The Implementation of Professional Learning Community in Elementary Schools

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Abstract—**The primary aim of this descriptive study is to identify the extent of Professional Learning Community (PLC) implementation in elementary schools in West Java, Indonesia. Professional Learning community (PLC) is a method that teachers continuously implement to improve their competencies and motivations to achieve. Among the reasons for PLC's little effects on teachers' accomplishment are the facts that teachers are not too active in PLC activities and that PLC activities are not implemented continuously. Considering this problem, this study on PLC is conducted. This study employs survey on elementary school teachers in Indonesia. The findings show that majority of elementary school teachers have not implemented PLC optimally in all its dimensions (socialization, communication, comprehension, compliance and conformity, as well as its strengths and weaknesses). The results of this study are expected to contribute in the designing of an operational and well-structured PLC program that will promote teachers' enthusiasm and motivation to implement PLC and will ensure PLC continuity to provide the best effects on teacher's competencies development.**

Keywords—elementary school; professional learning community

I. INTRODUCTION

Among the reasons for PLC's little effects on teachers' accomplishment are the facts that teachers are not too active in PLC activities and that PLC activities are not implemented continuously [1]. Ideally, PLC should be a forum for teachers to solve problems pertaining to their professional pedagogical duties [2]. Professional Learning Community (PLC) is basically a group of learners who share a learning vision and help each other to achieve a shared goal. Self-evaluation, reflective discovery, dialogue, group learning, and problem solving are types of activities conducted in a PLC [3,4]. PLC development involves several things, including: specific time, focus on learning problem, leadership initiation, innovation, and school as a unit of change [3-5]. Findings of a study noted that PLC was an operational tool. Furthermore, it said that every change required teachers to learn how to self-motivate themselves to face the change so that when they work and learn in PLC setting, they would instill the value of sustainable improvement in the organization [6]. Through discussions in PLC, teachers' ideas about learning and good teaching practices are formulated. This shows that teachers' perception is shaped through PLC process more than it is through other processes, such as reading, attending seminar, or further education [7]. It is understandable because in PLC, teachers not only understand the concepts in abstract but also identify them directly through their daily practices. In PLC, teachers become the concept designer themselves to produce ideas pertaining to their roles and duties [2].

The results of these studies show that schools that perform PLC contribute more positive impacts on teachers' performance. However, the studies did not describe in detail what programs can be implemented in a PLC. Thus, the researchers intend to conduct a survey about PLC implemented in schools in Indonesia, particularly on elementary level. Unlike those previous studies, this research is expected to provide enough data to identify the extent of teachers' knowledge and comprehension of PLC implementation and to identify the programs implemented in PLC. The result of this study is expected to produce a PLC design that teachers can implement to optimize teachers' participation in PLC and to ensure that it is sustainable.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative method, following the steps for research and development design developed by Borg and Gall [8], which consist of preliminary stage, development stage, and validation test (evaluation) stage. This paper only discusses the preliminary stage, in which the researchers analyze the context and needs for professional learning community (PLC) development for elementary school teachers in West Java, Indonesia. In this stage, the researchers also conduct literature study and field survey pertaining to PLC implementation in elementary schools in West Java, Indonesia.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

At the preliminary stage of this study, the researchers conduct a survey of teachers' PLC implementation. The indicators of PLC implementation are teachers' comprehension, socialization, communication, compliance and conformity, and strengths and weaknesses. From the survey, the following data is found.

TABLE I.   SURVEY OF PLC IMPLEMENTATION

		Statistics				
		Socialization	*Communication*	*Understanding*	*Compliance and Conformity*	*Strengths and weaknesses*
N	Valid	10	10	10	10	10
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		.50	.40	.40	.40	.50
Std. Error of Mean		.167	.163	.163	.163	.167
Median		.50	.00	.00	.00	.50
Mode		0[a]	0	0	0	0[a]
Std. Deviation		.527	.516	.516	.516	.527
Variance		.278	.267	.267	.267	.278
Skewness		.000	.484	.484	.484	.000
Std. Error of Skewness		.687	.687	.687	.687	.687
Kurtosis		-2.571	-2.277	-2.277	-2.277	-2.571
Std. Error of Kurtosis		1.334	1.334	1.334	1.334	1.334
Range		1	1	1	1	1
Maximum		1	1	1	1	1
Sum		5	4	4	4	5
Percentiles	*25*	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
	50	.50	.00	.00	.00	.50
	75	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00

[a.] Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

Based on the data in table 1, it can be seen that socialization of PLC programs and rules to teachers have been done as much as 50 percent. It means that some schools have not inform their teachers what PLC is, what its programs are, and what the rules of PLC are. Similarly, the communication process concerning PLC is only done in 40 percent of the schools. It is no wonder that teachers' comprehension about PLC is only 40 percent. Teachers' conformity and compliance is also at 40 percent level. On the other hand, teachers' weaknesses and strengths in implementing PLC are in balance, that is at 50 percent level. It means that teachers have the same rate of weaknesses and strengths in terms of time management, capabilities, and opportunities. A more detailed description is outlined in the following table.

TABLE II.   OUTLINE OF PLC IMPLEMENTATION

No	Diagram	Description
1		50% of all schools perform PLC socialization to teachers 50% of all schools do not perform PLC socialization to teachers
2		40% of the teachers communicate with each other about 60% of the teachers do not communicate with each other about
3		40% of the teachers understand PLC 60% of the teachers do not understand PLC
4		40% of the teachers comply with and conform to PLC rules 60% of the teachers do not comply with and conform to PLC rules
5		50% of the teachers have sufficient skills 50% of the teachers do not have sufficient skills
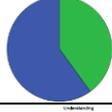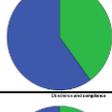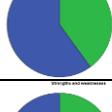
Table 2 shows that teachers' communication process, comprehension level, and compliance and conformity to PLC rules have the lowest score amongst all the indicators. This is perhaps due to the lack of description about PLC programs that teachers can do in their schools. PLC is a school culture which requires hard work and high level of commitment to implement. No matter how great the PLC model and design being offered, it will be useless without teachers' hard work and commitment [9]. Detailed and clear programs will promote PLC implementation. PLC programs must be collaborative, symbolic, and implemented in informal groups [10]. With such programs, knowledge development will be more dynamic and change-oriented, based on needs and problem solving at schools. Effectively implemented PLC programs will have positive correlation with the effectiveness in achieving school's objectives [5]. In realizing such effectiveness, teachers must act as agents of change in implementing PLC [11]. Therefore, to realize a high quality school, PLC should be able to stimulate the development of teachers' confidence, their perspective on reality and problems, their skills, and their organizational capabilities [2]. PLC programs development is the key to initiate teachers' motivation to perform their duties better [12].

IV. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study show that majority of elementary school teachers have not implemented PLC optimally, in terms of PLC socialization, communication, comprehension, compliance and conformity, and teachers' strengths and weaknesses. Teachers' communication process, comprehension level, and compliance and conformity to PLC rules have the lowest score amongst all the indicators. This is perhaps due to the lack of description about, and structure of, PLC programs that teachers can do in their schools. Detailed and clear programs will promote PLC implementation in elementary schools in Indonesia. PLC programs must be collaborative, symbolic, and implemented in informal groups so that it can produce knowledge development processes that are more

dynamic and change-oriented, based on learning needs and problem solving found at the schools.

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