

## PROFESSIONAL LEARNING IMPLEMENTATION AND CHALLENGES IN RURAL SCHOOLS IN SAMBAS DISTRICT

Dedi Irwan  
IKIP PGRI Pontianak  
dediirwanphd@gmail.com

Received: 20<sup>th</sup> of March 2020, Accepted: 29<sup>th</sup> of May 2020, Published: 29<sup>th</sup> of June 2020

### Abstract

This study aimed to describe the implementation of professional learning practices and their challenges, based on the rural schools' perspective. The result of this study was expected to provide description of the how far has the activities of professional learning been applied by school and what challenges they face in implementing the activities. This research was multiple case study conducted using a descriptive qualitative approach involving 4 rural schools in Sambas Regency, particularly in Sebawi and Tebas sub-districts. Tool of data collection used was interview guidance, and the data analysis technique applied were thematic and cross case analyses techniques. The result of this study showed that professional learning practices had been implemented in different level. In addition, a number of challenges which constrained schools in implementing the professional learning practices had been identified

**Keywords:** Professional learning practices, Multiple Case Study, Descriptive Qualitative, Rural Schools

### Abstrak

*Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan implementasi praktik pembelajaran profesional dan tantangannya, berdasarkan perspektif sekolah pedesaan. Hasil penelitian ini diharapkan dapat memberikan gambaran sejauh mana kegiatan pembelajaran profesional telah diterapkan oleh sekolah dan tantangan apa yang mereka hadapi dalam melaksanakan kegiatan tersebut. Penelitian ini merupakan studi kasus ganda yang dilakukan dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif yang melibatkan 4 sekolah pedesaan di Kabupaten Sambas, khususnya di Kecamatan Sebawi dan Tebas. Alat pengumpulan data yang digunakan adalah pedoman wawancara, dan teknik analisis data yang digunakan adalah teknik analisis tematik dan cross case. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa praktik pembelajaran profesional telah dilaksanakan di tingkat yang berbeda. Selain itu, sejumlah tantangan yang menjadi kendala sekolah dalam menerapkan praktik pembelajaran profesional telah diidentifikasi*

**Kata kunci:** Praktik pembelajaran profesional, Studi Kasus Ganda, Deskriptif Kualitatif, Sekolah Pedesaan

Copyright (c) 2020 Dedi Irwan

## INTRODUCTION

Education is defined as an individual learning process to achieve and acquire knowledge. Understanding of a more specific object from the knowledge that can be. According Naziev (2017) "Education refers to a socially regulated process to continuously transfer significant social experiences from previous generations to the next. Education is a learning process that involves two objects, namely teachers and students to gain knowledge. In education that is obtained, formally individuals can produce patterns of thought and behavior in accordance with what is being learned. Along with the times, the model of

assurance in the quality of education that has been implemented need to be revitalized. This is done because the adjustment of the model need developed to answer the challenges in the field of education which continues to change, this challenge is due to the ever-changing education curriculum, and to adapt to need.

Each school has its own common challenges in improving the quality of their learning. There are 5 Challenges and Barriers to Improving Quality in education namely, Poor Educational Planning, Lack of Teachers, Poor School Management, and The Economic Difficulties (Winarno, 2019). In the quality of learning, rural schools have differences. They are closer to the library, their internet access is faster, and the opportunities for schools to get professional program are easier to find, for example in seminars. Meanwhile, in rural, school facilities and opportunities for teachers are hindered because rural schools are far from the city center. As well as the distance to participate in government programs in improving teacher quality is a challenge in itself in improving the quality of schools.

The process of improving school quality has become more challenging with the presence of covid (Abidah et al., 2020; Duraku & Hoxha, 2020; UNESCO, 2020). Schools are forced to conduct online learning. Rural school have challenges in implementing the learning model. For students in areas, the problem that arises is the readiness of school to integrate existing supporting facilities in developing their learning. Meanwhile, for school in rural area, apart from the aspects of readiness of teachers and students, they also have problems with their facilities supporting the implementation of online learning. The problem in rural schools is even more complicated if we relate it to improving the quality of English learning, where learning media and student practice facilities are absolutely necessary.

