

## TEACHERS' SUSTAINABLE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH CLASSROOM ACTION RESEARCH

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### **Abstract**

As an educator, a teacher must be able to perform his duties professionally. A professional teacher is required to undertake sustainable professional development. Teachers' professional development is teachers' activities in the context of the practice of science and knowledge, technology and skills to improve their competence quality. This research is qualitative research conducted to the elementary school teachers in Denpasar. Data of this study were collected by conducting in-depth interviews and informal conversations. The data obtained is then transcribed and analyzed using comparative analysis. The results showed that most teachers conducted the classroom action research as a part of their duty that must be done primarily for the promotion of their functional position. Most teachers are not aware that the main purpose of conducting classroom action research is for their professional development. Consequently, there are still many teachers feel reluctant to do classroom action research because they do not understand how important classroom action research is to be conducted to develop their profession.

### ***Keywords:***

Teachers;  
Sustainable;  
Professional Development;  
Classroom Action Research;

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## 1. Introduction

Education is a conscious effort that is deliberately planned to achieve its intended purposes. Education aims to develop and improve the quality of human resources. In an effort to improve the quality of educational resources, teachers are components of human resources that must be nurtured and developed continuously. According to the Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 14 in 2005 regarding Teachers and Lecturers (2005), Teachers are professional educators with the main tasks are educating, teaching, guiding, directing, training, assessing, and evaluating learners. Education law number 20 in 2003 on National Education System article 40, paragraph 2 also requires teachers to be able to create a meaningful, fun, creative, dynamic learning activities. In accordance with the Act, each teacher must have the professional competence that includes personal competence, professional competence, educational competence, and social competence.

Sustainable Professional Development according to 2013 curriculum is an effort to improve and maintain the specific professionalism accordance with ongoing basis specified criteria. A professional teacher must always update his or her ability and competence, in order to always be able to meet the demands of its service users who always increase their needs and expectations and be able to solve the problems encountered in the implementation of teaching projects (Sri Widiastuti, 2016). Therefore, a professional teacher should always improve his ability by developing his experience and attend training, workshops or seminars and further education improvement (Motoko & Bryan, 2016; Lucy, 2014). Specially, Mantra (2016) put emphasis on dynamic and interactive training to the teachers is needed to be conducted which covers the discussion of lesson planning, learning materials, learning media and suitable assessment.

In this case, teachers are not only required to teach well but also assess the students appropriately to continually able to improve the students' competence (Sri Widiastuti, 2016). Moreover, Mantra (2017) revealed that teachers should be knowledgeable in all areas of subject matters they are going to teach and master the implementation of various teaching methodology. In addition, Sri Widiastuti (2017) suggests that teachers should continually promote and develop their competence in teaching. Teachers' improvement process is definitely important due to high demands of the community in order teachers have a high quality of competence to teach the

students in encountering the problems of their daily life nowadays. Therefore professional assessment is vitally necessary to carry out progressively.

Professional assessment is conducted on the basis of competence standards of teaching (Motoko & Bryan, 2016). Competence is the ability of each individual that includes aspects of knowledge, skills and work attitude in accordance with the standards set (Gilley & Steven, 1989; Lucy, 2014). Competence can be described as the ability to perform the task or role of integrating knowledge, skills, attitudes and personal values, and the ability to build knowledge and skills based on experience and learning. The development of the profession is part of human resource development based on a continuous learning process through several methods that can be followed (Mantra, 2016).

Payong (2011: 19) states that teachers can always adjust to the changes, then one of the teacher's professional developments is teaching. While Danim (2011) explains that it is still necessary to improve and develop the professional ability of teachers both through institutional initiative and individual teachers own initiative (Brian and Sarah, 2013). Sustainable professional development includes planning, implementation, evaluation and reflection activities designed to improve the characteristics, knowledge, understanding, and skills (Gilley & Steven, 1989). It is expected that teachers will be able to accelerate the development of pedagogical, professional, social, and personality competencies for the advancement of their career.

