

Teacher's Perspectives toward the Impact of Teacher Professional Development at Islamic School

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ABSTRACT

Teacher professional development is characterized as strategy to improve teacher's proficiencies and meet the changing professional needs in the field. Meanwhile, teacher professional development at Islamic School is conducted to help the teacher in improving teaching practice. English teacher at Islamic school is not only required to teach English but also integrating Islamic values through teaching materials and classroom activities. Therefore, this study aimed to describe and explore teacher's perspectives toward the impact of professional development at Islamic School. This qualitative study used semi-structured interview to collect the data. The result showed that there were professional development activities that had been conducted by the teacher. There were Reflective Teaching to reflect teaching performances and Teacher's Training to develop performances in the classroom. The teacher was inspired by the materials that were given in teacher's training and the teacher was motivated to conduct some methods in teaching activities inside the classroom. However, the teacher acknowledged new requirements of being English teacher at Islamic school. The teacher realized that teaching at Islamic school is always related to Islamic values. The teacher experienced some challenges in integrating Islamic values in the classroom but the teacher sees this as a challenge which motivates the teacher to be more creative in creating materials.

Keywords: Professional Development; Teacher's Development; EFL Teacher

INTRODUCTION

Over the last decade, teachers' obligations have extended to teaching understudies approximately a complex and interconnected society (Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2019). Therefore, education nowadays requires a new dimension of teachers' proficient advancement that connect with worldwide competencies (Orazbayeva, 2016). The term "Teacher Development" (TD), or "Professional Development" (PD) for teachers, are wide terms that incorporate an assortment of perspectives associated not only to a teacher's professional development but also to teacher's personal development. PD is in this manner seen as an ongoing process in order to see persevering changes in teacher practice (Helmer et al., 2011). However, in any changes, teachers definitely play a central part, for they are the ones that executes the standard requirement in the classroom (Helmer et al., 2011; Thao & Mai, 2020). In other words, the success of such ambitious educational reforms depends primarily on teachers' capabilities and teaching performances. Furthermore, Parsons (2022) states keeping up that professional development is gaining new skills through continuing education and career training after entering the workforce. In addition, concurring to Johnston (2003) all of exercises that changes or employ a different image, movement of some kind also constitute teacher development such as taking on a modern kind of lesson, planning and utilizing a few modern materials, or reading a book about language teaching. As a result, professional development is characterized as strategy for creating proficiencies for fulfilling changing professional needs through constant exposure to professional update programs.

Islamic School is one of the Islamic Institutions that is popular for the quality of its education and exceeds in teaching language to its students. Moreover, EFL Teacher ought to have an incredible bargain of understanding of determinant and factors that dictate the classroom circumstance of educating and learning. It implies that, the need to grow professionally as EFL teachers have given rise to proficient advancement programs with exercises that demonstrate advantageous for the self-development of EFL Islamic School teacher.

In this sense, participation in professional development activities have positively enhanced language competencies, teaching practice, practical lesson planning to meet students' learning needs. Discussions and recommendations are drawn previous research on improving the quality of PD activity (Nguyen, 2022). Numerous other previous studies such as Yang (2021) this study proposed that social conditions should support teachers' basic psychological needs in order to sustain and enhance TEFL teachers' motivation for continuing professional development. Finding and previous study indicate that EFL teacher should take responsibility for professional development in order to become better teachers and help students achieve their goals. Another previous study Habiburrahim et al., (2022) shows that not all teacher acknowledges the way of integrating English with the curriculum in Islamic school. Moreover, Madkur & Albantani (2017) study shows that some teachers also do not know how to deliver the Islamic value in some activities in the classroom. Therefore, professional development should be conducted in order to help the teachers in improving themselves in Islamic school because the studies show that EFL teachers are required not only teaching English but also integrating Islamic value through classroom activity inside the classroom. This study aims to explore the teacher's perspectives toward the effect of professional development conducted by Islamic School in one of Islamic Schools located in Indonesia. The research question for this study is provided below.

1. How does the teacher's perspectives toward the impact of professional development conducted by Islamic School?

METHODS

Research Design

This study is a descriptive qualitative study to describe and reveal the EFL teacher's perspectives toward the impact of professional development provided by Islamic School. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry which explore a social or human problem in the environment.

Participants

The participant is one English teacher in Islamic School. The Islamic School in this research refers to *Sekolah Islam*. The teacher conducted professional development individually through her performance in the class or joined a training provided by the school. Since this study aims to explore English teacher's perspectives toward the impact of professional development, this participant is considered as suitable participant to be chosen in this present study.

