



Professional Competency Training for Teachers in Realising Excellent Schools (A Descriptive Study at SDN Gekbrong 1)

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ABSTRACT

The quality of education in Indonesia still faces various challenges, particularly in terms of achieving national education standards related to educator competence. Teachers, as the spearhead of learning, have a strategic role in determining the success of education, but many schools still lack pedagogical and professional competence, lack innovation, and have minimal ongoing training. This study aims to analyse the condition of teacher competency at SDN Gekbrong 1, identify the competency improvement strategies implemented, examine the supporting and inhibiting factors, and assess the implications for the quality of education. The research uses a descriptive qualitative approach, with data obtained through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies using the Miles and Huberman model of analysis, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and interactive conclusion drawing, while data validity is ensured through source and technique triangulation. This study is based on the theory of teacher competency (Mulyasa, 2008; Kunandar, 2011), the concept of learning organisation (Senge, 2006), and the theory of education quality management based on Total Quality Management (Sallis, 2014; Deming, 1986), as well as national policies such as Law Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers, Permendiknas Number 16 of 2007 concerning Academic Qualification Standards and Teacher Competence, and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (2023) policy regarding improving teacher competence in the digital era. The results showed that the strategy to improve teacher competency at SDN Gekbrong 1 was implemented through needs-based training, lesson study, academic supervision, the formation of learning communities (KKG), and the integration of technology in learning. The main supporting factors included visionary school leadership and support from the Education Office, while the obstacles were limited training facilities and implementation time. The implementation of these strategies has had a positive impact on improving teachers' pedagogical and professional abilities, fostering a culture of reflection and collaboration, and improving the quality of the learning process and outcomes for primary school students.

Keywords: *teacher competency, improvement strategies, standards for educators and educational personnel, quality of education, SDN Gekbrong 1.*

INTRODUCTION

Improving the quality of education is a central issue in national development, especially in facing the challenges of globalisation and the 4.0 industrial revolution, which demand superior, adaptive, and highly competitive human resources. One of the key factors that greatly determines the quality of education is teacher competence. Teachers are at the forefront of curriculum implementation and learning in schools, so their quality and professionalism have a direct impact on student learning outcomes (Sallis, 2002; Tilaar, 2011).

According to Law No. 14 of 2005 on Teachers and Lecturers, teachers are required to have four main competencies, namely pedagogical, personal, social, and professional competencies. These four competencies are the minimum standards that every educator must meet in order to effectively carry out their role in achieving national education goals. However, in reality, many teachers in primary schools still face various obstacles in achieving these standards, either due to limited abilities, lack of training, or a weak system of continuous professional development (Fitria, 2018; Suprihatiningrum, 2016).

In the context of teacher competency in Cianjur Regency, particularly at SDN Gekbrong 1, there is still a low implementation of competency-based learning, a lack of innovation in teaching strategies, and weak reflection and self-evaluation of teachers regarding learning practices. This condition can have an impact on the decline in the quality of educational services in schools, especially in achieving national education standards (SNP). Research by Elmumtazah (2025) shows that the success of primary schools in achieving national standards is highly dependent on the ability of principals and teachers to manage systematic and sustainable competency improvement programmes.

Efforts to improve teacher competency are not limited to technical training but also include strengthening managerial and organisational aspects of learning so that teachers have the independence and motivation to engage in lifelong learning. According to Hoy and Miskel (2013), human resource management in education must focus on capacity building, empowerment, and the formation of an organisational culture that supports teacher professionalism. In other words, an effective educational management approach is the key to building a sustainable teacher development system (Sudarwan, 2019).

Furthermore, Kusnandi's (2024) research shows that effective teacher competency development strategies involve needs-based planning, contextual training implementation, and professional mentoring. This is in line with the concept of a learning organisation proposed by Peter Senge (2006), whereby a good educational organisation must be able to create a learning environment for all its members, including teachers, so that they can continue to develop in line with the changing times.

In addition, the quality of education produced by schools also correlates positively with the level of teacher competence. A study by Sulastri, Fitria, and Martha (2017) confirms that improving teacher professionalism through training and academic supervision has a significant effect on the quality of the learning process and outcomes. In this framework, the strategy for improving teacher competency at SDN Gekbrong 1 must be directed not only at meeting administrative standards but also at improving academic quality, learning innovation, and student-oriented educational services.

