JURNAL ILMIAH

PENDIDIKAN DASAR

The role of the learning community as a means of developing teacher professionalism in elementary schools

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Keywords:	Abstract
learning community; *professional development;* *teacher;* *elementary school*	*Teacher professionalism is very important to improve student learning outcomes. For this reason, learning communities exist as a means of developing teacher professionalism. This research aims to analyze the role of learning communities in the professional development of elementary school teachers, identify the obstacles and challenges faced, and find solutions to overcome obstacles and challenges when participating in learning communities. This research method is qualitative case study research. Data collection techniques include in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and participatory observation. The data collection technique used purposive sampling, the researcher chose subjects, namely 3 teachers including the community leader, class teacher, and PAI subject teacher. The data analysis technique uses Milles and Huberman qualitative analysis. Learning communities in elementary schools have an important role in developing teacher professionalism. The novelty of this research is the use of technology, especially the Merdeka Mengajar Platform (PMM) to facilitate collaboration and share teacher knowledge in learning communities. As well as using a holistic approach to pedagogical competence and developing soft skills such as leadership and collaboration. The obstacles and challenges found included limited time, school support, and motivation. Solutions to overcome this include institutional support, strategies to increase teacher participation, technology-based implementation approaches, and curriculum development with the community. Therefore, this article makes a significant contribution to efforts to increase the capacity of elementary school teachers through more active participation in learning communities, so that it can become a reference for increasing the effectiveness of the existing education system in Indonesia.*

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Teachers have an important role in the educational process. The different intelligence and competencies of students require a teacher to have adequate competencies. This needs to be supported by mastery of 4 competencies that teachers must have, one of which is professional. Teacher competency standards in Indonesia can be categorized as good and professional if they have several competencies, including teachers having a dynamic, active, and innovative mindset. Teachers must have high motivation and willingness to change technology and future learning planning systems. Several indicators that professional teachers must have include pedagogical values, social skills, and Pancasila's virtuous character (Wijaya, 2023). According to Law no. 14 of 2005, article 1 paragraph (1) states that teachers are professional educators who are responsible for educating, teaching, guiding, directing, training, assessing, and evaluating students in early childhood education, basic education, and secondary education (Yunita et al., 2022).

Competency standards and teacher duties are so complex that teacher professional development becomes very important. Professionalism is a special skill that a person has in a particular field that is officially recognized through a certificate from an organization (Ilyas, 2022). The importance of teacher professionalism can create a view in society that teachers can provide satisfactory services (Nur & Mardiah, 2020). Teacher professional competence includes the abilities, skills, and behavior that are important for teaching according to established quality standards (Yulmasita Bagou & Suking, 2020).

In carrying out his duties, a teacher needs scientific communication and collaboration with other people. Therefore, various educational innovations continue to emerge. One of them is the use of learning communities to improve teacher professionalism (Dimyati, 2019). This learning community allows teachers to balance learning patterns in the classroom with students (Hasanah & Haryadi, 2022). A professional learning community is a group of teachers who work together to share ideas and find solutions regularly to overcome learning problems that arise in their daily work (Affandi et al., 2019). It can also be interpreted that a learning community is an environment that allows teachers to share experiences, knowledge, and resources to improve the quality of learning (Kiriana et al., 2022; Pandiangan, 2019). The learning community aims to be able to raise the enthusiasm of teachers to master competencies in each subject (Tantomas, 2021). In a learning community, the

presence of a teacher with the main qualifications of a scientist, educator, organizer, motivator, dynamist, creator, innovator, and evaluator is very important (Khusna & Priyanti, 2023). Thus, the existence of a learning community will help teaching staff to become a means of developing teacher professionalism.

Learning communities consist of three different types of groups: first, intraschool groups; second, inter-school groups that allow a wider exchange of ideas and teaching methods; and finally, learning groups that develop through PMM (Giyanto et al., 2023). Learning communities have an important role as a means of professional development for teachers because they are a place to exchange experiences and knowledge in overcoming problems. Apart from that, learning communities can also make it easier for colleagues who have the same duties and responsibilities to coordinate with each other to find solutions to problems that arise in their daily work. The development of professional learning communities can help improve the quality of learning through identifying problems, sharing ideas and solutions, and the freedom to test solutions. In line with that, (Ilahi et al., 2022) stated that learning communities are very important in creating an education system that not only prioritizes intellectual intelligence but also increases character, religious values , and love of the nation. Professional learning communities consist of four elements in their implementation: resource support, opportunities for collaborative learning, and school social capital (Affandi et al., 2019).