Each of the challenges faced by schools in each of these regions will certainly have an impact on improving the quality of schools. Stated by Akar (2010) that the student education literature is emphasized on the impact of early language development on student achievement. Even so, schools inevitably have to change. Changes in post-pandemic educational practices require schools to innovate in solving their respective problems, in an effort to improve the quality of their education. To do this, it is not only handled by schools. Schools need to be assisted in preparing a system that is able to have a positive effect on improving their quality, which in turn will also have an impact on improving the quality of their students learning. With the large variety of challenges that each school faces, and taking into account every potential that each school has, schools need to develop models for improving the quality of learning that apply locally in their perspective school, which are in

accordance with the needs of each school, and develop based on the local potential that each school has. The model must be able to overcome the problems and challenges they face in their respective schools.

One model of improving school quality that can be applied in schools is the School That Learn (STL) learning pioneered by Senge (1990). In the heart of StL model was that the professional learning practices which were promoted and supported by schools. In this STL improvement model, it can be believed that it can improve the quality of schools, and it will be achieved if teachers and students are given the wide opportunity and are facilitated continuously systematically. This model is believed to be effective in improving the quality of schools. However, the StL concept developed by Senge is still general and developed in the context of educational in Europe, which has a number of fundamental differences with the context of education in Indonesia (Hamzah et al., 2011; Jokić et al., 2012). So, that modifications are needed, this model of STL improvement can be applied in schools according to the needs, potentials, and challenges they face. This can be applied in various contexts, especially in the province of west Kalimantan, especially in Sambas regency, where schools are spread from rural.

The aimed of this research is to describe the professional learning practices, which underpinned the model of StL applied in rural schools in west Kalimantan, especially in rural Sambas regency. This research was important to be conducted because it was an effort to provide an alternative data regarding how online learning had been practiced by school, and to find out challenges each school faced in implementing the professional learning practices. Such data would be need by stakeholders in evaluating the implementation of professional learning and to design future improvement of the professional learning practices.

## **METHOD**

This research was a Multiple Case Study (Ary, 2010; Sugiyono, 2012) which was carried out with a qualitative descriptive approach to describe professional learning practices in rural schools from the perspective of school leaders and teachers. In addition, such research designed was also selected in or der to map of the current or potential challenges that hindered schools from applying professional learning practices in their respective school.

**S**

### **subject of Research**

This study involved 3 rural schools in Sambas District. Within each school, five respondents were selected, which included English teachers and school leaders. The schools and respondents were selected using purposive selection. The selection criteria were the school geographic locations (rural), their learning supporting facilities (well-adequate and less-adequate), their willingness to voluntarily participate, and based on researcher's convenience. Meanwhile, the respondents were selected based on their position in leadership ranges in school (teachers and school leaders) subject they taught (English and Non-English) and their willingness to voluntarily participate.

### **Technique of Data Analysis**

To analyse the data, qualitative data analysis procedures were adopted in this research. In this regard, thematic analysis and cross-case analysis were adopted. Thematic analysis is a form of qualitative data analysis that emphasizes the identification, analysis and interpretation of meaning patterns in qualitative research data. According to Braun & Clarke, (in Heriyanto, 2018) Thematic analysis is a way of analysing data with the aim of identifying patterns or finding themes through data collected by researchers. Data obtained from in-depth interviews or semi-structured interviews will be carried out in this study. This data analysis technique aims to explore what actually happens in a phenomenon. In this study, thematic analysis is used to identify professional learning practices patterns and challenges in each school. Meanwhile, cross-case analysis was used to compare each respondent responses in order to make conclusion regarding professional learning implementation and challenges in school level, and to compare how each school implement professional learning practices in their schools.

