

The Role of the Professional Learning Community to Develop Teacher Leadership

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Abstract—The Professional Learning Community (PLC) has great potential as a means of developing teacher professionalism and leadership. This study aims to look at teachers' perceptions regarding teacher leadership from their involvement in the professional learning community and identify variables that encourage or hinder teacher leadership development. This type of research used in this research is descriptive research with a qualitative approach through in-depth interviews and observation. The results of this study indicate that teachers' perceptions of teacher leadership vary, including as a regulator of the student learning process both inside and outside the classroom. The obstacles experienced by teachers in playing the role of teacher leaders include a lack of knowledge and skills in classroom management. Teacher leadership can develop through professional learning communities by emphasizing the process of fostering a collaborative culture with peers and school principals in achieving vision and learning, developing sustainable community programs, and improving facilities as a supporting condition for optimizing service to students.

Keywords—teacher leadership, professional learning community, leadership development

I. INTRODUCTION

Teachers play an important role in developing students to become qualified humans, especially to prepare human resources who can compete in the 4.0 era. The teacher as an educator is a determinant of the success of the quality of education. According to the Regulation of the Minister of Education of the Republic of Indonesia Number 6 of 2018 concerning the assignment of teachers as school principals, teachers are professional educators with the main task of educating, teaching, guiding, directing, training, and assessing and evaluating students in early childhood education through formal education, education primary and secondary education. In carrying out their duties, teachers are required to have professional competences both cognitive, affective and psychomotor [1] shown in 4 competencies, namely pedagogic competence, personality competence, social competence and professional competence.

In the classroom, the teacher acts as a leader. Teacher leadership is an important aspect of the learning process so that

it can have an influence on students and make the learning process more optimal. Teacher leadership has an influence on student teaching and learning as well as effective teacher leadership in improving the school learning climate [2]. Leadership improves student learning because successful leadership is the second contributing factor after the teaching process in the classroom and leadership effects are usually greatest where and when it is needed most because the greater the challenge, the greater the action in the learning process [3].

To develop teacher leadership, a forum is needed so that teachers are able to recognize themselves and improve their professional competence. The Professional Learning Community is oriented towards the learning process and enhances the competence of teachers and students by involving members to collaborate, share and critically review teaching practices in accordance with national standards [4]. PLC helps develop teacher self-confidence, encourages and builds effective leadership and management and develops teacher pedagogical abilities [4].

Teacher Working Groups and Subject Teacher Deliberations are forms of institutions that already exist in Indonesia in line with the Professional Learning Community (PLC). In research A. Wilson [5] examines how teacher leadership can grow from PLC. This study aims to look at teacher perceptions and experiences through their involvement in PLC and identify variables that encourage or hinder the development of teacher leadership where teacher leadership can grow starting from the role of principal leadership and supportive school culture [5].

In fact, teachers have not been able to develop themselves as teacher leaders by themselves and studies on teacher leadership are still rarely conducted. Based on this, this study adapts the research conducted by A. Wilson [5] which will look at teacher perceptions regarding teacher leadership from their involvement in the professional learning community and identify variables that encourage or hinder the development of teacher leadership within PLC.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

This type of research used in this research is descriptive research with a qualitative approach. A qualitative approach is used to look deeper into a social phenomenon [6]. According to Sugiyono, the main purpose of descriptive research is that the facts and characteristics of existing objects and subjects are examined appropriately and systematically [7]. Several research instruments adapted from research conducted by A. Wilson [5] were developed to describe perceptions of teacher leadership, as well as identify variables that encourage or hinder the development of teacher leadership from their involvement in the professional learning community in the Teacher Working Groups Cluster 1 Dampit, Cicalengka District, Bandung Regency, West Java. The research informants consisted of principal and 8 teacher in-depth interviews and observation.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. *Teacher Perceptions of Teacher Leadership*

Responses regarding teacher leadership have been mixed. Teachers define their role as teacher leaders, namely teachers as parents of students in the school environment, as in control of the student learning process both in class and outside the classroom, as controllers and decision makers in the classroom, as a source of inspiration and motivation for students and residents school to grow and develop for the better, as mentors both in class and for fellow teachers in improving student learning abilities, teachers are leaders who are followed regardless of their behaviour and actions, and as teachers who carry out their duties as leaders of learning management in the classroom. Most teachers see themselves as teacher leaders through their role as classroom teachers. The role as a professional classroom teacher is the main role of the teacher as a teacher leader, so that teacher leadership activities are carried out trying to lead the class to the maximum possible.