Problem of The Study

The results of initial observations found the problem that the professionalism of teachers at SDN 1 Srobyong was not optimal. This is the background to the existence of learning communities as a renewal in educational innovation. The existence of the Platform Merdeka Mengajar (PMM) is present as an effort to increase teacher professionalism. It is hoped that the presence of a learning community can help teachers improve their professionalism along with using PMM. All teachers in Indonesia have the same opportunity to learn and improve their abilities anytime and anywhere through the independent teaching platform (Arnes et al., 2023).

The learning community consists of all 22 teachers consisting of 7 men and 15 women. The head of the learning community at this elementary school is a teacher who has attended motivating teacher education for 6 months. A *Guru Penggerak* (teacher mover) is a teacher who uses students as the center of learning so that they can improve their abilities and develop critical and creative thinking patterns (Fatimatuzzahroh & Zumrotun, 2023). *Guru Penggerak* must be an example for other

teachers to continue to innovate (Sibagariang et al., 2021). SDN 1 Srobyong is one of the learning communities that discusses the implementation of the Merdeka Teaching Platform (PMM). PMM is one of the new platforms provided by the government to assist school principals and teachers in implementing the independent curriculum (Aulia et al., 2023). This learning community is a group of teachers who study together and collaborate on a scheduled and ongoing basis to provide support and guidance to teachers regarding the implementation of PMM.

Research's State of the Art

This research is related to previous research that is relevant to the theme "the role of learning communities as a means of developing teacher professionalism". According to research conducted by Mitchell and Sickney in Canada, learning communities in schools have better effects than schools that do not have learning communities (Mitchell, 2019). Other research also shows that joining a learning community has a significant impact on teachers' ability to teach (Khusna & Priyanti, 2023). Based on previous research, there are similarities, namely understanding the role, obstacles, and solutions related to the community in teacher professional development. For this reason, this research highlights the importance of learning communities as a forum for teachers to collaborate, share knowledge, and develop their professionalism. In a learning community, teachers can act as scientists, educators, organizers, motivators, dynamists, creators, innovators, and evaluators. This research was conducted based on the fact that not many researchers have explored in depth the professional development of teachers in elementary schools through learning communities. For this reason, this research was conducted to explore how learning communities contribute to teacher professional development.

Novelty, Research Gap, & Objective

This article examines the potential of learning communities as a forum for developing teacher professionalism, which includes sharing knowledge and collaborating with fellow teachers. The novelty of this research is that technology is also used to facilitate collaboration and knowledge sharing between teachers, especially by using the Merdeka Mengajar (PMM) Platform. Apart from that, the learning community also uses a holistic approach that not only focuses on pedagogical competencies but also on developing soft skills such as leadership and collaboration. Thus, this article makes a significant contribution to efforts to improve the capabilities of elementary school teachers through more active learning community participation, so that it can become a valuable reference for educational practitioners,

researchers, and public policy to improve the effectiveness of the existing education system in Indonesia.

Gaps This research focuses on exploring in depth the role of learning communities in improving teacher professionalism in elementary schools. This research also plays a role in deepening understanding of the Independent Curriculum, where learning communities are an ideal forum for deepening understanding of developing educational trends and building relationships with educators from various schools and educational institutions. In observations made at SDN 1 Srobyong, it already has a learning community so that it can be used as a means of developing the professionalism of its teachers. The learning community in this research was chaired by one of *The Guru Penggerak* at the school. In the learning community, it is hoped that having a *Guru Penggerak* can encourage other teachers to become more professional. The hope is that the teacher learning community at SDN 1 Srobyong, can help to improve the professionalism of teachers.

