Key Factors in Teacher Professional Development

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Abstract: The enhancement of teacher professionalism is an attempt to increase professionalism skills along with teachers' profession. Considering the low teachers' professionalism, the purpose of this study was to figure out several factors that play an important role in teacher professional development. This study was employing descriptive quantitative design. Specifically, the researcher was distributing open questionnaires as a technique in collecting the data. The researcher recruited 78 teachers as the subjects of this study, all of whom representing Bantul Regency and Yogyakarta City. The data were analyzed by using descriptive quantitative design. In this study, the researcher found that: 1) Teachers' personal factors, such as both motivation and occupational commitment, have played an important role in providing supports, especially self-adjustment of the teachers to face high workload circumstances. 2) School is the environmental factor which has been perceived by teachers as a great influence in professional development, such as committing an opportunity and facility in developing of professionalism program.

Keywords: Professional development, professionalism, and occupational commitment

Introduction

Nowadays, the improvement of knowledge, information, and technology is growing fast. This circumstance leads current changes in every aspect of life, including life career. The demands of life career tend to produce high quality of work performance. In certain personal occupation, the quality of work performance is proved by personal ability to produce work professionalism.

The demand of work professionalism is detected by teachers. Teachers, as an important part of education, are expected to accomplish the duties in professional ways. As a consequence, teachers have to show professionalism in every aspect of life. The growth of technology and information must be neutralized by teachers' skills and abilities. According to Craft (2000), to surface current changes such as high living standard and quality of life, teachers need to do an *update* by enhancing life skills through professional development.

Most of teachers are not trying to show professional development; in fact they are reviewed as professional workers. This condition still does not change after they pursue teacher professional development program, such as Portfolio and PLPG program. As stated by Syawal Gultom, the Head of BPSDM and PMP, according to Kemdiknas (The Ministry of National Education) research, it is found that most of teachers who had received certification since 2005 through Portfolio program did not show any differences in personality aspects when accomplishing the duties in the real basis (Burhani, 2011). The result of Kemdiknas research showed that current phenomenon occurred due to the fact that several teachers violate the authority of their work performance. Life skill is also belonging to teachers' problem. This could be proven by the low teachers' motivation in competing, reading, and teaching (Nasution, 2014).

Data collecting of first survey was conducted on July 2014 through interviewing 2 teachers who have received certification and 1 principal from one of Senior High School in Yogyakarta. The data revealed that there is problem faced by the teachers in professional development. This survey also found that: 1) Professional development is frequently conducted by the teachers, but those teachers still find difficulties

to master research and writing abilities, moreover they are less motivated in reading; 2) Problems are related to high workload factors, such as teaching hours (24 hours per week), administration stuff, and services for students. However, from the interview with principal, it is stated that there are several teachers who still have the ability to conduct research apart from their hectic routines; 3) School plays an important role in providing facilities for the teachers, such as supporting teachers' tasks in every professional development program at school, teachers professional development through information and technology training, internet connection for browsing subject matter, and providing advanced study.

Based on survey, it is shown that most of teachers still face the problems concerning self-adjustment and workload control, thus, professional development do not offer changes on their ability. Nasution (2014) revealed that there is no professional teacher due to lack of professional development. Besides, support from schools is still of urgency. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct the study to reveal several factors that play an important role in teacher professional development.

Considering Kurt Lewin's theory, professional development is defined as a personality against the result of interaction between personal and environmental factors. Both factors play an important role (Lewin, 1935). Based on investigation and previous study, it could be concluded that there are several factors that influence professional development, namely: professional competence (Schambach & Blanton, 1993); motivation and organization (Guskey, 2000); personal, task, and work environment factors (Kwakman, 2003); self-efficacy and principal endorsement (Gumus, 2013).

Based on the survey and previous study, this study aimed to find out several factors that play an important role in professional development for teachers in Yogyakarta. Therefore, this is crucial to conduct the study considering professional development for those teachers is one of professional requirements. Accordingly, this intended development would lead teachers to be professional.

Professional Development

Profession is not a novel term for all teachers. This term is always connected with occupation or position. In APA Dictionary Psychology, VandenBos (2007) defined profession as an occupation which requires specific knowledge, in which behavior guidance has been develop to cover minimal qualification to fulfill professional training, work criteria, fee, and general practice, also ethic relation between profession members, colleagues, and clients. In other side, in certain literatures, teacher profession cannot be separated from the ways to enhance teachers' professional qualities. Particularly, this term refers to professionalism framework. Englund (in Frelin, 2013) defined professionalism as a qualification, capacity, and competence which are needed by a professional worker to reach successful profession. Meanwhile, the term *professional* is defined as *being a professional* and *behaving professionally* (Englund in Frelin, 2013; Day, 1999).

Talking about doctor or lawyer, both of them have professional activity or work standard. According to Carr (2000), teaching is a professional activity for the teachers. In teaching activity, teachers are expected to expand either perspective or strategy including how to implement teaching strategy supported by several methods, lesson plans, and classroom management, comprehend how to motivate students and communicate with them effectively even if they have different background and life skills, implement sophisticated approaches in the classroom (Santrock, 2011). Teachers' duties must be balanced with professionalism rules. Generally, professionalism consists of five criteria, namely: a) providing public service; b) involving skills either theoretically or empirically; c) having ethic dimension; d) demanding arrangement and regulation for briefing purposes; and e) professional practitioners need higher autonomy, especially in taking decisions related to empirical matters (Carr, 2000).