In Article 1, paragraph 5 (Law No. 16 of 2009), it is mentioned that sustainable professional development of teachers is carried out in accordance with the needs, gradually, continuously to improve the professionalism. Sustainable Professional development is a concept whereby individuals strive to improve their skill and professional qualifications from the established standards in carrying out their work. Sustainable professional development emphasizes teachers to be more proactive and creative (Gilley & Steven, 1989; Lucy, 2014). The teachers are responsible for their long-term career development under the school management where he teaches. Sustainable professional development as an improvement of professional knowledge and professional skill improvement is consciously continually done throughout the life of a teacher (Motoko & Bryan, 2016).

In accordance with the mandate of the Act, one of the policies established by the Ministry of Education and Culture in 2013 is that teachers and school principals are required to undertake continuous professional development activities or sustainable professional development (Hery, Tri & Susantiningrum, 2012). This teachers' sustainable professional development is set forth in the Minister of National Education Regulation number 03/V/PB/2010 and number 14 in 2010 concerning the guidance on functional implementation of teachers and credit figures for their position. The policy undertook principally aims to foster a career functional level and professionalism of teachers.

A professional teacher, in this case, should: (a) master the characteristics of learners who are served deeply with a variety of character and approaches; (b) master the field of science or resources (teaching materials) in terms of disciplinary content and pedagogical content; (c) master educational learning approaches, and (d) develop professionalism on an ongoing basis (Rakajoni, 2008; Mantra, 2017). The development of the teaching profession is the activity of the teacher in the context of practice Science and knowledge, technology and skills to improve the quality (Motoko & Bryan, 2016), both for teaching and learning process and other professionalism of education personnel and in order to produce something useful for education and culture (Suhardjono, et.al, 1996: 1; Minister of Education Decree number 025/0 year 1995). Various teacher activities including professional development activities are as follows: (1) conducting research in the field of education, (2) using appropriate technology in the field of education; (3) designing lesson plan and learning media, (4) writing academic papers; (5) joining the curriculum development activities. Professional teachers should master the learning materials and methodology (Lucy, 2014). In addition, a professional teacher should conduct Classroom Action Research.

The most recent policy is the regulation for the promotion of teachers to improve their career by collecting credit numbers from scientific publications or innovative works as well as credit figures from the sub-elements of personal development. Therefore, Teachers should be able to develop themselves through scientific activities by conducting research that can improve teachers' performance and professionalism of their work as educators (Ann, Carlos, & Haley,

2015). The research activities undertaken by teachers provide an excellent opportunity for teachers to be able to develop their performance and professionalism. However, many teachers actually feel burdened with the government's policy.

Classroom Action Research (CAR) has enormous potential to improve learning when it is implemented properly and correctly. Through classroom action research, a teacher gains an understanding of what to do, understanding and appreciating the value of his own education and learning, teaching contextually and understanding the history of education and being able to carry out sustainable professional development activities (Ann, Carlos, & Haley, 2015). Based on the interviews conducted with several elementary school teachers in Denpasar, they stated that they are insufficiently able to carry out their professional development activities. In this case, they are reluctant, unwilling, and even apathetic towards conducting research and writing scientific papers as well as proposing their increase in their professional position. Therefore, one way to improve the professionalism of teachers is to train and familiarize them with Classroom Action Research.

Based on the results of the initial interviews conducted by elementary teachers, it was found that the classroom action research is not solely to obtain credit that can be used to raise their professional position, but also it can develop the ability and reflect the teaching strategy conducted in the class. Based on the above phenomenon, There are three problems investigated in this study, they are: (1) what are the teachers' understanding of sustainable professional development?, (2) How are the teachers' awareness of classroom action research as their sustainable professional development?, and (3) Do the teachers conduct classroom action research as their sustainable professional development? These research problems are considered important to be studied with the expectation that the real existing phenomena can be revealed to establish a possible recommendation for an adequate appropriate improve teachers' competence in order that classroom action research as sustainable professional development becomes a process of improving the teachers' quality.