This research aims to analyze the role of learning communities as a means of developing teacher professionalism. Learning communities act as a forum that supports their members to grow personally and socially, enrich their insight, improve their abilities, build self-confidence, and expand collaborative networks (Sekar & Kamarubiani, 2020). The focus of this research is to see the role of learning communities in teacher professional development, identify the obstacles and challenges teachers face in participating in learning communities, and find solutions to overcome obstacles and challenges when participating in learning communities at SDN 1 Srobyong. This research has the potential to provide valuable insights for education practitioners, researchers, and public policy to improve the effectiveness of the existing education system in Indonesia.

METHOD

Type and Design

This research uses a qualitative method with a case study approach. The research was conducted at SDN 1 Srobyong regarding the role of learning communities. Initial research was collecting data obtained from in-depth interviews with related parties, in this research namely teachers who are members of the learning community at SDN 1 Srobyong. Data was also obtained by conducting participatory observation to be able to reveal the case seriously so that it can be described in detail. The research was carried out systematically by collecting,

processing, and concluding data by describing cases or conducting data analysis using qualitative descriptive depictions regarding roles, obstacles, and solutions related to obstacles to joining a learning community as a means of developing their professionalism.

Data and Data Sources

Data was obtained through interviews with teachers who participated in the learning community at SDN 1 Srobyong, to gain an understanding of shared experiences and how they influenced their professional development. The subjects in this research were 3 teachers, including the community leader, class teacher, and PAI subject teacher. The sample used in this research was purposive sampling, in this case, the researcher chose subjects based on teachers who were ASN and had implemented PMM. The selection of these three subjects was used as a sample data source to obtain several different perceptions regarding the role of the learning community in their professional development. In this case, purposive sampling is useful because it provides researchers with various non-probability sampling methods to describe a case (Firmansyah et al., 2022). Other data sources were also obtained and collected from focus group discussions and direct participant observation by researchers.

Data Collection Technique

The data in this research used data collection techniques in the form of in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and participatory observation. In his book entitled Qualitative Research Methodology, Zuhri Abdussamad says that an interview or interview is a type of verbal communication used to obtain information. In other words, interviews can be considered as a data collection method carried out by asking questions to the subjects being studied (Muntatsiroh et al., 2023). Data collection techniques in the form of interviews were used to gain an understanding of the role of the learning community and how this influenced their professional development. Next, focus group discussions were used to explore the obstacles and challenges teachers face in participating in learning communities. The participatory observation was carried out to understand the dynamics and interactions between teachers in the learning community, as well as the solutions they found to overcome the obstacles they experienced.

Data Analysis

Data analysis in this research was obtained from processing the interview results and then generalizing the results into descriptive text which shows how the

teacher learning community in the school influences their professional development. In qualitative research, both during data collection and afterward, data analysis must be carried out (Haryono, 2023). Next, an in-depth analysis will be carried out to describe solutions to overcome the obstacles and challenges faced while participating in the learning community. In this stage, the data collection must be processed by categorizing it systematically. According to the theory of experts Mile and Huberman, interactive reduction is the process of reducing, presenting, and flexibly concluding data as a whole, free from the constraints of the sequence of events (Ahmad & Muslimah, 2021). This theory is used in this research by presenting data categorizing the data, and then drawing conclusions.

RESULTS

Learning communities as a means to support teachers develop their professionalism regarding their duties and responsibilities as educators. The scope of topics discussed in this community includes, among other things, the performance of teaching staff in learning, practice, and class results and administration according to the conditions that will be faced in the future. One of the topics is related to PMM's follow-up in implementing the independent curriculum. The results of this research highlight the vital role of learning communities in teacher professional development, identify the obstacles and challenges faced, and present solutions that can be implemented to overcome these problems:

A. The Role of Learning Communities in Teacher Professional Development

The learning community found at SDN 1 Srobyong has several roles, including:

1. Increasing Teacher Professional Competence

Facing the globalization of education and changes in the curriculum that are being implemented, teachers must be able to keep up with existing changes so as not to be left behind. To be a professional teacher, of course, you must have strong motivation to want to develop, improve your competence, and grow together for the better progress of Indonesian education. In line with the motivation that the teacher with the initials MHW always uses in his interviews, namely 'benefiting others', this naturally leads to help guide teachers in implementing PMM with the learning community. Such dedication led to *Guru Penggerak* being appointed as a community leader who coordinates the teacher-learning community at SDN 1 Srobyong, in Mlonggo District. Having

strong self-motivation like this will help a teacher to develop and work together to advance education.