In the cross-case analysis the researcher expanded the viewpoint to bring together themes and constructs developed from the notes of teachers and leaders in each of the four schools. The processes involved collect, compare and differentiate the constructs and themes developed from each school case together as a way to generate 'new knowledge and understanding of the problem being investigated' (Khan & VanWynsberghe, 2008). (Khan & VanWynsberghe, 2008) suggest cross-case analysis is one of the best ways to achieve this. They believe that cross-case analysis can mobilize knowledge from individual case studies to a wider range of case studies. In this study, cross-case analysis allows researcher to understand the differences and similarities regarding the practice of professional learning and what challenges each school faced in implementing the professional learning practices.

Cross-case analysis allowed researchers to understand the differences and similarities about the practice of professional learning implemented by each school, and the challenges they faced in implementing the professional learning practices.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Implementation of Professional Learning Activities in rural school**

#### *The collaborative professional learning factor*

Data analysis results showed that activities under the collaborative professional learning factor were rarely conducted by schools in rural areas since the schools had already other routines activities in schools with high intensity. Such business made them unable to implement those activities optimally. Nonetheless, those schools reported that they put those activities in high level of importance, particularly in making innovation in learning. They believed that innovation was needed to the quality of their learning. In this regard, data analysis showed that the process of collaborative professional learning in each school varied from one another. The data suggested that *Collaborative Professional Learning Factor* was carried out in these schools quite often, due to the need for innovation. Schools found that innovation was needed to support the quality of their learning. The goal was to increase knowledge or insight in order to create quality teachers. The schools believed that if teachers were qualified, students would also be of quality too. Collaboration with other school does not even rule out the possibility to collaborate with other teachers as well. And then collaborating with colleagues at school was also regarded important too such as observing colleagues in class, this aim to be able to give each other feedback. They argued that besides being able to make learning effective, such activities could also improve the quality of learning. By doing so, learning outcomes could be optimised, since the quality of learning was interconnected between students and teacher (See: Ghufron and Hardiyanto, 2017).

#### *Learning and reflecting from different sources factor*

Similar result as shown by previous factor were found in this factor, where the interviewed respondent explained that *Learning and Reflecting from different sources factor* activities were rarely carried out, because some activities were considered inappropriate or inefficient. One of the activities was to offer assistance to other teachers. This was considered by some respondents to be unnecessary. They believed, in accordance with their culture, offering help to those who were having problem in teaching was considered inappropriate. They could be judged to show their superiority in teaching skill. They believed that it was better to wait for

those in problem to offer help rather than offering help without waiting for them to ask for ones. Some teachers argued that, if they offered help, they could potentially make others be uncomfortable and disturbing their privacy. Another activity which school reported to be conducted rarely was learning from internet. They reported that they tended to use internet more for entertainment use than for education.

#### *Learning Conversations and Mutual Support factor, practice and values*

In contrast with previous two factors, the *Learning Conversations and Mutual Support factor* was reported done quite often. This activity included in this factor were found to be done by teacher quiet frequently such as consultation with student about the learning process they preferred. Teachers believed that it was effective to be conduced, considering that if the teacher used teaching method which fitted the students' needs, the learning outcome would be maximum in quality. Teachers reported that in every class they taught, they had to know whether the method they could be understood by students. In addition, the argued that it was also important to do so that teacher could know whether the material provided was easily accepted or not and also so that in the future it could be improved.

#### **Challenges in Implementing professional learning activities**

To implement professional learning activities was not an easy job to do by schools in the rural. Data analysis suggested that there were a number of challenges the school had faced.

Regvry6h

#### *Different point of view toward the importance of professional learning practices*

Surprisingly, data analysis showed that teacher in the schools still seemed to be unfamiliar to most activities included in professional learning practices. Such facts led them to have unsimilar opinion regarding whether or not implementing professional learning was important to do in improving their students' learning. Teachers argued that such debates might occur since there had not been any one introduced them to such activities, so that they design their own way on how to improve their capacity. Such fact was also supported by Febrianto, et al. (2020) who reported that teachers' unwillingness to implement new learning strategies because they was not used to such activities. And, teachers reported that they had their own privacy in thinking. They reported that they really appreciated each others' thought regarding anything, and it was taboo to debate about each teachers' thought. Such situation made it difficult to unify their point of view regarding a number of issues, including in relation the importance of implementing professional learning practises in their school.