## **2. Research Method**

This research made use of a qualitative research design to explore the teachers' awareness of classroom action research as their sustainable professional development and whether the teachers conduct Classroom Action Research or not. Participants of this study are the Elementary school teachers of some Elementary Schools in Denpasar Bali. They are certified teachers who have more than 4 years teaching experience. The teachers as the participants were intensively studied concerning their awareness of Classroom Action Research as sustainable professional development process to enhance their competence. The data of the study were collected by doing an in-depth interview.

The interviews were ended until the saturated data collected. The interview guides were the instruments used to collect the data. Informal conversations were also conducted to clarify the supplementary data regarding the teachers' awareness of Classroom Action Research. The collected data were analyzed by using the comparative technique. The data collected were firstly transcribed into written form. The transcribed data were interpreted and then analyzed argumentatively

## **3. Results and Analysis**

This section discusses the results and discussion of the research that has been conducted which consists of three sub headings such as: (1) the teachers' understanding of sustainable professional development, (2) teachers' awareness of classroom action research as sustainable professional development, and (3) conducting classroom action research as the teachers' sustainable professional development.

### **3.1 The teachers' understanding of Sustainable Professional Development**

Based on the interviews conducted by the six Elementary School teachers who have more than four years teaching experience, it was found that they have a various understanding on sustainable professional development. Their different understanding on sustainable professional development certainly reflected the ways they develop their skills professionally.

"I understand very well that my duty as a teacher is not just teaching but I must also be able to develop my profession in a sustainable manner. To support my professional development, I should continue to explore my potential "(Teacher A).

The teacher D seems that she has a fairly good understanding of sustainable professional development. The teachers D stated that she conducted the classroom action research and other teacher profession duties properly and consistently, but she did not understand much about sustainable professional development. She simply states that all she does is a duty to be performed as a teacher. This is evidenced by the implementation of professional teacher's tasks including the consistent implementation of classroom research.

"I always do my duty as a teacher. Yes, I usually teach, fulfill administrative obligations, guiding the extracurricular activity, and conducting a classroom action research. But I do not really understand if my actions are part of a sustainable professional development "(Teacher D).

Teachers F has a good understanding of sustainable professional development. Even though He had a good understanding of sustainable profession development but he does not support the implementation of classroom action research. He did not do activities that can support the sustainable professional development and his focus is on his main teaching task.

"I understand what CPD is but I do not do professional teacher activities such as classroom action research to improve my professionalism as a teacher. I'm just teaching. I do not really understand how to do these activities "(teacher F).

All participants in this study have a various understanding of sustainable professional development activities that must be done by the teachers to improve their performance. Their different understanding on sustainable profession development is certainly essential for the teachers to understand comprehensively.

### **3.2 Teachers' awareness of Classroom Action Research as their Sustainable Professional Development**

Based on the results of in-depth interviews with elementary school teachers who were selected as the participants of this study, it was found that there are some teachers who have a very good awareness of the implementation of classroom action research as a professional activity that can develop their professionalism as a teacher. They have a very strong awareness that the profession they are having is a professional task that must be done well, so they are always trying and motivated internally to do their best in performing their duties and develop their professionalism as teachers.

Teacher A states that a teacher's professional behavior cannot be achieved simply by issuing the requirement that the educational personnel is professionals, even though they are determined in the form of legislation. Professional status can only be achieved through an ongoing developmental stage.