In teacher profession, developing ability in professional activities is obligatory in order to fulfill professionalism demanded. As stated by Evans (in Ivanti & Fotopoulopou, 2011), teachers professionalism heavily related to professional development. It constantly requires professional competence and expertise (Townsend & Bates, 2007). Particularly, teacher professionalism assertion appears due to current changes

in society, such as profession, organization, and life career. Those, those changes must be faced by personal changes as well (Smith, 2004).

Professional development is defined as a process which is designed to enhance personal competences, expertise, and professionalism (Guskey, 2000). Further, Faraci (2008) adds that professional development is a developmental process for personal capacities. Generally, this study defined professional development as teachers' attempts to improve personal professionalism in order to reach life career qualities.

Factors Influencing Professional Development

Based on the results of several studies, there are some factors that influence professional development. However, Kwakman (2003) has a deeper interpretation related to this study. He found several factors that influence teachers' participation as a professional development. Those factors include: 1) personal; 2) task or duty; and 3) environment. Based on this study, personal factors is a dominant one compared to other factors.

Personality is categorized as an internal factor which permits authority for determining personal behaviors. The supports from external factors will establish psychological mechanism in order to yield successful professional development. Further, Lewin (1935) articulates that human behavior is a function of personal and environment factors which explains teachers' performance in professional development. In this case, teachers' performance to fulfill the demand of environment changes is the result of interaction between teachers' resources and environment changes.

Research Methodology

This study was employing quantitative approach with survey design. The aim of this study was to describe empirical data acquired from the field concerning factors that have plays the role in teacher professional development. In this approach, the researcher employed quantitative method to collect the data in the form of number (numeric) by measuring several variables of the study. The numeric data empirically represent abstract ideas.

Particularly, this study involved 78 teachers, who hold certification, from 4 state senior high schools in 2 locations, Bantul Regency and Yogyakarta City. Data collection was conducted by distributing 100 open-questionnaires. However, there were in total 78 questionnaires which were worth analyzing. Furthermore, the acquired data were analyzed by using descriptive statistic design.

Discussion

The results of study were: 1) 68% respondents have known the importance of professional development activities related to teacher profession. These activities could be seen in table 1. 2) 55% teachers have been aware that school has an important role in supporting teachers either material or non-material in order to enhance learning process, teachers' performance, and staff. 3) However, almost all of teachers state that school has a great influence for professional development and providing positive response in every circumstance.

Table 1. Professional Development Programs Attended by Teachers

No	Programs	Percentage
1	MGMP (Subject Teacher Forum)	47%
2	Training	20%
3	Workshop	18%
4	Seminar	11%
5	Research	2%
6	Designing learning materials	2%

The result of study has shown that there is a general tendency of teachers who participate in professional development programs every month, such as MGMP, with the percentage of 45% out of the whole professional development programs. Obviously, the participation of teachers is just to fulfill work demands and profession as a teacher. Therefore, there is no expected change in behavior after joining those professional development programs.

Particularly, behavior determines how much a teacher undertakes professional development, such as doing tasks as a teacher or achieving reward. The teachers, therefore, are not motivated to make changes through professional development.

Based on the result of the study, the data showed that there is teachers' awareness of the importance of professional development supported by high number of programs attended, but it still does not show professionalism changes. Related to the survey result, teachers are incapable of managing themselves and workloads, and thus they are trapped in routines. As a result, professional development is just conducted through regular programs.

Professional development which is conducted regularly is probably due to the lack of emotional attachment between teachers and their profession. This could be explained by occupational commitment concept. Based on Lee, Carswell & Allen (2000), occupational commitment is psychological relationship between individuals and their careers due to affective reactions. Teachers who are attached to their job, because of strong connection, convenience, and trust to the work, could fulfill their needs. Otherwise, the low attachment of teachers toward their profession would be apart from developing their professionalism. In this case, there is psychological reciprocation between teachers and their professions.

In another case, this study found that most of teachers assumed that school has a great influence in developing learning process, school progress, and staff performance. This will affect their happiness, satisfaction, convenience, motivation, positive thinking, self-exploration, and being respected by the school when it facilitates their professional development. These data have shown that what the school provides, either material or non-material, are positively perceived by the teachers, and thus influencing teaching performances, as well as the consistency for professional development. Pedler, Burgoyne, Boydell (2007) state that an organization is prepared to do specific attempts in providing supports to its members, not only relying on its member individual natural learning through experiences.

Based on the discussion above, internal (motivation and occupational commitment) and external factors (environment) have a great impact in providing supports to professional development. Those three factors are considered as behavior functions of teacher professional development to develop and research further.

Conclusion

a. Personal factor, involving motivation and occupational commitment, play an important role in self-adjustment for professional development, especially to cope with high and demanding workload condition.
b. School is an environmental factor which has a great influence in professional development, especially by providing opportunity and facility for professional development programs.

Suggestions

a. To stimulate teachers to have work motivation and occupational commitment by encouraging self-motivation in order to develop their professionalism.
b. To share understanding to decision/policy makers at school concerning the important role of providing supports for professional development.

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