### Lack of time

Professional learning was not a one-go process, it is considered as a continuous effort to improve their learning. Therefore, it would take time to implement. The interview data analysis revealed that teachers spent most of their time in school doing their routines activities in teaching and learning processes. In this respect, they reported that they did not have spare time to implement other new activities as their new routines activities, including in implementing professional learning activities.

### Inadequate IT support

In order to implement professional learning activities optimally, a number of learning supporting facilities were indeed in need. Unfortunately, most of the facilities were absent, or at least limited in the rural school (Ningsih, Koryati, and Deskoni, 2016, Hakim, 2015, West Kalimantan BPS, 2015, and Indonesian Ministry of Villages, Underdeveloped Regions and Transmigration, 2016). Teachers reported that their options in terms of learning sources was limited. One of the sources was the access to proper internet quality. They reported that the internet quality in their area was poor, watching video or downloading learning materials could take a long time. In addition, they reported that they even could not have electricity during the day, it was only available during the night. Such situation was worsened with the damaged roads, which made travel to other schools or to urban areas where learning facilities could be accessed was challenging. As supported by Simamora (2020) and Bestiantono, Agustina and Cheng (2020) schools would not be able to implement online without properly supported,.

### Pandemic made their activities harder to do

The challenges they reported above had been made worse by the pandemic covid19 (Schleicher, 2020). In this regard, they reported, as in support of what had been found by (Zainuddin, 2020, Bao, 2020 and Dhawan, 2020), that the pandemic made their learning more challenging, meanwhile, their opportunity to learn became more limited. They argued that with the policy to require school to run online learning, with all their limitation, made teaching and learning process became more difficult. On the other side, the lockdown policy made them unable to visit school or other areas where they could find learning resources like library and attending professional improvement seminars or training. In this respect, they stated that before the pandemic, to improve their learning, whit the absence of internet and other electronic leaning resources, they visited schools and nearest public library. Such practices could no longer be conducted during pandemic time.

## CONCLUSION

The implementation of professional learning practices in involving schools in rural areas had been carried out in various ways and frequency. Overall, the data analysis result suggested that the professional learning activities were not implemented frequently by each school. Collaborative professional learning factors, for example had been practiced in certain extent, but not in high frequent level. They argued that implementing such activities were important, but due to a number of challenges made them unable to do so. In addition, the implementation of some activities in this factor were done on the belief that it could significantly improve teachers capacity, by which, students' learning capacity could be promoted.

As was done to *Collaborative professional learning factors*, *Learning and Reflecting from different sources factor* had also not been practiced frequently. They did so, since it was not in line with their culture, which did not allow them to offer help to those did not ask for help. Therefore, communication should be started by those who were having problems. Such situation made school communication activities regarding offering help to each other did not flow flawlessly, instead, it tended to be mundane. Different from those two factors, *Learning Conversations and Mutual Support factor* was reported to have been practiced quiet often. Teachers and school leaders reported that they practiced activities in the factors since they believed that it was one significant way to improve their learning. By doing so, classroom learning quality could be improved.

To implement professional learning activities, a number of challenges had constrained the schools. The main challenge faced by the schools was the different views of teachers and school leaders regarding the importance of practicing professional learning activities in improving students' learning quality. Some believe doing so could make significant improvement, while others thought that it would not give a big effect. The next challenges as that teachers and school had lack of time to implement the professional learning activities. They reported that the teaching learning processes which they had to undergo in their daily activities in school had spent most of their time in school. Therefore, adding extra activities would be hard for them to do. Such condition was worsened by the lack of information technology to support their learning. Such limitation made their learning sources be limited. The last challenge was the pandemic. Lock down policy made their movement to places where learning sources could be access become more limited, meanwhile, the policy which required them to implement online learning made their teaching learning activities be more



challenging to do.

