



Analysis of the Role of Teacher Learning Community in Improving Pedagogic Competence and Teacher Professionalism in Labuhanbatu Secondary School

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis peran Komunitas Belajar Guru (KBG) dalam meningkatkan kompetensi pedagogik dan profesionalisme guru di sekolah menengah Kabupaten Labuhanbatu, Sumatera Utara. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dengan metode pengumpulan data melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi langsung, dan analisis dokumen. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa KBG berperan signifikan dalam membantu guru mengembangkan strategi pembelajaran kreatif, meningkatkan kemampuan pengelolaan kelas, dan memperluas literasi teknologi pendidikan. Selain itu, KBG juga mendorong pengembangan profesionalisme guru melalui peningkatan keterlibatan dalam pelatihan dan kegiatan keprofesionalisme berkelanjutan. Meskipun terdapat hambatan seperti keterbatasan waktu dan partisipasi yang bervariasi, dukungan struktural dari pihak sekolah, terutama dalam hal manajemen waktu dan motivasi, sangat penting untuk memastikan keberlanjutan dan efektivitas KBG. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa KBG memiliki potensi besar untuk menjadi model pengembangan profesional guru yang berkelanjutan dan berdampak positif bagi kualitas pendidikan di masa depan.

Kata Kunci: Komunitas Belajar Guru, kompetensi pedagogik, profesionalisme guru, sekolah menengah, Labuhanbatu

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the role of Teacher Learning Communities (TLC) in enhancing pedagogical competence and teacher professionalism in secondary schools in Labuhanbatu Regency, North Sumatra. The research employs a descriptive qualitative approach, using data collection methods such as in-depth interviews, direct observation, and document analysis. The findings reveal that TLCs play a significant role in assisting teachers in developing creative teaching strategies, improving classroom management skills, and expanding educational technology literacy. Additionally, TLCs encourage the development of teacher professionalism by increasing engagement in training and ongoing professional activities. Despite challenges such as time constraints and varying participation levels, structural support from schools, particularly in time management and motivation, is crucial to ensuring the sustainability and effectiveness of TLCs. This study concludes that TLCs hold great potential as a sustainable teacher professional development model, positively impacting the future quality of education.

Keywords: Teacher Learning Communities, pedagogical competence, teacher professionalism, secondary schools, Labuhanbatu

Introduction

In the era of globalization, the quality of education is one of the determining factors for the progress of a nation. Improving teacher competence, both in terms of pedagogy and professionalism, is a key element in improving the quality of education in Indonesia. One effort that can be made to achieve this goal is to form a Teacher Learning Community (KBG). In Labuhanbatu Regency, North Sumatra, KBG has begun to be implemented as one of the strategies to support the development of teacher competence, especially at the secondary school level. KBG is expected to be a forum for teachers to share experiences, improve teaching capacity, and develop professionalism in a sustainable manner.

Pedagogical competence refers to the teacher's ability to manage learning effectively. According to Law No. 14 of 2005 on Teachers and Lecturers, pedagogical competence includes the ability to understand students, design and implement learning, and evaluate learning outcomes. In secondary school environments, the challenges faced by teachers in improving pedagogical competence are quite large, because students in adolescence have

different psychological characteristics than elementary school students. In this context, KBG can act as a discussion space where teachers can share effective learning methods and strategies to facilitate students' cognitive and emotional development.

Teacher professionalism is not only measured by teaching skills, but also by commitment to the code of professional ethics, self-development, and involvement in ongoing professional activities. Professional teachers are expected to be able to continue learning and adapting to developments in curriculum and educational technology. In Labuhanbatu high schools, the existence of KBG aims to facilitate teachers to be more skilled in using educational technology and updating their knowledge according to the demands of the latest curriculum.

KBG is a form of Professional Learning Community (PLC) based on collaboration and active participation of teachers in the learning process. According to research conducted by Stoll et al. (2006), PLC has a significant impact on teacher professional development because it encourages critical reflection and collaboration. Through KBG, teachers can identify learning problems they face, find solutions together, and implement

innovations in the classroom. In Labuhanbatu high school, KBG has become a means for sharing experiences between senior and new teachers, which helps improve their overall competence.

The implementation of KBG in Labuhanbatu high schools uses a structured group discussion approach. Each KBG session usually begins with the delivery of material by one of the teachers, which is then followed by an open discussion. Topics discussed in KBG sessions include improving learning methods, using technology media, and developing relevant learning evaluations. In a study by Grossman, Wineburg, and Woolworth (2001), it was stated that the open discussion structure in PLCs such as KBG provides an opportunity for teachers to build new knowledge and improve their reflective abilities.