Data Collection Technique

This research conducted a virtual interview through an application called Zoom to gather data. The Zoom application was used because there was endless discussion about arranging the direct meeting with the teacher. The interview through Zoom was recorded in a form of sound. Moreover, this type of interview was considered as an alternative to conduct the interview with the teacher. Unfortunately, the condition and situation were difficult to conduct the interview directly at that time. The interview aims to understand, examine, and figure out a person, a

circumstance, an occurrence in multiple considerations, and reasoning of an individual behind their action (Ary, et al., 2010; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018). Furthermore, the interview was considered as semi-structured interview and it consists of open-ended and close-ended questions. The open-ended section causes the phrasing and arrangement to be adjusted in accordance with the participants (Kvale, 2007). In addition, close-ended questions allow the researcher to find the strict answers in yes or no questions, while open-ended questions give further answers of the participant to be explored by the researcher later (Hatry, et al., 2015). The main questions of interview were focused on five questions: The first point of the interview was to know teacher's obstacles in teaching-learning process. The second point of the interview was to know how the teacher handle the obstacles in the teaching-learning process and to know the professional development activities conducted. The third point of the interview was to know the impact of the professional development activities. The fourth point was to know teacher opinion about their needs in professional development. And the last point of the interview was to know how the teacher solve the problem in conducting the professional development activities. These questions were purposed to help the researchers find the answer for the research question.

Data Analysis

This study conducted Thematic Analysis from Braun and Clarke (2006). Thematic Analysis was considered suitable for this present study because it allowed the researchers to find the codes from the interview and after that formulate the theme to answer the research question in the present study. In order to conduct the Thematic Analysis, the researchers transcribed the interview from the audio form from the Zoom recording data into written form. Then, the researchers read the interview transcript and conducted the reading for the second and third time while listening to the audio from the recording. After that, the researchers choose potential codes from the interview. The researches decided which codes that were most represent the code of the theme and reduced unnecessary codes to support the theme. After finding the codes, the researchers decided the suitable name of the themes to represent the codes. The name of the theme is necessary in order to answer the research question. Then, the researchers reported the results through the result and discussion section below.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The researchers employed a semi-structured interview to the EFL teacher in Islamic School. After collecting the data and analyzing them, the researchers discussed the findings regarding the research question. The aim of this study is to describe teacher's perspectives toward the impact of the teacher development provided by Islamic School. The research question is "How does the teacher's perspectives toward the impact of professional development provided by Islamic School?"

1. Teacher's Professional Development (PD)

The teacher had conducted professional developments to evaluate and develop her performance in the classroom. The teacher has conducted reflective teaching to evaluate her performance and teacher's training to develop her professionalism. After conducting the professional development activities, the teacher came up with results of her evaluation. The teacher conducted two professional development activities; reflective teaching and teacher's training. These results are shown below.

1.1 Reflective Teaching

The teacher in Islamic school had conducted reflective teaching in the class. The result reflective teaching could be seen from one or more teaching activity that the teacher had done. The participant discovered about the teacher's performance and students' responses in the class through the reflective teaching. The Excerpt 1 is provided below.

"..aku teh masih banyak kekurangannya. Misalkan, di kegiatan belajarnya juga kaya monoton gitu. Rasanya kegiatan yang aku lakukan itu paling diskusi terus presentasi... kan monoton, anak-anak tuh kadang bosan apalagi yah yang kebanyakan jam-jam akhir gitu... udah itu mah lalesu udah materi mah monoton, energinya udah abis. Kaya gitu sih, nyadar banget di situ sih, kegiatan belajarnya kurang variatif." (Excerpt 1)

Teacher professional development is a process where teachers learn about their strength and weaknesses of their teaching and Diaz-Maggioli (2003) defines it as a permanent process where teacher engages voluntarily to adjust their teaching to their students' needs. According to Richards and Farrell (2005) professional development helps the teachers to be aware of current development in their field, evaluate their ability, prepare them for changing needs, become a good role for in-service teachers, maintain professional standards in order to develop the quality of themselves. Moreover, Johnston (2003) explains many teachers do indeed choose to direct their efforts toward enhancing their classroom practice, for example, addressing what they see as weak points in their teaching or introducing new ways of doing old things.

