

# Teacher professional development of public elementary school: A phenomenological approach

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## ABSTRACT

A teacher must have professionalism in carrying out his duties as an educator. However, there are still many teachers who have not shown professionalism. Because it has several problems related to teacher performance, and if you have not found a solution, it can cause prolonged problems. This study aims to describe the principal's strategy for developing teacher professionalism. The research was conducted at the Gaga Ilir State Elementary School, Kronjo District, Tangerang Regency. This study uses a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach—collecting research data through observation, interviews, and documentation. Teachers and school principals serve as the primary sources of information. Data analysis went through three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions, which were carried out simultaneously with the stages. The study results indicate that teacher professionalism can develop through communication development, rewards, evaluation activities, and discussion forum activities. This finding recommends that schools can use these activities to develop teacher professionalism.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Education is a conscious effort to realize cultural heritage from one generation to the next (Abd Rahman et al., 2022; Juhji, 2017). Education has a significant role in improving the quality of human resources because education is responsible for building, fostering, and developing human qualities (Dacholfany et al., 2018; Izzah, 2018; Oktarina, 2007). Producing quality and insightful human resources requires the professionalism of educators to develop and utilize educational technology, especially in the 4.0 era that utilizes ICT in learning. Several studies have revealed the successful use of ICT in their learning (Septantiningtyas et al., 2021; Supardi et al., 2021).

The teacher is a role model for students (Cahyaningrum et al., 2017; Munawwaroh, 2019; Sari, 2017). Therefore, reflecting all forms of achievement, strength, ability, intelligence, compassion, wisdom, exemplary, and understanding to students requires sincerity and humility. Being a teacher means being a lover and a hunter of knowledge. A teacher is related to knowledge so that it becomes a unified whole. An outstanding teacher is a teacher who can devote himself sincerely, willing to sacrifice his time, energy, and thoughts in transferring knowledge to students. Outstanding teachers can uphold the professionalism and quality of their teaching as educators, not in position and money, but in the people who do it. Teachers must have four competencies: pedagogic, professional, personality, and social (Huda, 2022).

The emergence of the notion of an "unprofessional teacher" becomes anxiety in building teacher professionalism. The facts on the ground regarding the lack of professionalism of teachers have strengthened this argument (Sirojuddin et al., 2021), such as teachers who are often absent without information or do not carry out their primary duties and functions correctly. When talking about teacher professionalism, it relates

to teacher performance (Kartini et al., 2020). When discussing teacher performance, increasing professionalism or performance is closely related to the principal as a leader (Kartini et al., 2020; Suratman et al., 2020). The principle is one component of education that has an essential role in improving the quality of education (Salim et al., 2021; Suharyat & Danapriatna, 2021).

Several previous studies reveal the importance of professional teachers. Professional teachers have an impact on the quality of learning (Dewi, 2018). In addition, professional teachers also affect the quality of the learning process they do (Batari et al., 2018). It means that professional teachers have a high urgency for the quality of learning in schools. Furthermore, professional teachers also affect students' learning achievement; as stated by Ade Rustiana and Noor Chalifah, the professional competence of teachers influences 16.9 per cent of high school students learning achievement (Rustiana & Chalifah, 2012). However, the facts in the field, there are still teachers who have not shown their level of professionalism, so the quality of learning has not been achieved optimally.

A school principal must have a program or strategy related to the professionalism of educators to create a conducive school climate and provide motivation to educators in implementing effective and efficient learning models so that the learning carried out is of high quality. Quality learning shows that schools have implemented quality education methods. The teacher's role determines the quality of education in schools in supporting programs according to the vision, mission, and goals. Therefore, the development of teacher professionalism must continue to be carried out by schools through the principal's leadership.

Ari Wibowo's research results reveal that the strategies that principals can do to improve teacher professionalism are by activating the teacher working group, motivating teachers, training, comparative studies, teacher evaluation meetings, classroom supervision, giving punishment and rewards, and through leadership styles participatory (Wibowo, 2022). While Mia Noprika *et al.* stated that the principal's strategy in improving the quality of teachers includes teacher involvement in educational training and seminar activities, implementation of tutoring activities, providing special remedial and extracurricular activities in the form of sports and art coaching, organizing try-outs, and giving additional study hours for students who will take the National Examination, School Examination, and others. In addition, several activities were carried out to improve facilities and infrastructure, such as planning for the facilities and procurement needed as well as maintaining facilities and infrastructure through school operational assistance (Noprika et al., 2020). However, the strategies carried out by principals in each school are different, although the ultimate goal is to build professionalism and increase teacher professionalism. Based on the problems described above, the purpose of this study is to describe the principal's strategy for developing teacher professionalism at the Gaga Ilir State Elementary School.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach. Gaga Ilir State Elementary School became the research location. Located on the north coast of Tangerang Regency, Banten Province, precisely in Kronjo District. Research data was obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation. Several teachers and principals became the main informants in digging up research information. Observations are made by observing all activities that occur in schools related to teacher professionalism. In addition, researchers also observed and followed activities carried out by school principals related to the development of teacher professionalism.