## REFERENCES

- Adhabi, E. A. R., & Anozie, C. B. L. (2017). Literature Review for the Type of Interview in Qualitative Research. *International Journal of Education*, 9(3), 86. <https://doi.org/10.5296/ije.v9i3.11483>
- Ary, S. (2010). Qualitative Research. *Journal of Asia TEFL*, 2(3), 2010–2013.
- Asiatun, K., Jerusalem, M. A., & Komariah, K. (2014). Peningkatan Kualitas Pembelajaran Melalui Penerapan Strategi Pembelajaran Inovatif di SMPN 5 Depok Sleman Yogyakarta. *Jurnal Pendidikan Teknologi Dan Kejuruan*, 3(3), 1–15.
- Bao, W. (2020). COVID-19 and online teaching in higher education: A case study of Peking University. *Human Behavior and Emerging Technologies*, 2(2), 113-115.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2012). Thematic Analysis. *American Psychological Association*, 2(3), 57–71.
- Bestiantono, D. S., Agustina, P. Z. R., & Cheng, T.-H. (2020). How Students' Perspectives about Online Learning Amid the COVID-19 Pandemic? *Studies in Learning and Teaching*, 1(3), 133–139. <https://doi.org/10.46627/silet.v1i3.46>
- Dhawan, S. (2020). Online learning: A panacea in the time of COVID-19 crisis. *Journal of Educational Technology Systems*, 49(1), 5-22.
- Febrianto, P. T. Mas'udah, S., & Megasari, L. A. (2020). Implementation of Online Learning during the Covid-19 Pandemic on Madura Island, Indonesia. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 19(8).
- Hakim, A.R. 2015: *Indonesian Infrastructure profile*. Retrieved at 20 March 2016 from: [https://www.academia.edu/11151444/Profil\\_Infrastruktur\\_Menurut\\_Wilayah\\_d\\_i\\_Indonesia](https://www.academia.edu/11151444/Profil_Infrastruktur_Menurut_Wilayah_d_i_Indonesia)
- Heriyanto, H. (2018). Thematic Analysis sebagai Metode Menganalisa Data untuk Penelitian Kualitatif. *Anuva*, 2(3), 317. <https://doi.org/10.14710/anuva.2.3.317-324>
- Indonesian Ministry of Villages. 2014: List of Under-Developed Districts. Retrieved at 20 March 2016 from <http://kemendesa.go.id/hal/300027/183-kab-daerah-tertinggal>
- Khan, S., & VanWynsberghe, R. (2008). Cultivating the under-mined: Cross-case analysis as knowledge mobilization. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung*, 9(1). <https://doi.org/10.17169/fqs-9.1.334>
- Ningsih, H. S., Koryati, D., & Deskoni. (2016). Analisis Kesulitan Guru Dalam Menerapkan Pembelajaran Saintifik Pada Matapelajaran Ips Di Smp Negeri Kota Palembang. *Profit*, 3(2), 130–138.
- Rahman, M. M. (2019). *Semi-Structured Interview : A Critical Analysis*. (July), 4–6.
- Schleicher, A. (2020). The Impact of Covid-19 on education insights From Education At a Glance 2020.



Simamora, R. M. (2020). The Challenges of Online Learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic: An Essay Analysis of Performing Arts Education Students. *Studies in Learning and Teaching*, 1(2), 86–103. <https://doi.org/10.46627/silet.v1i2.38>

Sugiyono. (2012). Penelitian Deskriptif. *Jurnal Analisis*, 14(2), 1–500.

Sugiyono. (2017). *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, dan R&D*. Bandung: Alfabeta.

West Kalimantan Statistic agency (BPS-Kalbar). 2015: *School Participation in West Kalimantan*. Retrieved on 20 March 2016 from <http://kalbar.siap-online.com/#!/sma>

Zainuddin, M. R. (2020). Online Learning Challenges In Central Pandemic Virus Corona In Stai Muhammadiyah Tulungagung. *Edukasi: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 8(1), 129-138.