The teacher mentioned that she found out the teacher's technique has been monotonous and it is not effective for the students especially when it is conducted as the last subject at the end of school day. The teacher is aware of this situation and the teaching performance should be more interesting and varied. The teacher conducted the reflective teaching through the process of teaching activity inside the class. Reflective teaching is considered as one of professional developments (Guskey, 2000). According to Bartlett (1990) reflective teacher also asks about two questions consisting of "What?" and "Why?" questions about the teaching performances as a part of educational purposes. Moreover, reflecting the activity and teacher performances inside the class helps the teacher to understand about the teaching process itself which had been conducted in the classroom (Jay & Johnson, 2002; Levis & Farrell, 2007). In addition, some of previous study show that teachers conducted reflective teaching to help themselves in preparing lesson plan, teaching skills and solve the problem their teaching and classroom (Ahmad, et. al, 2013; Riyanti 2021). Fortunately, the school shows its awareness toward the necessity of professional development for teachers in the school and it is proven through the amount of teachers' training that are conducted regularly from month to month.

1.2 Teacher's Training at School

The teacher is aware of this situation and the teaching performance should be more varied. Fortunately, the school shows its awareness towards the necessity of professional development for teachers in the school and it is proven through the amount of teacher' training that are conducted regularly from month to month.

" karena training internal jadi ditujukan untuk semua guru di situ." (Excerpt 2)

"...waktu itu baru diselenggarakan sebulan sekali" (Excerpt 3)

The training that was conducted by the school was not specifically made for English teacher in the school but it was for all teachers in the school. The school conducted the training for once a month and the speaker is from the foundation of the school itself.

These excerpts below shows that the teacher conducted reflective teaching and also teacher's training to develop the performance inside the class. The teacher was given training for teaching in Islamic school. Not only the pedagogical aspect but also Islamic value that should be considered when the teacher conducted English teaching in Islamic School. Excerpts are provided below.

"Karena ini sekolah islam, jadi trainingnya ga terus-terus training tentang pendidikannya tapi tentang keislamannya karena ini sekolah islam." (Excerpt 4)

"...keislamannya kaya tentang aturan kita nyampaiin ke anak. Misalkan, yg diperbolehkan itu apa dan yang tidak diperbolehkan itu apa. Misalnya, saat kita bikin power point atau PPT itu kita tidak boleh menampilkan ilustrasi makhluk hidup yg full gitu. Misalkan, kita boleh menampilkan ilustrasi makhluk hidup gitu, tapi wajahnya disamarkan kaya gitu. Terus ga boleh lambang-lambang musik. Misalnya bikin Power Point, biasanya di Power Point itu ada gambar animasi-animasi gitu kan. Nah misalkan, kita ga boleh pake gambar alat musik atau boneka itu tidak diperkenankan. Tentang yg boleh dan tidak boleh kita sampaikan ke anak-anak. Terus misalkan, mau ice breaking atau memberi reward ke anak juga ga boleh pake tepuk tangan atau musik itu ga boleh." (Excerpt 5)

The Islamic value in the school also has to be delivered in the training since teaching activity is conducted in Islamic School. There are Islamic value that should be considered in making and presenting the teaching materials inside the class. Moreover, the teacher mentioned that it is challenging to integrating Islamic value in the class. Madkur & Albantani (2017) mentioned some English Muslim teachers do not know about transferring Islamic values in some activities and they have limited knowledge about Islam. Moreover, Habiburrahim et al., (2022) mentioned that the teacher experienced challenges in integrating English with the curriculum in Islamic Boarding School.

2. Teacher's perspectives towards the impact of Professional Development (PD)

2.1 Inspiring

Conducting teacher professional development had been conducted and provided by Islamic School. Then, the teacher experienced the program. The teacher has identified both benefit and challenges to teach in Islamic School after finishing the professional development program provided by the school.

"Ya bagus-bagus aja gitu. Jadi menginspirasi aku untuk membuat kegiatan yang lebih bervariasi. Yang anak tuh bener-bener dari awal sampai akhir tuh punya aktivitas, ga jenuh. Ga bikin anak jenuh gitu." (Excerpt 6)

The teacher discovered that the training in the school is excellent and it inspires her to conduct varied activity and techniques in the classroom. Since, the problem of the teacher has been mentioned under the theme Teacher and Professional Development in the class is having monotonous activity, the teacher found that this training is beneficial for her to develop her professionalism as a teacher. The teacher is quite happy about the result of the materials that had been given in the training and the teacher implemented the materials to the classroom with the students. Johnston (2003) explains many teachers do indeed choose to enhance their classroom practice, for example, addressing what they see as weak points in their teaching or

introducing new ways of doing old things. These efforts of conducting professional development led to some results as provided below.