In more detail, the researchers observed teacher attendance, teacher absence, teacher teaching methods, weekly evaluations by the principal, and weekly activities. In addition, researchers also observed how teachers teach, communicate between teachers, and communicate with principals and teachers. The researcher interviewed the principal by asking several questions related to the strategies adopted by the principal in shaping teacher professionalism. After that, the researcher continued to interview the teachers at the school. Documentation analysis is also carried out, such as annual activity documents, conditions of teachers and students, state of facilities and infrastructure, school principal's annual program, and principal's daily agenda. The collected data was then analyzed and concluded, and then made a report on the research results was published.

## 3. RESULTS

Based on the study's results, the principal's strategy in shaping the professionalism of the teachers of Gaga Ilir State Elementary School has been going well. Based on direct observation, the relationship between teachers, teamwork, the responsibilities of teachers and principals, and people involved in building the quality of education is the key to professional development. However, in its implementation, there are still obstacles. Further explanation is discussed through the following discussion.

#### 4. DISCUSSION

The strategy used by the principal of the Gaga Ilir State Elementary School in developing teacher professionalism is to build good communication, provide rewards, conduct evaluations, and participate in discussion forum activities. The strategies carried out are in line with what Anam and Malikkhah conveyed in developing teacher professionalism school principals can carry out the following strategies: 1) Conducting coaching, monitoring, and evaluating the pedagogic aspects of teachers; 2) Conducting encouragement or motivation; 3) Increasing the atmosphere of harmony and intimacy by improving communication; and 4) Conducting teacher discipline development through various activities such as education and training, as well as teacher working groups (Anam & Malikkhah, 2020).

However, this is different from what Sutoyo stated in his paper that the strategy adopted by the principal in improving teacher professionalism includes at least two critical things: motivating teachers, giving awards or prizes, creating a practical situation, and creating good cooperation (Sutoyo, 2019). This opinion has similarities to the communication strategy built by the principal to improve teacher professionalism. However, there are differences in other strategies. It shows that principals, as leaders in educational institutions, have different ways of developing and improving the professionalism of teachers in their schools. Therefore, the principal has a great duty and responsibility to manage the education in his institution so that it is in line with the national education goals.

##### *Build communication*

Communication is the process of sending a message to a recipient.(Furqon, 2005) In this case, communication is essential because it involves a process of social change, taking into account changes in the structure and function of social systems. A *communication channel* is a device that allows messages from a source to reach the recipient through contact and interaction between individuals, such as teachers and students, teachers and principals, the community, and other employees (Mutialela, 2017).

The ability to communicate with a teacher must be empowered at all times through several programs on an ongoing basis. Such as conducting programmed and sustainable scientific forum activities following contemporary studies, participating in conference activities, participating in soft skills development, participating in model development training, and participating in thematic discussion forums, as well as other activities capable of developing communication. A teacher's ability to communicate effectively with students, fellow teachers, parents or guardians of students, and communication in foreign languages is also very much needed to increase the resources, competitiveness, and excellence of an institution (Simanjuntak, 2022). A teacher's communication skills can be demonstrated by: (1) Communicating orally or in writing, (2). Communicating using technology and information functionally, (3) Associating effectively with students or fellow teachers and with others, (4) Associating politely with the surrounding community, and (5) Having the ability to communicate in foreign languages.

Irin Javentdo *et al.* reported that teacher communication has a positive and significant influence on learning outcomes. Likewise, if it is associated with the school environment and school culture, teacher communication simultaneously has a positive and significant influence on student learning outcomes (Javentdo et al., 2021). This explains that if teachers and schools are able to implement effective communication, create a conducive school environment, and can form a good school culture, together, they will be able to improve student learning outcomes in schools. In addition, the results of research from Vianesa Sucia on 8th-grade students of State Junior High School 3 Wonogiri reported that the teacher's communication style had a significant effect on motivating students' learning motivation. Empirically, he found that 28.2% of students' learning motivation was influenced by the teacher's communication style (Sucia, 2017).