This condition is reinforced by data from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek, 2023), which shows that most teachers in primary schools are still at an intermediate level of competency, with a need for improvement in the areas of digital literacy, differentiated pedagogy, and authentic assessment. Therefore, a comprehensive and sustainable strategy is needed to improve teacher competency to ensure the achievement of the standards for educators and educational personnel mandated by government regulations.

METHODOLOGY

The method used in this study was a qualitative descriptive method, which aims to describe and interpret data in depth to illustrate actual phenomena occurring in the field. The object of this study was the strategy for improving teacher competence at SDN Gekbrong 1 in Cianjur Regency, which included various training programmes, supervision, workshops, and learning communities. The research subjects included the principal, classroom teachers, subject teachers, and school supervisors. The research location was set at SDN Gekbrong 1, Gekbrong Subdistrict, Cianjur Regency, West Java Province, because this school is implementing various teacher competency improvement programmes in order to achieve the standards for educators and educational personnel.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. RESEARCH FINDINGS

1. Teacher Competency Improvement Strategies Implemented

a. Needs-Based Teaching Process

The main findings of this study indicate that the teaching process at SDN Gekbrong 1 has been transformed because the teacher competency development approach is based on the actual needs of teachers in the classroom, rather than through general or top-down training as is common in conventional training.

This approach began with an analysis of teacher competency needs, which was conducted through classroom observation, individual reflection, and open

discussions between the principal and teachers. Based on the results of this analysis, teachers were then given microtraining directly related to the challenges they faced in teaching, such as:

- a) Classroom management based on active student participation,
- b) Use of simple digital media (Canva, Wayground, Wordwall, and interactive videos),
- c) Designing authentic assessments and portfolios,
- d) Integration of project-based learning (PjBL) and discovery learning approaches.

This type of training is conducted on a small scale and in a contextual manner, guided by peers or the head teacher as facilitators (peer coaching). With this training model, teachers not only receive material, but also experience the new teaching process first-hand, then apply it reflectively in their own classrooms.

b. Dynamics of the Teacher Learning Process: Learning by Doing & Reflective Practice

In the context of needs-based training, the teacher learning process does not stop at the training stage but continues with reflective teaching. Each teacher is given space to:

- a) Apply the training outcomes in the classroom,
- b) Document their practices through daily notes and short videos,
- c) Discuss the results of their practices in the Teacher Working Group (KKG) forum.

This cycle resembles the Lesson Study model, namely planning (plan), implementation (do), and reflection (see). This makes each teacher not just a training participant, but an active subject of professional learning who builds knowledge through experience.

Teachers at SDN Gekbrong 1 quickly mastered their competencies because they learned in the real context of their own classrooms, rather than in a training room separated from reality. This is in line with Kolb's (1984) view of experiential learning, that effective learning occurs when individuals experience, reflect, and apply repeatedly.

c. Key Success Factors (Learning Accelerator Factors)

Several factors that accelerated the mastery of competencies by teachers at SDN Gekbrong 1 were:

- a) Collaborative Learning Approach
Teachers learned in groups, observing each other and providing feedback. This approach fostered a culture of peer learning and accelerated the

internalisation of skills.

b) Contextualisation of Training Material

Training material is compiled based on real problems in each teacher's classroom, making learning relevant and applicable.

c) Transformative Academic Supervision

The head teacher does not only conduct assessments but also acts as a coach who helps teachers analyse their practices rather than judging them.

d) Collective Reflection and Documentation of Best Practices

Each teacher presents their best practices at the monthly KKG forum. This process strengthens shared knowledge and accelerates the adoption of best practices among teachers.

e) Supportive Learning Environment

The working atmosphere at the school is open and supportive, creating a sense of security to try new things and fail without fear of blame.

d. Implications and Novelty of the Research

The novelty of this research lies in the application of the Needs-Based Training model as a strategy for improving teacher competence that is directly integrated into the daily teaching process. Until now, most teacher training has been external, detached from the classroom context, and without any mechanism for reflection or follow-up. However, this study found that teachers quickly mastered competencies because their professional learning took place in the context of their work (in-job learning), rather than outside of work.

This approach resulted in accelerated mastery of competencies through:

- a) Contextual learning based on real problems,
- b) Collaborative reflection among teachers,
- c) Continuous mentoring by the head teacher and peers,
- d) Integration of direct experience into the teacher learning cycle.

This innovation can be formulated as a needs-based teacher competency improvement model that integrates training, reflective practice, and transformative supervision in a real learning context.

