of income and requires expertise, skills, or competencies that are following established quality standards and norms, and requires special training. This shows that a competent teacher has the characteristics and principles of professionalism, including the need for specific skills (Ranjan et al., 2015; Kosasih, 2017; Demirören et al., 2020). Apart from having in-depth knowledge of the field of study being taught, a teacher is also expected to have additional abilities that support the teaching and learning process, such as the ability to positively influence students' emotions and leadership abilities that can shape students' ethics and morals.

In the English context, the term "professional" refers to someone who is an expert or specialist in a particular field, demonstrating a level of excellence in carrying out their duties (Wulandari et al., 2022). However, being an expert is not only about expertise but also about quality in carrying out work. Therefore, a teacher must strive to be professional because professionalism is the key to providing effective and beneficial education for society. This applies not only in the context of education but also in various aspects of human life related to work or profession (Jaafar et al., 2023). Law Number 14 of 2005 concerning teachers and lecturers emphasizes that teachers have a position as professionals whose task is to improve the reputation of teachers and their role as learning agents, with a focus on improving the quality of national education.

Teacher professional development involves the process of learning and adapting to developments in science, as well as applying this knowledge in practice for the benefit of their students (Lee & Lee, 2014; Darling-Hammond, 2016; Prno et al., 2021). This is not only driven by progress over time but is also a necessity in efforts to improve the quality of human life in the future. One of the characteristics of professionalism is that there are strict selection standards to ensure that only competent individuals are allowed to carry out certain professions. Society recognizes the services provided by those who have the knowledge and skills that support the profession, and a special education process is required before someone can carry out their professional duties. Apart from that, the existence of professional organizations is also important to protect the interests of their members and improve services to the community.

In the field of education, teacher professional development aims to improve professional quality, conduct transparent and objective performance assessments, and provide motivation to improve performance and achievement (De Castella & Byrne, 2015; Efendi et al., 2019; Froiland, 2011). A professional teacher must stay up to date with the latest developments, especially information about the world of education. In addition, teacher competency includes understanding facts and concepts, improving skills, teaching behavior, and professional values (Febriani et al., 2022). As professional educators, teachers must be able to prove their academic abilities through educational certificates or diplomas, which show that they have met competency standards as teachers.

Becoming a professional teacher requires the development of quality and professionalism as the main working principles that serve as guidelines for carrying out professional duties (Yusnita et al., 2018; Murkatik et al., 2020; Karim et al., 2021). In this context, teacher professionalism is reflected in their ability to teach the competencies they possess consistently and in their professional field. Teachers, as

the main actors in the learning process, have an important role in determining the success of their students at school. Teachers are a key factor in learning, teaching activities are a routine part of an educator's duties in guiding students (Darling-Hammond, 2016; Ekanayake & Wishart, 2015). The learning process is realized through interaction between teachers and students, where changes in behavior and new knowledge are formed through experience and strengthening insight. In this context, as stated by (Farinde-Wu et al., 2017; Ningke & Subiantoro, 2022), effective teachers are those who succeed in actively involving students in the learning process.

The scope of teacher professionalism can be seen from several criteria, such as understanding and application of educational theories and various learning methods, use of media and learning resources, and ability to plan and evaluate learning programs (Keinänen et al., 2018). Teachers, with their professional duties supported by pedagogical competence, are responsible for helping students achieve their intellectual, personal, and social development. The characteristics of a professional teacher include the desire to continue to develop themselves, maintain the quality of the profession, and demonstrate behavior that is by ideal standards, while being proud of their profession (Khoiriyati et al., 2021).

Indicators of teacher professional development include a variety of activities, from following developments in science and technology and developing learning models to writing scientific papers and making teaching aids (Wyananda et al., 2022). Teacher professionalism is also characterized by public recognition of the services provided, the existence of a certain educational process before starting their professional duties, and the existence of professional organizations that protect the interests of their members. As drivers of community development, teachers must constantly improve themselves and always follow existing developments following the demands of their duties.