"For me, the professionalism of the teacher is not a duty undertaken to fulfill the prerequisites to become a professional under the law, but as a Teacher should be able to develop self-sustainability" (Teacher A)

Teacher B and teacher C state that as a professional, a teacher should be responsible for all aspects of educational duties. Therefore, teachers as professionals can utilize their expertise in performing their duties. Conducting classroom action research is one way that is done so that they can apply the knowledge they have and can use the results of research to provide reflection on their teaching ability. They realized that classroom action research is one of the tasks should be performed by teachers in the effort of professional development. Moreover, they also added that teachers' professionalism in elementary school needs to be improved so that they have the professionalism in accordance with the demands of the current development. This is because the existence of teachers is required to be more critical and active in carrying out their duties. Professional teachers have a sensitivity to the needs of learners and are able to find a way out of the difficulty of teaching. Therefore, by implementing classroom action research can indirectly know the right strategy that can be used to improve their students' ability.

"Being a teacher demands me to always work professionally. I am very aware that the classroom action research that I do, it can help me in improving my performance and can help students improve their skills "(teacher B)"

"I have to be sensitive to face the student difficulties, therefore by doing classroom action research, I can get a reflection on what I do in the class, so I can find solutions to problems faced by my students "(teacher C)

According to teacher D, the implementation of classroom action research which is a part of sustainable professional development is a form of professional duty of a teacher. Aside from being a sustainable professional development, classroom action research is conducted by teachers also to improve teachers' creativity in teaching. It is also emphasized by teacher C who has been teaching elementary school students for more than 10 years. He states that the daily teacher's job is to carry out learning services to learners in accordance with the applicable system. In accordance with the educational objectives set forth in the curriculum, teachers are required to implement the educational objectives based on learning strategies and assess the progress of the students' achievement.

Classroom action research is one of the tasks of the teachers which can develop their creativity. Creativity done by the teachers, of course, gives a very big contribution to improving teachers' sustainable professional development. Teachers C and D recognize that doing classroom action research is one part of a sustainable professional development that they must undertake to improve their professionalism as a professional teacher. Therefore, they understand very well to always do classroom action research in a sustainable manner.

Teachers A added that the certified teacher is urged to keep their professionalism in accordance with the development of science, technology, community demands, and students' psychological development. The development and improvement of teachers' competence through the system of guidance and development of sustainable teacher profession is associated with the acquisition of functional position credit score. The orientation of fostering and developing the teachers' profession in elementary school includes the guidance of pedagogic competence, personality

competence, social competence, and professional competence. Professional development of teachers is done through functional positions. Meanwhile, coaching and career development include assignment, promotion, and promotion. This teachers' development and career development effort must be in line with their functional position. The pattern of coaching and development of the profession and career of teachers is expected to be implemented by conducting classroom action research.

"Yaaa ... Besides to improve my career as a professional teacher, Classroom action research that I do of course is part of my professional development program"

The awareness of the elementary school teachers on the implementation of classroom action research as one part of the sustainable professional development of course strongly supports the professionalism of teachers as professional workers in the field of education. It can improve teachers' performance in educating students. However, it is not all teachers have a good awareness of sustainable professional development by doing classroom action research. There are some teachers who claim that the implementation of classroom action research merely obtained points as a prerequisite for obtaining professional positions or improving their functional positions. This, of course, leads to teachers' unlawfulness in conducting research.

"I've done classroom action research in my classroom teaching. I do it because of the demands of the profession only. If I do not do classroom action research, then I cannot get points for my functional position "(Teacher E)

"oh, I've done classroom action research 2 times for the last 2 years. I am forced to do research. I do not understand how to do it. I am confused, so I just try to do so to get credit points "(Teacher E)

"I never do classroom action research because I do not understand and for that, I do not take care of the rise of my position "(Teacher F)

The reasons of teachers E and F conduct research are merely to get points to meet the requirements of applying for a functional promotion. They do not realize that the classroom

action research greatly contributes to the improvement their professionalism as teachers in a sustainable manner. Their lack of awareness of the importance of implementing classroom action research in the development of their own potentials, of course, makes them unwilling to do the research. Teacher E also states that if she does not realize that the real purpose of implementing classroom action research is for her professional development as a teacher, so she is reluctant to conduct classroom action research.