This model can be an alternative policy for teacher development in primary schools, especially in areas with limited access to formal training.

e. Synthesis of Findings

Conceptually, the teaching process at SDN Gekbrong 1 has transformed from teaching for compliance to teaching for learning, where teachers are no longer passive implementers of the curriculum but active learners who reconstruct their professional knowledge. With a collaborative and reflective

needs-based approach, teachers are able to master pedagogical and professional competencies quickly, contextually, and sustainably.

2. Supporting and Hindering Factors

a. Supporting Factors

- a) Visionary and participatory school leadership.
- b) Support from the Education Office in the form of online and offline training programmes.
- c) A collaborative culture among teachers that encourages peer learning.
- d) Teachers' intrinsic motivation to continue learning and improve the quality of learning.

b. Hindering Factors

- a) Time constraints due to teachers' heavy administrative workload.
- b) Lack of training facilities and ICT equipment in schools.
- c) Irregular schedules for competency improvement activities due to the school's busy agenda.
- d) Some senior teachers are still not very adaptable to the use of learning technology.

3. Implications of Competency Improvement on Education Quality (Excellent Schools)

The results of observations and interviews show that the implementation of teacher competency improvement strategies has had a positive impact on the quality of learning at SDN Gekbrong 1. These impacts include:

- a. Increased learning innovation
Teachers are more creative in designing active and enjoyable learning activities.
- b. Teachers' professional reflection has developed
Through Learning Community (Kombel) activities, KKG and supervision, teachers are able to assess the strengths and weaknesses of their own teaching.
- c. Student learning outcomes have improved
This is demonstrated by an increase in the average formative assessment scores and student participation in learning activities.
- d. A culture of collaboration has grown
Teachers are more open to feedback and discussions about learning across classes.

Thus, improving teacher competence contributes directly to improving the quality of education at SDN Gekbrong 1, making it an excellent school in terms of both

the learning process and learning outcomes/graduates (output).

B. DISCUSSION

The results of the study indicate that the strategy for improving teacher competence at SDN Gekbrong 1 is in line with the principles of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) as proposed by Senge (2006) in the concept of a learning organisation. The school functions as a learning organisation where teachers learn from and share experiences with each other.

This finding is in line with the results of research by Permatasari et al. (2023), which states that training activities, lesson studies, and learning communities are effective strategies for improving teachers' professional competence.

The leadership of the principal plays an important role in the success of this strategy. Principals who apply a participatory leadership style are able to create a conducive working atmosphere and motivate teachers to continue learning (Wahjosumidjo, 2011).

From an educational management perspective, the strategy for improving teacher competence at SDN Gekbrong 1 reflects the managerial functions of Planning-Organising-Actuating-Controlling (POAC) as described by Terry (2006) and Mulyasa (2008):

- a. Planning: analysis of competence needs and development of training programmes;
- b. Organising: forming a Learning Community (Kombel), KKG and a quality development team (TPMP);
- c. Actuating: implementing training, supervision and learning reflection;
- d. Controlling: evaluating results through supervision and peer feedback.

In addition, the results of this study confirm Sallis' (2014) Total Quality Management (TQM) theory that improving the quality of education requires the involvement of all school elements in continuous improvement efforts.

Teachers who actively participated in competency improvement activities showed significant improvements in project-based learning practices, the use of digital technology, and formative evaluation skills. Thus, it can be concluded that the strategy of improving teacher competency through systematic, contextual, and continuous training has been proven to improve the quality of the learning process in primary schools, thereby influencing the quality of educational institutions/units, which makes schools excel.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research and discussions that have been conducted, it can be concluded that the strategy to improve teacher competence at SDN Gekbrong 1 in Cianjur Regency has had a positive impact on the

achievement of the Educator and Education Personnel Standards (SPTK) and the improvement of education quality in primary schools.

Teacher competency improvement was carried out through various planned programmes such as needs-based training, lesson study, academic supervision by the principal, the formation of a teacher learning community (KKG), and the use of learning technology. These strategies were effective because they were supported by visionary leadership from the principal, a collaborative culture among teachers, and policy support from the local Education Office.

The results of the study show that the improvement in teachers' pedagogical and professional competencies has a direct impact on the quality of the teaching and learning process, increased teacher motivation and creativity, and better student learning outcomes. In addition, a reflective and collaborative culture among teachers has grown to become a key characteristic of the school as a learning organisation.

Thus, the strategy of improving teacher competence, which is managed in a managerial, sustainable, and needs-based manner, has proven to be a key factor in improving the quality of education at SDN Gekbrong 1.

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