The learning community is well received by the majority of teachers at this school because of its role in helping the performance of the teachers who are members become better and more focused. Learning communities have proven to be an effective platform for teachers to improve their professional competence. Through regular discussions, webinars, workshops, and training sessions, teachers can share knowledge, skills, and experiences that are relevant to teaching practice. Participating in learning communities also greatly influences teachers' pedagogical abilities. This can be seen in the learning community deliberations at SDN 1 Srobyong, where teachers purposefully participate in discussions about performance evaluation and administration to create plans for better school learning practices for the future.

Figure 1. Implementation of Learning Community at SDN 1 Srobyong

In a learning community deliberation held on May 18 2024 at SDN 1 Srobyong, this community reviewed the follow-up to PMM. Coordinated by the community leader named MHW, the topic discussed in this deliberation was the Work Results Plan (RHK). June as the end of the academic year 2024 is the target for completing the RHK administration so that all teachers must reach 100%. If they do not meet the target, it will be considered that the teacher has not performed well, which will affect their professional competence as teachers. In this era of sophisticated technology, it cannot be denied that there are still teachers who are less competent in technology, making it difficult to access features and carry out administration at PMM. Using a projector during deliberations, makes it easier for all teachers to cross-check the results of their work on their respective laptops until the RHK is successfully submitted to

PMM. Therefore, it is important for teachers to actively participate in learning communities because it provides a means for teachers to help each other, work together, and encourage each other to improve their professional performance competencies so that they are achieved well and with direction.

Apart from the RHK task, teachers are also burdened with other additional tasks, one of which is being advised to carry out the implementation of real actions in class regarding the implementation of the independent curriculum to be collected at PMM. Apart from carrying out the administrative obligations of a teacher, this task is also useful for promotion due to the teacher's increasing professional performance. Apart from the learning community being carried out directly, its implementation is also very open online, either through web seminars or the learning community WhatsApp group itself. This information was explained by one of the teachers who participated in this school's online learning community group. There are many activities to share knowledge and experience between teachers by sharing links to learning videos and teaching practice information so that they can be used as a reference in adapting points that can be applied in the classroom later. The community leader also explained that it is not uncommon for teachers to ask questions online to ask about difficulties regarding teacher administration or problems in the classroom. Openness in various implementations helps overcome the limitations of each teacher so that they can continue to be connected and updated with their learning community.

2. Strengthening Collaboration Between Teachers

Learning communities encourage stronger collaboration between teachers. This is reflected in the high participation of teachers in community activities and their activeness in sharing educational resources. This collaboration enriches teaching methods and promotes innovation in learning. Collaboration carried out both in person and online does not limit teachers from actively sharing educational knowledge in their learning community. A simple activity that is usually carried out is exchanging experiences with colleagues regarding the development of the characteristics of students in each class to identify problems in meeting students' needs. Sharing experiences regarding how each teacher handles problems is very useful for determining the best way to choose teaching methods.

Collaboration between teachers which is often carried out in this community also includes sharing links to learning innovations in PMM. PMM is a technology platform designed to help teachers and school principals learn about the independent curriculum. Having a PMM which contains many examples of teaching methods helps teachers to develop their teaching methods. Teachers can easily learn several examples of learning methods in PMM. This can be used as literature material for teachers to collaborate as discussion material regarding appropriate learning methods to be applied in an environment with the same student characteristics. Because the examples of learning actions in PMM cannot be directly applied in the classroom, learning innovations must still be adapted to each child's development.

As a mover of education, teachers must help fulfill the developmental tasks of elementary school children. In this case, as professional teachers, they must also innovate in learning so as not to be left behind in the development of elementary school children (Khaulani et al., 2020). Sometimes the development of elementary school children in the learning videos at PMM does not match the actual situation of students in several regional environments, for example at SDN 1 Srobyong. The teacher here believes that it is more effective to share experiences between colleagues in the same field, compared to just studying learning innovations at PMM without making adjustments. Because teachers don't always hold the same classes each year, it is necessary to know the experience of previous class teachers to make it easier to determine theory and practice in future teaching. Things like this show that it is important to have an active learning community in schools to work together in overcoming problems for school progress.