Based on the results of in-depth interviews conducted with 6 elementary school teachers in Denpasar, there are some teachers who have a fairly good awareness of classroom action research in an effort to develop a professional profession as a professional teacher. They carry out classroom action research to earn points to raise their position. The teacher's awareness of the classroom action research implementation will, of course, have an impact on the seriousness of the teachers in conducting classroom action research. They can develop their creativity and use the results of research as a medium of reflection for teachers to improve the quality of learning and teaching in the class.

### **3.3 Conducting Classroom Action Research as the Teachers' Professional Development**

Teachers must perform various activities to improve academic ability. One of the activities that teachers can do in sustainable professional development is to conduct classroom action research. The results of interviews related to the implementation of classroom action research as sustainable professional development conducted to the elementary school teachers in Denpasar are presented in this section.

"I do classroom action research as an effort to develop my sustainable professional development. I do it consistently at least six months "(Teacher A)

"I usually do classroom action research every 1 semester. I did it not only to gain points in an effort to raise my rank but also to develop my sustainable professional development "(Teacher C)

"As an effort to develop my professionalism as a teacher, I do my teaching job and conduct classroom action research" (Teacher B)

Most teachers conduct classroom action research at least once in one semester. According to them, classroom action research can help teachers find accurate data about all things that can improve the quality of teaching. Classroom action research can make teachers sensitive and responsive to the dynamics or problems of learning in the classroom. In addition, classroom action research can also help teachers improve their professional performance. Teachers are able to improve the learning process through a deep study of what happens in the classroom. Moreover, classroom action research does not disturb the main task of teachers in carrying out their duties of teaching in the classroom. The other thing is that teachers become creative and innovative in developing their knowledge.

"I can improve the teaching and learning process in the classroom by looking at the results of my research in the classroom. This task also does not interfere with my main task in the classroom. I can know the effectiveness and develop my creativity in teaching by implementing innovative strategies and learning methods through my research "(Teacher D).

According to teacher D, classroom action research is a step that must be done by teachers to continuously improve their ability. There are many things that teachers need to do. One way is to do classroom action research. Based on the interview, one of the interviewed teachers stated that he did the classroom action research solely to get points to promote his position. He explained that the classroom action research is also not mainly intended to meet the requirements to be able to write scientific papers but it is also as a professional development process. In this study is also found that there is a teacher who does not implement classroom action research in the classroom he teaches. This is because he does not know and does not want to implement classroom action. With the unconsciousness of the teacher, the teacher is reluctant to do classroom action research. He also stated that he did not want to get promotions on the grounds of being reluctant doing educational research in the classroom. The teacher's inability is based on his lack of understanding of the importance of implementing classroom action research as part of professional self-development as a professional teacher.

Based on interviews, most teachers conduct classroom action research as sustainable professional development. They conduct classroom action research to get points to promote their position, and also as an effort to improve their professionalism as a teacher. Although teachers do not comprehensively understand that the main purpose of conducting classroom action research is to enhance their professional development, however, in general, they know that their profession requires all teachers should carry out a classroom action for their career in teaching.

#### **4. Conclusion**

This study shows that teachers of elementary schools in the city of Denpasar have a diverse understanding of sustainable professional development. A diverse understanding on sustainable professional development certainly affects the activities done by teachers in improving professionalism and their performance as a professional teacher. The findings of this study indicated that teachers conducted classroom action research activities as an effort to promote their position rather than to enhance their professional skill. Teachers who do not develop their profession on an ongoing basis are not due to their ignorance of sustainable professional development, and their lack of understanding to carry out activities that support the sustainable professional development. A good understanding of sustainable professional development should be shared with all teachers. Understanding the implementation of activities that can increase sustainable professional development is certainly needed by the teachers to develop their professionalism.

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