According to Cosenza [8], based on research conducted by a group of educators across the world, developing a standard teacher leader model published in 2011. The Teacher Leader Model Standard consists of seven domains describing the many dimensions of teacher leadership:

- Domain I: Fostering a Collaborative Culture to Support Educator Development and Student Learning
- Domain II: Accessing and Using Research to Improve Student Practice and Learning
- Domain III: Promoting Professional Learning for Continuous Improvement
- Domain IV: Facilitating Improved Student Instruction and Learning
- Domain V: Promoting the Use of Assessment and Data for School and District Improvement

- Domain VI: Improving Outreach and Collaboration with Families and Community
- Domain VII: Advocating for Student Learning and the Profession

Teacher leadership is a worthy effort to improve school, student learning and teacher careers by involving teachers as leaders in the school system and their contribution to this. The positive influence of teacher leadership results in the practice of educators including themselves, contributing to policy-making and practice in a whole system that supports effective student teaching and learning by collaborating for student success [9]. Teacher leadership is characterized by teacher patience and commitment to improve student learning. Teachers are able to develop and work collaboratively with colleagues through shared interest in solving practical problems that can help students' problems in learning [10].

Five categories of 21st Century Teacher skills according to the International Society for Technology in Education, namely teachers must be able to facilitate and inspire students' learning and creativity, teachers must be able to design and develop learning experiences and assessments in the digital era, teachers are able to become models for how to learn and work in the era digital, teachers are able to encourage and become models of responsibility and digital society and participate in development and leadership [11].

Some of the obstacles experienced by teachers in playing the role of teacher leaders include a lack of knowledge and skills in classroom management so that learning is less conducive in addition to teachers' lack of awareness of their role as leaders who can control the class. Teachers must have leadership skills in the classroom including being a good listener in the classroom, building empathy, removing rigid boundaries, fostering learning awareness of students, building relationships through persuasive patterns, building closeness, building a vision, being painstaking adults and building classes. as a great community [12].

In addition, another obstacle is communication and unifying opinions with some teachers when in a poll forum to determine alternative solutions or solving problems together so that following up on a problem lasts longer. Professional Learning Community (PLC) refers to the process of acquiring knowledge carried out collaboratively in solving problems for the benefit of the teaching and learning process [13].

B. *The Role of Professional Learning Community on Teacher Leadership*

Professional Learning Community (PLC) is a system where teachers can develop their professional potential as educators and share ideas to solve student learning problems. As a system, the professional learning community consists of 4 blocks, namely teacher collaboration to improve the quality of student learning, the availability of supporting resources, joint learning opportunities for teachers, and school social capital which can improve teacher performance [14]. Hord stated that

PLC consists of five important dimensions: 1) shared and supportive leadership; 2) shared values and vision; 3) collective learning and its application; 4) shared personal practice; and 5) supportive conditions [5]. Based on the results of research related to the 5 dimensions of PLC that have been carried out, namely:

1) *Shared and supportive leadership*: Shared and supportive leadership is stated in the results of the interview that in every decision making, school administrators always involve teachers as members for deliberation in meetings. School administrators and residents participate to find common ground and the best solution until finally a joint decision-making is made. The principal is democratic, not authoritarian and always prioritizes common interests in solving problems that exist in school so that solutions are obtained that do not burden any party. The principal has an important role in teacher development including taking a firm stance to start developing school-based reform, collaborating with teachers, developing teacher leadership, creating opportunities for teachers to work together and learn from each other and school principals developing PLC in schools [13].

2) *Shared values and vision*: Common values and vision where the vision of PLC is to prioritize service and student success, so that in making work programs in line with the vision. The vision is carried out together in practice, where administrators and teachers work together. The principal focuses on the vision of the school which is developed and clarified continuously by the school community so that the school community understands this vision [13].