Figure 2. Implementation of the KKG (Teacher Working Group)

Strengthening collaboration between teachers is also carried out in a larger scope with the hope of gaining more literature and experience to improve the professionalism of SDN 1 Srobyong teachers. This can be seen from participation in the implementation of the KKG learning community on May 22 2024 at SDN 6 Jambu, participants from 10 schools that are members of Dabin III, Mlonggo District, Jepara Regency. The Gugus Elang KKG held training with the theme 'ice-breaking is fun and fun for learning'. The training was guided by a speaker named DS as the new principal at SDN 6 Jambu with a decree dated 1 May 2024. The training participants were attended by representatives of the teacher community from various schools, one of which was attended by teachers from the SDN 1 Srobyong learning community.

The training with the title 'Interesting and Fun Ice Breaking: Exciting and No Boring So that Learning is Interesting and Enjoyable' provides a means for teachers to collaborate regarding learning strategies that can be applied in their respective classes later. The enthusiasm and participation of the participating teachers were visible throughout the Speaker guiding this training. The enthusiasm of the participants was shown by their enthusiasm for following the ice-breaking practice guided by the speaker. He also directed the collaboration of participants to group according to their respective learning communities to prepare interesting and fun icebreakers of their creation. So there are many examples of ice-breaking activities shown in this community training activity.

The results of an interview with one of the participants who is a teacher from the SDN 1 Srobyong learning community explained that this training was very useful because after attending the training they gained various knowledge regarding the application of interesting and fun ice-breaking. This teacher with the initials F also said that he was more motivated to create more active, creative, and innovative learning methods. This opinion was also agreed with by most of the other participants at the end of the training session, expressing interest in having other fun learning ideas and innovations. This community activity shows that the teacher community can be a means of collaboration between teachers to share knowledge and experience that is useful for developing their professionalism as teachers.

3. Collective Problem Solving

Teachers who are members of a learning community can jointly identify and overcome various challenges faced in the learning process. This collective approach not only provides practical solutions but also increases the sense of community and social support among community members. Teachers who are members of a learning community agree to discuss problems experienced in their work collectively. By having the same duties and responsibilities, it will be easier if they are handled collectively. This was stated by several teachers in this school's learning community, that it felt lighter if they worked together on assignments, such as when working on the RHK.

According to the results of the interview with the community leader, it was explained that the topics or issues discussed in the learning community meetings were adjusted to the current situation at a later date. When the research was taking place, the learning community at SDN 1 Srobyong was holding discussions regarding the follow-up to PMM. This deliberation was carried out as a form of collective problem-solving step related to the administration of the RHK (Work Results Plan) which is targeted for completion in June. Several teachers complained about this problem, such as network connections, processing time, limitations in using IT, and so on. After considering the following things, ENL, as the school principal, finally determined a learning community meeting schedule to resolve existing problems. The next learning community meeting was held with a focus on mutual guidance and direction in completing PMM follow-up.

B. Barriers and Challenges When Participating in Learning Communities

Even though the learning community has many roles, there are still several obstacles faced. The following are the results of the interview regarding the obstacles and challenges faced, such as:

1. Time Limitations

Teachers often face difficulty allocating time to participate in community activities due to busy teaching schedules. The community leader confirmed by stating that:

"The obstacle that is often faced is limited time because activities usually coincide with other communities, so it is difficult to get the opportunity to gather with the learning community" (Interview with MHW teacher, Saturday 18 May 2024 at 12:20).

He added that apart from the daily obligations of teaching in class, taking care of administration, and preparing upcoming learning materials, it is sometimes difficult to find time for learning community meetings. One of the class teachers also explained that:

"Personal obstacles as a teacher and a housewife are that when you are at home it will be very difficult to attend school community meetings either in person or online" (Interview with class V teacher with the initials FNH, Saturday 18 May 2024 at 13:00).

This shows that some teachers also have assignments in other communities, so that between communities it is difficult to divide the time for holding gatherings together. Time limitations are also an obstacle and challenge for members of the learning community.