"Tentunya senang ya, berarti ya mereka kan ada perubahan dari cara mereka belajar. Kadang waktu belajar itu kurang antusias, kurang aktif waktu itu, karena berkelompok jadinya aktif. Dia juga mencari cari informasi, nyoba speak up pendapat dia kaya gimana, aku sih senang berarti kegiatan ini tuh lumayan berhasil membuat mereka aktif gitu. Ada perubahan kan. Ada perubahan kan." (Excerpt 7)

The teacher mentioned that students are actively engaged in classroom when they worked in group. The students tend to find information and speak up their opinion. Moreover, the teacher discovered that there is positive transformation in the students' engagement. Moreover, in previous study shows that professional development shows some benefits including teaching performances becomes more communicative than before, more attention to students' needs and organized (Giraldo, 2014). Moreover, Powell et al., (2003) mentions that the impact is related to professional knowledge, practices, and affective response as perceived by the teacher. Professional Development which affects teaching performance can also be assessed from the teachers' insights into and teachers' reflection to seek the value, needs and academics.

2.2 Challenging and Motivating

The teacher discovered professional development as challenging because the use of Islamic value affects the teacher in using and choosing materials as well. Not only the Islamic value but the teacher education also affects the teacher in conducting her teaching inside the class. The teacher mentioned that she has difficulties in finding alternatives because she used to study to give songs and claps as reward in English for Young Learners in her previous education. Therefore, the teacher is motivated to find alternatives and be more creative in creating the classroom activity to teach English at Islamic School.

"Jadi, kegiatan dibatasi kan.. kaya materi di SMP kan biasanya di akhir semester suka ada materi tentang lagu.. materi itu tuh diilangin gitu. Jadi, aktivitasnya lebih terbatas buat ice breaking juga agak bingung nyarinya kaya gimana sedangkan aku kuliah kelas EYL kebanyakan ice breakingnya pake lagu sama tepuk tangan gitu.. harus cheerful. Cuman aslinya waktu kerja itu ga boleh kaya gitu. Jadi, cukup bingung juga ini ice breakingnya gimana biar anak-anak tuh ga bosen belajarnya itu sih yang paling kerasa." (excerpt)

"Lebih termotivasi untuk mencari alternatif lain ternyata bisa diimplementasikan ke anak-anak." (Excerpt 8)

"Iya termotivasi untuk kreatif." (Excerpt 9)

The teacher mentions that she has difficulties in finding alternatives because she used to study to give songs and claps as reward in English for Young Learners in her previous education. Therefore, the teacher is motivated to find alternatives and be more creative in creating the classroom activity to teach English at Islamic School. Madkur & Albantani (2017) mentioned some English Muslim teachers do not know about integrating Islamic values in some activities inside the classroom and they have limited knowledge about Islam. Moreover, Habiburrahim et al., (2022) mentioned that the teacher experienced some challenges in integrating English with the curriculum in Islamic school.

Based on the data analysis above, the researcher found that there were two professional development activities conducting by the teacher proposed by Guskey (2000), they were teacher's training and reflective teaching. The teacher conducted the professional development through taking on practical lesson planning and integrating Islamic value in the English material.

The school principals also supported the teacher to solve some problems in the teaching activity such as giving the teacher some training every month.

CONCLUSIONS

The conclusion was derived based on the findings and the discussion, and the suggestion was directed to the teacher, the school, and the future researcher on the same topic.

Based on the data analysis, there are some of professional development activities had been conducted by the teacher. The results are reflective teaching to reflect her teaching performances and teacher's training to develop her performances in the classroom.

In answering the research question, there are two results of teacher's perspectives toward the impact of professional development at Islamic School. Such as, the teacher is inspired and motivated by the materials that were during teacher's training and inspired her to conduct the method and technique in her teaching activity inside the classroom. The teacher also feels some challenges in integrating Islamic value in the classroom because it is not similar with teacher's education background. However, this challenge becomes personal motivation for teacher to be more creative in creating materials for the students.

In summary, based on the above conclusions, the researchers conclude that there were impacts of the professional development activities conducting by the teacher concurred to Powell et al., (2003), they were related to professional knowledge, practices and affective response as perceived by the teacher. Subsequently, based on what we found in this study, professional development is characterized as strategy for creating proficiencies to fulfil the changing of professional needs through constant exposure to professional update programs.

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