##### *Rewards*

Motivation is anything that can make someone do something.(Lestari, 2020) *Motivation* is a tendency that occurs in people who act with specific goals, consciously or unconsciously. *Rewards* are incentives that link pay based on being able to increase employee productivity in order to achieve a competitive advantage. Rewards are also known as rewards, prizes, or rewards. In the concept of management, compensation is a way to motivate employees—organizations reward employees for motivating performance and fostering loyalty.

Motivation is essential in shaping how much students are interested in learning. Motivation also affects how much students will learn from a learning activity or how much they apply in capturing information. Students who learn will use higher cognitive in learning the material so that students can absorb and capture it better. Student learning motivation is the main factor for student learning success. Well-motivated students will produce a better success rate.

According to Desy Ayu Nurmala et al., learning motivation has a direct or indirect effect on learning outcomes (Nurmala et al., 2014). In addition, in their research, Dewi Surani and Mifthahudin reported that Teacher Teaching Motivation also affects the effectiveness of learning in vocational high schools. (Surani & Mifthahudin, 2018) Therefore, teacher motivation must continue to be developed by the principal so that it continues among the teachers in the school. Edi Suhadi et al. state that a training model is needed that can increase teacher motivation through strengthening intrinsic motivation with an approach to job expansion and job enrichment. In addition, by strengthening extrinsic motivation through guidance, distribution of duties and responsibilities, performance appraisal followed by providing feedback, creating a conducive working atmosphere, and career development opportunities according to achievement (Suhadi et al., 2014).

Edi Suhadi et al. also wrote that teacher motivation is an internal strength that exists within him, so he has a strong desire or spirit to try his best to succeed in his role as an educator. Motivation is an individual factor that underlies behaviour to make efforts to achieve goals. High motivation will encourage teachers to pay attention and mobilize the ability to carry out efforts in their role as educators. Motivation can be realized through the intensity of effort and willingness to carry out activities according to the job's demands to encourage quality improvement or task success (Suhadi et al., 2014).

#### *Evaluation activities*

*Evaluation* is a process closely related to collecting information that allows an educator to determine the level of learning progress and improve future learning. Learning evaluation is an ongoing process of gathering and interpreting information to assess decisions to design a learning system (Arifin, 2009). Thus, evaluation activities must have three implications as follows: 1) Evaluation is a continuous activity, not only at the end of learning but preferably before learning begins; evaluation activities are carried out as well; 2) The evaluation process must be directed at a specific goal, namely to obtain various solutions to problems in improving learning; 3) Evaluation is required to use various measuring tools that are accurate and meaningful so that the collection of information needed can make decisions.

As school principals, evaluation activities are routine activities that are a reflection for teachers and principals. Evaluation activities are carried out by the principal at least once a month hold this activity. This activity is constructive in solving existing problems. The evaluation activities carried out by the principal can contain activities to solve problems in the teaching and learning process. the teacher can put forward the problems faced, then the principal, as a leader, can provide suggestions and directions. The head of the school and other teachers are also allowed to advise on other teachers' problems.

#### *Discussion forum activities*

Discussion is a form of orderly and directed exchange of ideas in large or small groups to understand problems, coordinate them, and make joint decisions (Afifah, 2014). Therefore, discussions require issues to be discussed, a moderator leading the discussion, and discussions issuing opinions regularly. Functional training is an effort to increase teacher competence to strengthen insight, attitudes, knowledge, and skills. This activity must follow the teaching profession, which benefits carrying out teacher duties through institutions with competent authority permission. Functional training for teachers is an activity of teachers in attending education or an exercise aiming to increase teacher professionalism. The discussion forum in question can be in the form of attending workshops, teacher group activities, and seminars (Sujanto, 2009).

A teacher must have academic achievements related to the world of education. In addition, a teacher must develop his insight and knowledge to not stop at past knowledge—the process of seeking knowledge, among others, by participating in discussion forums or education and training. Exploring the potential possessed by a teacher can be used by participating in reading and participating in scientific discussion forums or discussions with professional friends.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

The principal's strategy in developing and improving teacher professionalism is in four ways: building communication, giving awards, conducting evaluations, and participating in discussion forums. The success of school principals in developing and improving teacher professionalism is a benchmark for school managerial success to impact the quality of education at the institution. This finding recommends that principals develop and improve teachers' professionalism in their respective schools.

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