Challenges and Problems of Teacher Professionalization Development

Several things pose serious challenges for the teaching profession to increase its authority in society. First, there is still uncertainty regarding the definition of the teaching profession, its field of specialization, and the standard of expertise required of a teacher. Second, pressure from society and schools on the need for teachers often makes this profession vulnerable to external interference. This is reflected in past and present practices, where anyone is considered capable of teaching regardless of their educational background or qualifications. Third, the significant increase in the number of teachers makes it difficult to control and maintain teacher quality standards, which in turn calls into question the professionalism of teachers themselves. Fourth, professional organizations such as Republic of Indonesia Teachers Association have not been fully active in strengthening teacher professionalism through systematic and direct activities related to improving their quality.

According to (Trisoni, 2016), five factors cause low teacher professionalism in more detail. First, many teachers are not yet fully engaged in their profession because work outside of working hours takes up their time, so time for self-development is limited. Second, teacher compliance with the norms and ethics of the teaching profession is still low and vulnerable to violations. Third, recognition of educational science is still lacking, reflected in the weakness of teacher education institutions. Fourth, differences of opinion regarding the teaching materials given to prospective teachers are still a matter of debate. Fifth, Republic of Indonesia Teachers Association, as a professional organization, has not fully functioned to increase the professionalism of its members because it tends to be political. However, the government is trying to find alternatives to increase teacher professionalism through various policies and programs.

Teacher Professional Development Strategy

Attention to the development of teacher professionalism has become a global phenomenon, because the role of teachers is not limited to delivering science and technology material, but also to forming attitudes and character that can face challenges in an era of hypercompetition. The teacher's job involves helping students to adapt to various life situations and the stresses that develop within them. Student empowerment efforts cover various aspects of personality, such as intellectual, social, emotional, and skills. This noble task is difficult because teachers not only have to prepare the younger generation to face the information age but also have to remain relevant as individuals and professionals.

Teacher professional development is not easy because many factors influence it. Therefore, it is important to pay attention to the environment in which this development occurs, especially if these factors can hinder efforts to develop teacher professionalism. Bureaucracy, especially in the education sector, often does not support a conducive atmosphere for teacher professional development. Ideally, the bureaucracy should provide support and space for the teacher's professional development process following laws and regulations related to education. However, a bureaucratic system that tends to demand services has hindered the bureaucracy's ideal role by existing regulations.

In this context, appropriate strategies are needed to create a climate that supports the development of teacher professionalism. This strategy includes changing the bureaucratic paradigm to be more service-oriented rather than service-oriented, as well as efforts to reduce the level of bureaucracy that hinders teachers' self-development. This strategy requires effective operational methods, such as coaching to increase awareness of the role of bureaucracy in community services, as well as simplifying procedures that hinder teacher self-development and community service (Sachdeva & Malhotra, 2014). Apart from that, other dimensions of teacher professional development involve the involvement of universities, increasing the recruitment of prospective teachers, upgrading programs related to field practice, improving the quality of prospective teacher education, implementing supervision, and improving the quality of educational management based on Total Quality Management.

Government Efforts to Increase Teacher Professionalism

The government has tried to increase the professionalism of teachers by increasing their qualifications through equalizing educational levels to certification programs following the mandate of Law No. 14 of 2005. However, equalization itself will not have a significant impact if teachers cannot adapt to change. Apart from these programs, the government is also actively promoting collaborative activities between teachers through Teacher Performance Assessment, Subject Teacher Deliberation, and Teacher Working Group, which enable the exchange of experiences in dealing with learning challenges.

The process of teacher professionalization must be seen as a continuous effort involving various aspects, such as pre-service education, in-service development, community appreciation, enforcement of a code of ethics, and improving welfare. However, the key factor in improving teacher qualifications is to equate the number of hours worked with the salary received. Although the government has taken various steps, if teachers' salaries remain low, they may be forced to look for additional work to make ends meet, which could reduce their focus on professional development. For example, in developed countries such as the United Kingdom and the United States, governments have balanced teacher salaries with their workload, which has been shown to improve the quality of education. Therefore, it is important for the government and all related parties to provide appropriate appreciation for the important role of teachers in society to encourage the improvement of their

professionalism (Robles, 2012; Biesta, 2015;).

CONCLUSION

In closing the discussion of this article, the author concludes that to increase the professionalism of educators, educational innovation is a strategic step. Through the use of technology, training, collaboration, and developing a conducive environment, educators can continue to hone their skills, innovate in teaching methods, and meet the demands of the times. Educational innovation not only acts as a tool to achieve learning goals but also as a means to increase the professionalism of educators in realizing quality, relevant education and having a positive impact on the future of students and the nation.

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