2. Support from the School

Some schools still do not provide adequate support or facilities to carry out learning community activities. Some schools end up being less active in carrying out learning community activities, usually because the school does not yet have active teacher members. Incidentally, SDN 1 Srobyong already has a *Guru Penggerak* who actively coordinates and guides other teachers to remain active in the learning community. So that the learning community at this school has been actively implemented. This is relevant to what the head of the community said:

"Incidentally, this school already has several teachers, one of whom is me, so I was entrusted by the school to help mobilize other teachers to be active in implementing learning communities, including in implementing PMM" (Interview with MHW teacher, Saturday 18 May 2024 at 12:20).

3. Motivation

Not all teachers have the same motivation or commitment to participate, thus affecting group dynamics. There are still a small number of members who are members of the learning community whose level of awareness is less active in the learning community. Relevant to the community leader's statement was that:

"Sometimes some teachers do not carry out their duties to collaborate to advance the school, but some even feel forced to do so because of the demands of their duties. This is because teachers do not want to open themselves up to

have the will to develop together following the dynamics of education" (Interview with MHW teacher, Saturday 18 May 2024 at 12:20).

Lack of self-motivation ultimately affects your performance as a professional teacher, resulting in you only becoming a teacher whose teaching is monotonous and not varied and who uses less technology. The impact affects teaching in class which still uses traditional methods such as lectures, reading, and doing assignments, so that students do not receive meaningful learning.

C. Solutions to Overcome the Obstacles and Challenges Faced

An in-depth analysis of the results of this research shows that learning communities make a significant contribution to improving the quality of education through developing teacher professionalism. Several analysis points that can be used as solutions to overcome the obstacles and challenges faced include:

1. The importance of institutional support

Support from schools and educational institutions is crucial for the success of learning communities. Schools that provide the time, space, and resources will allow teachers to more easily participate and maximize the benefits of the learning community. School support includes the role of the principal's instructional leadership in improving teacher teaching performance. If the principal's instructional leadership role is not dominant, it may be difficult to improve teacher teaching performance to improve the quality of education. Relevant to the expectations expressed by FNS class teachers that:

"We hope that the school, including the principal, will always support it by accommodating and facilitating the implementation of the learning community, as well as paying attention to teachers' needs which are beneficial for performance to encourage teachers to be active, such as holding regular meetings for school evaluations" (Interview with class V teacher with the initials FNH, Saturday 18 May 2024 at 13:00).

2. Strategies to Increase Teacher Participation

To overcome variations in participation levels, strategies are needed that can motivate all teachers to be actively involved. For example, the development of recognition programs for active teachers, or the integration of

learning community activities into formal professional development programs. This is relevant to the teacher's explanation, ANA said that:

"Teachers' motivation needs to be increased in participating in school activities, apart from themselves, one way is by providing rewards from the school to teachers so that teachers are more enthusiastic in carrying out their duties and obligations. "If there is no external support, of course, the teacher will be more relaxed and there will be no targets in carrying out his duties" (Interview with PAI ANA subject teacher, Saturday 18 May 2024 at 13:25).

Reward and punishment seem to function in opposite ways, but in reality, both aim to make someone better, including increasing employee motivation to work. One of these studies, shows that rewards and punishments are effective in improving teacher discipline in schools (Ngatijan, 2018). Providing appreciation for good teacher performance with moral and emotional support can also help increase teacher morale. The following can be used as a strategy to increase teacher participation in developing their professional performance.

3. Technology-Based Approach

The use of technology can be an effective solution to overcome time and distance limitations. The PMM approach can be carried out through online learning platforms, the use of discussion groups via WhatsApp groups can also be a practical option for carrying out learning community discussions without being tied to place and time. In line with the teacher's statement, ANA stated that:

"The use of PMM as a topic to be discussed in learning communities is good and can help teachers become more familiar with this platform so they can overcome existing problems. Moreover, this platform can be accessed anytime and anywhere" (Interview with PAI subject teacher with the initials ANA, Saturday 18 May 2024 at 13:25).