In the context of developing pedagogical competence, KBG has had a positive impact in Labuhanbatu high schools. Teachers involved in KBG were reported to be better able to integrate active learning strategies and problem-based learning approaches in their classes. This is in accordance with research conducted by Vescio, Ross, and Adams (2008) which stated that teacher involvement in PLC significantly improved the quality of their teaching and student learning outcomes. In addition, KBG also helps teachers in designing more innovative learning materials that are in accordance with students' needs.

In addition to pedagogical competence, KBG also plays an important role in developing teacher professionalism in Labuhanbatu. Active participation in KBG encourages teachers to continue learning and improving their knowledge in the field of education. Teachers involved in KBG are also reported to be more proactive in attending training, seminars, and workshops outside of school, as well as being involved in educational research activities. A study by DuFour (2004) stated that one indicator of

PLC success is increased teacher involvement in professional development activities outside of school.

Although KBG has many benefits, its implementation in Labuhanbatu high schools is not without challenges. One of the main obstacles faced is time constraints. Teachers often find it difficult to find the right time to attend KBG sessions amidst their busy teaching schedules. In addition, not all teachers have the same interest in actively participating in KBG, especially those who are used to conventional teaching methods. To overcome these obstacles, schools need to provide greater support in terms of time management and facilities so that KBG can run more optimally.

To ensure the sustainability of KBG in Labuhanbatu high schools, several strategies need to be implemented. First, the school must provide a special schedule for teachers to participate in KBG without disrupting their teaching activities. Second, there is a need to improve supporting facilities such as internet access and relevant reading materials to support KBG discussions. Third, motivation and support from school leaders are needed so that teachers feel appreciated for their participation in KBG. According to research by Lomos, Hofman, and Bosker (2011), school management support greatly influences the success of PLC in improving the quality of education.

Based on the analysis above, it can be concluded that KBG has a very important role in improving pedagogical competence and teacher professionalism in Labuhanbatu high schools. Through active involvement in this learning community, teachers can continue to learn and innovate in learning, which will ultimately have a positive impact on student learning outcomes. Although there are some obstacles in its implementation, with the right support from the school, KBG can be one of the effective solutions in improving the quality of education in Indonesia.

Method

1. Research Approaches and Types

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach to analyze the role of the Teacher Learning Community (KBG) in improving pedagogical competence and teacher professionalism in Labuhanbatu secondary schools. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study focuses on an in-depth exploration of the experiences, perceptions, and social dynamics that occur in the learning community. Through this approach, researchers can dig deeper into how the collaborative process within the KBG impacts the development of teacher competence.

2. Location and Subject of Research

This research will be conducted in several high schools that have formed KBG in Labuhanbatu Regency, North Sumatra. The subjects of the study include teachers who are actively involved in KBG activities, principals as supervisors and facilitators, and school supervisors. The subjects of the study will be selected using purposive sampling techniques, with the criteria of teachers who have been involved in KBG for at least one year and actively participate in professional development activities carried out in the community.

3. Research Instruments

The main instrument in this study is the researcher himself, who plays a role in collecting and analyzing data. To support data collection, the researcher will also use several additional instruments, such as:

- a. **Semi-structured interview guidelines:** This interview will be used to explore teachers' understanding, experiences, and perceptions regarding the role of KBG in developing their pedagogical competence and professionalism.

- b. **Participatory observation guidelines:**

Researchers will conduct direct observation of KBG activities in several schools that are the research locations. This observation aims to see directly how interactions and collaborations occur in teacher learning communities, as well as the methods used in discussions or training.

- c. **Documentation:** Researchers will also collect various documents related to KBG activities, such as activity agendas, training reports, and learning materials used by teachers in KBG activities.

4. Data collection technique

Data collection in this study was carried out using three main techniques, namely:

- a. **In-depth interview:** Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with teachers who are actively involved in KBG, school principals, and school supervisors. These interviews aim to obtain comprehensive information on the role of KBG in improving teacher pedagogical competence and professionalism.
- b. **Direct observation:** Researchers will conduct observations during the KBG meeting, especially related to the dynamics of the discussion, the methods used, and the contributions of each member in the community. Observations will be recorded using field notes.

