

Impact of Peer Mentoring Strategy on Islamic Elementary Teachers' Professional Development

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of peer mentoring strategies on the professional development of teachers in elementary schools. This research uses a case study. There are 15 schools as research objects consisting of Private Elementary Schools, State Elementary Schools, and Islamic Elementary Schools. Data collection techniques were carried out through observation, documents, and questionnaires. Data analysis was carried out in two stages, namely (1) analysis of single or individual case data and (2) analysis of cross-case data. Checking the validity of the data in this study using the theory of Lincoln and Guba consists of 4 steps: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The results of the study indicate that the peer mentoring system has had an impact on increasing competencies that are relevant to current needs. Professional development has been built with close partnerships with colleagues, building innovations in teaching and learning, and scheduled mentoring management. Professional development through the peer mentoring process has had an impact on increasing teacher competency qualifications including pedagogic, personality, social and professional which has been described in the Teacher and Lecturer Law no. 14 of 2005. Thus, the peer mentoring process has many impacts on innovation and creativity improvement. the quality of each teacher.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The development of science and technology has also had an impact on the development of the need for education because of the demands of human quality who can be qualified and able to balance the current era of globalization. So, educators must have quality teaching staff who can meet global needs. The complex world that students will face in the future automatically demands that human resources related to the performance of educators (teachers) must be professional. Teachers are

required to have in-depth knowledge about the implementation of the educational process. So, teachers must continue to be empowered to be more competent and professional to have an impact on the quality of their performance. The issue of assessing the performance of teachers working in schools exists in different contexts, which focus on measuring learning outcomes.

Therefore, educational institutions such as elementary schools must always carry out professional development of teachers so that they are relevant to global conditions. Teacher professional development (PD) is critical to improving student outcomes. Previous studies have shown that effective PD takes into account assessment, the scale of study, duration, completeness, dissemination, context, support and control, and collaboration (Sancar, Atal, & Deryakulu, 2021). Moreover, the Covid-19 pandemic period presents a very complex challenge for teachers in integrating technology into online learning. Thus, the teacher's internal factors play an important role in the process of dynamic interaction between students and teachers or with content, facilitators, and peers (Dille & Røkenes, 2021), so that the learning process can achieve its goals.

To prepare teachers for the current situation, the process of teacher professional development is a must. Therefore, this research was conducted with the urgency of the need for professional improvement of teachers to improve the quality of teaching and learning in elementary schools. Several elementary schools in the Mataram sub-district, both Islamic elementary schools, public elementary schools, and private elementary schools, also have to face and be ready to change the implementation of education in a global era that continues to advance. So, these schools need the development of quality education in schools that can prepare their graduates to face education at the secondary level in the era of technological progress and scientific changes that are increasingly advanced. Thus, the professional improvement of teachers becomes a must to achieve the goals the school wants to achieve.

Many studies are related to professional teacher improvement. Alt (2018) conducts teacher professional development through ICT competency improvement. There is also a PD program using workshops supported by teacher experience activities (Ha & Murray, 2021). This means that experienced teachers have ways of improving the quality of teaching and learning. Professional design is one of the main competencies of modern teachers (Voroshilov, 2017). Modern teacher refers to how teachers have teaching skills to transfer 21st-century skills to students. However, being a modern teacher who can keep up with global needs and developments is not easy. Professional development activities are certainly something that must be done for life by teachers and is sustainable according to changes in life. Thus, the PD process requires an appropriate way according to needs. Huston & Weaver (2008) used peer coaching as a professional development opportunity for educators. Peer coaching strategies promote teacher professional growth based on teaching practice, teacher learning, teamwork, and teacher confidence, enthusiasm, and autonomy (Alsaleh, Alabdulhadi, & Alrwaished, 2017). Even peer coaching has changed the current teaching practice (Britton & Anderson, 2010). It means that peer coaching activities lead to activities carried out with colleagues.

However, this study presents a different concept from previous research because this research focuses on peer mentoring strategies to carry out professional development of classroom and subject-specific teachers. This novelty is a research gap that distinguishes it from previous research. Mentoring is the positive and supportive facilitation of learning and development between someone who has more experience, knowledge, or expertise in a particular area and someone less knowledgeable or new to that field (Hayes & Pridham, 2019). In this study, peer mentoring involves teachers as partners for other teachers to develop their professional abilities. The peer mentoring process also leads to an inherent desire to support others, a commitment to the mentoring experience, and having the courage to share in the struggle. The activity level of a mentor is positively related to professional growth (McAlier & Bangert, 2011). Especially in the era of technological advances, electronic mentoring activities make the mentoring process easier (Kovalchuck & Vorotnykova, 2017; Thompsona et al., 2010; Single & Single, 2005). It can even have an impact on increasing professional development (Kahraman & Kuzu, 2016; Quintana & Zambrano, 2014).

Therefore, this study aims to determine the impact of peer mentoring strategies on the professional development of teachers in elementary schools. This is certainly related to the progress and development of science, human life and the demands of globalization on the quality of graduates. This means that professional development is a must. Thus, the results of this study are expected to assist principals in developing peer mentoring strategies so that teachers can become high-quality actors in providing education in schools.

2. METHODS

This research uses a case study. In this study, the investigation process was carried out in-depth and detailed the events that occurred. In this context, researchers as observers and interviewers are concerned with identifying phenomena that occur in the field to obtain original, accurate, objective, and correct data (Creswell, 2012). The study was conducted to determine the professional development of teachers in elementary schools in the Mataram District. It has 43 elementary school levels. So, this study took a sample of 30% of the schools used, namely 15 schools. 15 schools became the object of research consisting of private, state, and Islamic elementary schools.