4. Community-Based Curriculum Development

Implementation of a curriculum prepared based on the results of collaboration within the learning community can ensure the relevance and practicality of teaching materials. This also allows for quicker adaptation to changing educational needs. Development can be carried out with communities that have similarities regarding geographical location, family background, and human resources of parents and guardians which influence

the characteristics of students at school. This is a challenge for teachers to be able to develop the existing curriculum because the characteristics and levels of needs of students are different. For example, by combining several curricula to develop and refine them according to educational needs. Relevant to the FNH teacher's statement which revealed that:

"We as class teachers certainly understand the needs of our students better, each student also definitely has a different background. By sharing knowledge between class teachers, it is possible to find teaching techniques by choosing the best curriculum to be implemented later" (Interview with class V teacher with the initials FNH, Saturday 18 May 2024 at 13:00).

Overall, this research confirms that learning communities are a key element in developing teacher professionalism and improving the quality of education. By overcoming existing obstacles and challenges, learning communities can become the main driving force in transforming education for the better.

DISCUSSIONS

Increasing the professionalism of elementary school teachers, various approaches can be applied, one of which is based on studies emphasizing the importance of continuous professional development through training programs and, the application of an inductive thinking approach to develop competencies (Ahmad et al., 2023; Jamal et al., 2023; Krisnanda & Riandika M, 2023). Teaching professionalism can provide society's view of teachers' professional identity, such as confidence in their abilities and commitment to the teaching profession. In other words, perceptions about teaching can influence how teachers interpret and internalize their role as educators (Kaul, 2021). Learning communities encourage and support teacher professional development and enable the acquisition of knowledge and best practices in teaching (Khusna & Priyanti, 2023). Professional training, teacher empowerment, work time flexibility, effective communication, recognition, and rewards for performance are some of the suggested approaches (Dasor, 2024).

Through active learning communities in elementary schools, it is possible for teachers who are members of these communities to have the potential to become professional teachers. This is following the research objectives where teachers can collaborate, share knowledge, and develop their professionalism. Utilizing online learning platforms and collaborative applications allows teachers to participate in

learning communities without having to be bound by a specific location or time. The platform that has been used and studied in this research is the Platform Merdeka Mengajar (PMM) which is used as inspiration, reference, and understanding literature on how to implement the independent curriculum. The independent training in PMM can be adjusted to suit each teacher's time, which is very useful for teachers who have various activities (Prasetyaningsih et al., 2024). PMM helps teachers get inspiration, references, and understanding about how to implement the independent curriculum (Ambawani et al., 2023).

Based on the description above, this research is considered capable of helping to accommodate problem-solving and encouraging synergy of teacher professionalism to become a better and more effective teacher-learning community at SDN 1 Srobyong. It is hoped that this learning community can work together to help as a means of developing teacher professionalism in elementary schools which will ultimately have an impact on improving student learning outcomes. Overall, this research makes a significant contribution to understanding how learning communities can enhance teacher professionalism, but also recognizes several barriers that need to be overcome to maximize the effectiveness of learning communities. The advantages of this research include: providing an in-depth understanding of the role of learning communities in developing teacher professionalism in elementary schools, identifying obstacles and challenges faced by teachers in learning communities and presenting practical solutions to overcome these problems, emphasizing technology-based approaches in implementing learning communities which is relevant to current developments, and offers curriculum development strategies with the community, which can ensure the relevance and practicality of school needs.

Some limitations of this research are; time constraints, where teachers involved in several communities and other activities may experience difficulty in allocating time to participate in learning communities, the level of teacher participation in learning communities varies, which can affect group dynamics and community effectiveness, and there is still a low level of awareness about the importance of community Study. The solutions that can be provided in this research can be done by developing strategies to increase teacher participation by providing emotional support and rewards that can help increase teacher motivation to participate in learning communities, using technology as a solution to overcome time and distance limitations, carrying out joint curriculum development community to ensure the

relevance and practicality of school needs and encourage collective problem solving within the learning community, which can assist teachers in developing more effective and innovative learning strategies.

CONCLUSION

Learning communities in elementary schools have an important role in developing teacher professionalism. This learning community provides a forum for teachers to collaborate, share knowledge, improve competence, and solve problems collectively. This research identified several barriers and challenges faced by teachers in participating in learning communities, such as limited time, lack of school support, and motivation. However, with proposed solutions such as strong institutional support, strategies to increase teacher participation, technology-based approaches, and joint curriculum development, learning communities can become more effective in increasing teacher professionalism and, ultimately, improving student learning outcomes.

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