- c. **Documentation:** Researchers will collect related documents that support KBG activities. These documents can be in the form of activity schedules, materials discussed, discussion results reports, and teacher reflection reports after participating in KBG.

5. Data Analysis Techniques

Data collected from interviews, observations, and documentation will be analyzed using thematic analysis techniques. The data analysis process is carried out through several stages, namely:

- a. **Data reduction:** At this stage, the researcher will summarize and organize the raw data from the results of interviews, observations, and documentation, and identify the main themes that emerge.
- b. **Categorization:** After identifying the main themes, the researcher will group similar data into certain categories that are relevant to the research objectives, such as categories of pedagogical competence, professionalism, and learning community dynamics.
- c. **Drawing conclusions:** From the categorized data, the researcher then draws conclusions to answer the research question regarding how KBG contributes to improving pedagogical competence and teacher professionalism.

Results and Discussion

A. Research results

Based on the results of research conducted in several secondary schools in Labuhanbatu Regency, North Sumatra, several important findings were found related to the role of the Teacher Learning Community (KBG) in improving pedagogical competence and teacher professionalism. These findings were obtained through in-depth interview techniques, direct observation, and document analysis that support KBG activities in these schools.

1. The Role of KBG in Improving Pedagogical Competence

The results of interviews with teachers who are actively involved in KBG show that their involvement in this learning

community has a significant impact on improving pedagogical competence. Teachers feel more confident in implementing more creative and problem-based learning strategies after participating in discussions and training in KBG. One teacher said, "I understand better how to create problem-based learning scenarios that make students more active in learning and thinking critically."

Observations made during KBG activities showed that discussions between teachers often focused on efforts to better understand the characteristics of students and appropriate learning methods. Many teachers then implemented active learning methods such as problem-based learning and project-based learning, which were identified as a result of discussions and sharing of best practices in KBG. This finding is in line with research by Vescio et al. (2008), which showed that learning communities such as KBG can have a significant impact on the development of teachers' teaching skills and ultimately improve student learning outcomes.

2. Improving Ability in Class Management

Teachers involved in the BEC also reported improved classroom management skills. Many who previously struggled to manage undisciplined students felt better prepared to face the challenge after learning the new techniques discussed in the BEC. One example that was often discussed was the use of positive reinforcement techniques to increase student motivation. "After the BEC discussions, I learned more about how to motivate students in a non-confrontational way, and this has been very helpful in maintaining a conducive classroom atmosphere," said one teacher.

Theoretical studies related to classroom management show that positive reinforcement strategies are indeed effective in creating a healthier learning environment and supporting student

development (Brophy, 1981). In the context of KBG in Labuhanbatu, this practice is promoted as one approach that can be applied by teachers in middle classes, where students often experience emotional changes that affect their behavior.

3. Use of Technology in Learning

One important theme that emerged from observations and interviews was that KBGs became a space for teachers to deepen their skills in utilizing technology to support learning. Many teachers who were previously unfamiliar with educational technology began to utilize digital media, such as online learning applications and other digital resources, after learning about them from fellow teachers in KBGs.

One teacher said, "I now use Google Classroom more often to give assignments to students, and I see a very positive impact, especially in terms of accessibility and student engagement." This reinforces the findings of Grossman et al. (2001), where teacher learning communities can be an effective means of building technology skills among teachers, especially in today's digital education era.

4. Improving Teacher Professionalism

In terms of professionalism, the results of the study showed that teachers involved in KBG were more proactive in developing themselves and committed to continuous professional development. Many teachers reported an increased interest in attending training and seminars outside of school after participating in KBG. They felt more motivated to update their knowledge and skills to stay relevant to the ever-changing demands of education. "KBG reminds us to keep learning and never feel satisfied with what we already have. This is an important encouragement to maintain professionalism as a teacher," explained one of the principals involved in the study.

This finding is supported by a study conducted by DuFour (2004), which shows that one of the indicators of the success of Professional Learning Communities (PLC) such as KBG is the increase in teacher involvement in continuous professional development activities. This shows that KBG does not only focus on improving pedagogical competence, but also on forming professional attitudes and mentalities among teachers.

5. Obstacles in KBG Implementation

Although the benefits of KBG are quite significant, the research results also found several obstacles in its implementation. The most frequently mentioned obstacle was time constraints. Many teachers found it difficult to balance teaching obligations and participating in KBG activities. "Sometimes our schedules are very busy, and it is difficult to find time to participate in KBG regularly," said one teacher. In addition, there are also some teachers who are less motivated to actively participate in KBG because they feel comfortable enough with the conventional teaching methods they have been using so far.