Case study research usually includes several data collection techniques collected from various sources. Data collection techniques include interviews, observation (direct and participant), questionnaires, and relevant documents (Shanks & Bekmamedova, 2018). Data collection techniques were carried out through observation, documents, and interviews. Observation activities are carried out through direct observation of the development of teacher professional development that has been carried out in schools. The document is taken from reports on activities to increase the competence of teachers in schools. Questionnaires were conducted with principals to find out their strategies for mentoring the professional development of teachers. It is adapted from the result of research (Rhodes & Beneicke, 2002). The questionnaire data is presented using percentages. Data analysis was carried out in two stages, namely (1) analysis of single or individual case data and (2) analysis of cross-case data. Checking the validity of the data in this study using the theory of Lincoln and Guba which consists of 4 steps as follows; credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the questionnaire data analysis also show that the peer mentoring system has had a lot of impact on innovation and creativity in improving the quality of each teacher in the realm of educator qualifications in law number 14 of 2005. The following is the result of calculating the percentage of the questionnaire that has been filled out by the principal from 15 elementary schools in the Mataram sub-district.



Graph 1. The Impact of Peer Mentoring on Teachers' Professional Development

Graph 1 shows a positive impact on the professional development of teachers in primary schools. The peer mentoring system has had an impact on understanding the concepts of collaboration and teamwork. From the percentage that has been presented, the lowest item is on the basic knowledge of mentoring. This means that the principal must improve the practice of mentoring in various activities. However, overall from the percentage results presented in graph 1, peer mentoring has influenced the professional development process of teachers in elementary schools.

Observation activities are carried out through direct observations of schools to find out the professional development agenda designed by the school. Observation activities are adjusted to the agenda of teacher competency improvement activities organized by the school. Of the 15 elementary schools observed in Mataram District, 75% of elementary schools carried out activities to improve the competence of teachers so that their professional development was of higher quality. Various activities, such as Forum Group discussions through problem studies or case studies through peer mentoring systems, workshops, and seminars, are carried out. So, the findings from this observation activity are that the partnership process between fellow teachers has fostered the concept of collaboration in solving teaching and learning problems both online and offline. At the same time, the results of the analysis of documents that have been obtained from schools related to teacher professional improvement activities show the concept of harmonious collaboration. The teachers have shared their knowledge and experience in solving teaching and learning implementation problems.

The findings of the impact of this peer mentoring system are;

1. Every teacher can understand the basic concept of mentoring in schools.
2. Team building and partnering well in various school activities provide innovation to the quality of teaching and learning.
3. Commitment is a very important part of improving the quality of education and solving various problems related to teaching and learning so that teachers can face every challenge in improving the quality of education.
4. Management of senior teacher assistance to junior teachers or the concept of collaboration that can create good feedback.
5. Sharing experiences and knowledge among teachers in schools can increase reflectiveness on the various work that has been done at school.

From the activities carried out as a whole, it can be concluded that the peer mentoring system has built a form of close partnership to support each other in improving the professional quality of

teachers. The peer mentoring system has had an impact on increasing competencies that are relevant to current needs. Professional development has been built with close partnerships with colleagues, building innovations in teaching and learning, and scheduled mentoring management. Professional development through the peer mentoring process has had an impact on increasing teacher competency qualifications, including pedagogic, personality, social and professional, which has been described in the Teacher and Lecturer Law no. 14 of 2005. Peer coaching is also based on mutual visits from two teachers where they give each other feedback and suggestions about their teaching. In peer mentoring, each teacher acted as a partner and mentored teacher.

From this system, schools have carried out mentoring activities in structured stages. Kemmis et al. (2014) has used three basic patterns of mentoring, namely supervision, support, and collaborative self-development. Mechanisms of coaching, mentoring, and peer-network, which have a prevalent outside of education, are seen as important in education to help raise standards and attainment (Rhodes & Beneicke, 2002). Other studies have shown that peer coaching strategies promote teacher professional growth based on teaching practice, teacher learning, teamwork, and teacher self-confidence, enthusiasm, and autonomy. This means that peer mentoring in this study is a reciprocal and collaborative relationship that is often carried out by seniors and juniors. In this case, the collaboration between fellow teachers has created a harmonious collaboration.

Thus, every school must support the development of the professional identity of teachers to become quality educators (Avidov-Ungar & Forkosh-Baruch, 2018). In this case, the way teachers conduct teaching is at the root of their professional identity (Richter et al., 2021; Zeng, 2020). Teacher professional learning is a complex process which requires the cognitive and emotional involvement of teachers individually and collectively (Avalos, 2011). Therefore, teachers should continue to participate in continuous professional development (De Vries, Jansen, & van de Grift, 2013) because 21st-century teacher professionals with classroom management are closely intertwined to realize creative and innovative skills, communication, media awareness and computer literacy and information technology (Ninlawan, 2015).

4. CONCLUSION

The results of the study conclude that the peer mentoring system that has been carried out by elementary schools builds the right way to improve the professional development of teachers. This system has had an impact on teacher competency qualifications that lead to professional teachers. The competency qualifications that have been improved are related to competencies in Law No. 14 of 2005. The concept of professional development is in line with teacher competency qualifications. The peer mentoring system has built partnerships and collaborations between teachers in elementary schools so that this collaboration provides innovation and creativity from every teacher in improving the quality of education. The results of this study also have implications for schools to develop peer mentoring strategies in improving the competence of teachers. This research is still limited to the impact of strategies that have been used by schools in developing teacher professionals. Therefore, this research can still be developed to find out every item of teacher professional in pedagogy. The next researchers can examine more deeply related to the professional impact of teachers on the quality of teaching and learning in schools that are relevant to the demands of 21st-century skills

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