3) *Collective learning and its application*: Collective learning and its application are already underway in PLC activities. Teachers often communicate and exchange ideas in terms of solving student problems, supportive learning methods and other matters related to teacher professional development. In PLC, teachers are felt to be more active in cooperating to support each other. Teachers do not hesitate to ask for input and ask for assistance and positive feedback to make the school culture harmonious, active and open. So that in practice, teachers become more motivated and eager to provide the best service for students. The elements that make up PLC include the commitment and responsibility of teachers to continue developing professionalism as an educator, collaborating with colleagues to help each other overcome problems faced by exchanging ideas and experiences in managing teaching and learning activities, as well as a school climate that supports teachers to develop their potential. [15].

4) *Shared personal practice*: Sharing experiences together is done by discussing and giving each other feedback related to learning practices. Problem solving is carried out and evaluated together, if there are problems that have not been resolved, together with the teacher, look for other alternative

solutions related to these problems. In addition, sharing experiences is also carried out by means of simulations or practices. Experienced teachers become tutors for other teachers, exemplifying teaching skills or managing classes in practice either personally or in an activity forum so that other teachers can follow these methods. W. Lin, M. Lee and G. Riordan explained that professional teacher interactions can shape various types of teacher leadership [16].

5) *Supportive conditions*: As a supporting condition, the school always supports the potential development of teachers. Among them is by improving the facilities and infrastructure that can be used in classroom learning activities or the development of teacher skills. However, in reality, school facilities and infrastructure do not support teacher development. Besides, the principal's leadership is considered to be a supporting factor because the school principal is not awkward to have a direct dialogue with the teacher so that a sense of kinship can become a school culture so that teachers feel at home and are encouraged to develop their professionalism. Other needs related to supporting conditions that can play a role in the sustainability of PLC include complete facilities and infrastructure, training models and methods that are more practical and simulated, sufficient time and continuous training according to educational developments and school needs [13].

Therefore, PLC should support teachers to develop their potential to become teacher leaders. Teachers assume the role of PLC is to develop the potential of teachers as teacher leaders, including as a forum for discussion on problems in the classroom, as a forum for developing insights and competencies in class management and teaching methods, as a means of providing training and coaching teacher competence. Important factors in developing PLC are the orientation of leadership behaviour, climate and organizational support systems [13].

School culture has a role in shaping teacher leadership. Positive teacher leadership results from schools that have a diverse school culture, cooperation between teachers and school administrators in managing to implement a positive school culture [17]. In a culture that supports teacher leadership, all teachers must be consistent and unsaturated to continue learning to develop their professional competences by practicing and integrating new things to meet student needs for student success [9].

Programs carried out in PLC include coaching learning methods, training in the use of IT to support learning, coaching learning evaluation tools, coaching questions, training teaching methods and classroom management. The activities carried out by the teacher as a result of participation in PLC include making and developing questions according to the correct rules, planning an effective learning process, learning evaluation activities, applying various learning models and other activities that help solve student problems. The program carried out aims to increase the effectiveness of the teaching

and learning process. Teaching effectiveness is dependent on a number of factors including leadership and organizational practices, substantive details of meeting activities in PLCs, the nature of conversation in PLC activities and community development among PLC teams [18]. While the activities carried out in PLC are related to teacher leadership, namely collaborating with fellow teachers and providing mutual feedback in terms of professional development activities. The involvement of teachers in school meetings and PLC activity meetings to express opinions and be involved in joint decision-making with administrators is felt good because administrators always carry out deliberations in the process of finding alternative solutions and making joint decisions.

The teacher leadership competency indicators generated from the PLC program have an effect on the classroom management process where with their influence, the teacher is able to make learning practices effective.

IV. CONCLUSION

Teacher leadership is a process that cannot be developed by itself. Teacher leadership can be developed through professional learning communities which have five important aspects, namely 1) shared and supportive leadership; 2) shared values and vision; 3) collective learning and its application; 4) shared personal practice; and 5) supportive This development is implemented with an emphasis on the process of fostering a collaborative culture with peers and also principals in achieving vision and learning, developing sustainable community programs, and improving facilities as supporting conditions for optimizing services to students. So that the learning process becomes more effective.

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