The researchers recommend the need for better time management and flexible scheduling so that teachers can actively participate without sacrificing their teaching obligations. This is also in line with research by Lomos et al. (2011), which shows that support from school management is very important in the success of PLCs.

6. Sustainability and Long-Term Impact of KBG

One important result of this study is that teachers and principals involved in KBGs recognize the importance of the sustainability of these learning communities. Teachers hope that KBGs can continue to grow and become a platform for learning

throughout their careers. They also see KBGs as a very potential medium for disseminating innovations in teaching and learning. Principals even stated that the sustainability of KBGs needs to be supported structurally, including adequate allocation of time and resources.

This sustainability is considered important because previous studies by Stoll et al. (2006) showed that sustainable PLCs have a more significant long-term impact in improving the quality of education and teacher professionalism. In the context of Labuhanbatu, the success of KBG can serve as a model for similar developments in other areas.

The results of the study indicate that KBG in Labuhanbatu secondary schools plays a significant role in improving pedagogical competence and teacher professionalism. Teachers involved in KBG showed increased abilities in learning methods, classroom management, use of educational technology, and their professional development. However, obstacles such as limited time and active participation are still challenges in the implementation of KBG. With the right support from school management, KBG has great potential to become a sustainable strategy and have a long-term impact in improving the quality of education.

B. Discussion

1. The Role of KBG in Improving Pedagogical Competence

The finding that Teacher Learning Communities (KBG) are able to improve teachers' pedagogical competence is very relevant to contemporary educational theory. Pedagogical competence, which includes understanding student characteristics, learning methods, and evaluation of learning outcomes, is the key to the success of the educational process (Borko, 2004). KBG, as a forum for reflection and sharing experiences, encourages

teachers to apply more interactive and problem-based learning strategies. Thus, KBG is not only a place for theoretical discussion, but also a platform for implementing effective teaching practices.

Teachers involved in KBG in Labuhanbatu reported increased confidence in managing classes and implementing new learning strategies, such as problem-based learning (PBL). This suggests that collaborative discussions within KBG have successfully encouraged innovation in the learning process. As stated by Stoll et al. (2006), collaboration between teachers through PLC (Professional Learning Community) provides teachers with the opportunity to learn from real-world practices, thereby improving their teaching skills. This finding demonstrates the important role of KBG in facing the challenges of dynamic learning that demands continuous renewal.

The importance of reflection in the teaching process is also recognized by Grossman et al. (2001), who emphasized that teachers involved in learning communities will be more critical of their own practices. In this context, KBG in Labuhanbatu becomes a space for teachers to analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the methods used in the classroom. Therefore, this finding is very relevant for efforts to improve the quality of teaching in secondary schools that require adaptation of learning methods for a more critical and digital generation of students.

2. Improving Ability in Class Management

Effective classroom management is one of the essential competencies for teachers. The findings of this study indicate that involvement in KBG can help teachers overcome various problems that arise in classroom management, especially at the secondary school level. Classroom management skills are often a major challenge for teachers, because adolescents

at this age experience complex emotional and psychological changes. Teachers in Labuhanbatu reported that after participating in KBG, they were able to apply positive reinforcement techniques to improve student discipline and engagement.

Positive reinforcement techniques that are widely discussed in KBG are in accordance with the classroom management theory proposed by Brophy (1981). Positive reinforcement has been proven effective in building harmonious relationships between teachers and students and creating a conducive learning environment. KBG facilitates teachers to learn about how to integrate this approach into their teaching. In this case, KBG becomes an effective forum to equip teachers with practical skills in managing student behavior, especially in classes with different student characters.

In addition, this finding emphasizes the importance of collaboration in finding solutions to problems faced by teachers in the field. Through KBG, teachers can share experiences and strategies in dealing with difficult students. Thus, KBG plays an important role in supporting the development of pedagogical skills and creating a better learning environment in Labuhanbatu secondary schools.

3. Use of Technology in Learning

The study also found that KBG helped teachers improve their skills in using technology to support the learning process. This is very relevant considering the increasing importance of technology in education. Teachers who were previously unfamiliar with digital platforms and online learning applications, such as Google Classroom, began using this technology in their teaching process after attending KBG sessions. The role of KBG in improving technological literacy among teachers is very important in facing the era of digitalization of education.

Literature review by Selwyn (2011) emphasized that mastery of educational technology is an integral part of teacher professionalism in the 21st century. Therefore, discussions in KBG that focus on the effective use of technology are a strategic step in preparing teachers to face the challenges of modern education. The implementation of this technology also has implications for increasing student engagement in learning, where students become more active participants through digital media.

KBG in Labuhanbatu provides teachers with the opportunity to share experiences related to the technology they use and how it can improve the quality of teaching. These discussions allow teachers who are less experienced with technology to learn from their more advanced colleagues. Ultimately, the digital skills gained from KBG will help teachers to be more adaptive to the times and meet the needs of students who are increasingly familiar with technology.

4. Improving Teacher Professionalism

Involvement in KBG also contributes to improving teacher professionalism. Research findings show that teachers who are active in KBG are more enthusiastic about participating in additional training and professional development activities outside of school. Teacher professionalism is not only related to teaching skills, but also to the commitment to continue developing themselves and adapting to changes in the world of education (Day, 1999).

Teachers involved in KBG feel the urge to continue learning and updating their knowledge, in line with DuFour's (2004) findings that emphasize that PLCs encourage continuous development. In the context of KBG in Labuhanbatu, teachers became more aware of the importance of participating in seminars, workshops, and other professional activities. This shows that KBG not only functions as a space for sharing knowledge,

but also as a source of motivation for broader professional development.

This increase in teacher professionalism is also related to the recognition of the importance of collaborative networks. Through KBG, teachers become more open to new ideas and innovative practices. This collaboration improves the quality of their professionalism as a whole, thus being able to provide a positive influence on the quality of education in Labuhanbatu secondary schools.

5. Obstacles in KBG Implementation

Findings related to barriers in implementing KBG, especially time constraints, are the main focus of this discussion. Although KBG provides significant benefits for teachers, the difficulty in allocating time to participate is one of the main barriers. Teachers are often faced with a busy teaching schedule, making it difficult to find time to attend KBG sessions regularly.

This obstacle is in line with the findings of Lomos et al. (2011), who emphasized that the success of PLC is greatly influenced by good time management and support from the school. Therefore, it is important for schools in Labuhanbatu to create a more flexible time management mechanism so that KBG can run without disrupting teachers' teaching duties. Possible solutions include special scheduling for KBG meetings or the use of digital technology to enable online participation for teachers who have difficulty physically attending.

In addition, the lack of motivation from some teachers who feel comfortable with conventional teaching methods is also a challenge. This shows the need to increase awareness of the benefits of KBG for all teachers, especially those who have not felt the urgency of changing teaching methods. Support from school leaders in motivating teachers to be actively involved in KBG is

also very important so that this community can continue to grow and provide positive long-term impacts.

6. Sustainability and Long-Term Impact of KBG

The sustainability of KBG is one of the important aspects in improving the quality of education in Labuhanbatu. The research findings show that teachers and principals are aware of the importance of maintaining the sustainability of this community. The sustainability of KBG depends not only on the enthusiasm of teachers, but also on structural support from the school, including adequate allocation of time and resources.

The study by Stoll et al. (2006) emphasized that sustainable PLC has a greater impact in the long term on improving teacher professionalism and the quality of education. Therefore, schools in Labuhanbatu need to consider integrating KBG as part of a sustainable teacher professional development program. Thus, KBG will not only be a temporary meeting place, but also a long-term platform for innovation and improving pedagogical competence.

In addition, the success of KBG can also be replicated in other schools, both in the North Sumatra region and nationally. KBG can be an effective professional development model for teachers throughout Indonesia, especially in improving the quality of education in remote areas or with limited resources.

Conclusion

The conclusion of the discussion above shows that the Teacher Learning Community (KBG) has an important role in improving the pedagogical competence and professionalism of teachers in Labuhanbatu secondary schools. KBG is an effective forum for teachers to share teaching practices, strengthen classroom management skills,

and improve technological literacy among teachers. Active participation in KBG also encourages teachers to continue to develop themselves professionally through training and other professional development activities, which ultimately contributes to improving the quality of education in schools.

However, the success of KBG also faces challenges, such as time constraints and uneven participation among teachers. Structural support from the school, such as flexible time management and motivation from school leaders, is needed to overcome these obstacles. With the right support, KBG can be a sustainable strategy that not only focuses on improving current teacher competencies, but also forms a long-term foundation for improving the quality of education in the future.

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