

High School Teacher Professionalism in Enhancing the Quality of Teaching and Learning

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Abstract

This study aims at exploring teachers' perceptions of characteristics of teacher's professionalism. This study also identifies understanding of teachers on seven criteria of teacher professionalism that are educating, teaching, guiding, instructing, training, evaluating, and reflecting. In addition, this study was conducted to observe how the seven elements of teacher professionalism have been practiced in high school classroom. The research instruments were (1) open-ended questions to explore the teachers' perception of the characteristics of teacher's professionalism, (2) fixed-response forms to identify percentage of teachers' understanding on the scope of duty of teachers' professionalism, and (3) observation checklist to identify percentage of teacher's professionalism practices in classroom. Data was analysed by using thematic and descriptive approaches. Four themes emerged from this study are students' behaviour management, teaching and learning in classroom, encouragement and Evaluation, and students' performance. The data shows that the teachers are familiar with teaching professionalism. Data also revealed that quite a high percentage of teachers understand the scope of teacher's professionalism. However, when it comes to practice, they employ it unsatisfactorily. The implication is that practice of professionalism in the classroom needs to be promoted in comparison with the other elements.

Keywords: teaching and learning, teacher professionalism, observation, quality of education

1. Introduction

Teacher's role as the conductor of the teaching and learning sessions is as important as the role of the principal (the head of the school) in administering the affairs of school. This is because when the teaching and learning activities are taking place, teacher takes the responsibility to create the classroom climate and environment based on the thorough planning and the expertise possessed, beginning from the process of executing the set induction, elaborating on the lesson content, activating students' thinking through activities, evaluating, providing guidance, to the task of making reflections on the effectiveness of the instruction in order to trace any weaknesses which need to be improved. Therefore, it is not surprising that teachers are said to be the determinants of the future of the country, since teachers are the ones who directly deal with the students, the target group who is to be moulded and developed. Thus, all of the strategies and skills employed by teachers in the classroom are considered to have big and meaningful contribution to the religion, country, and nation. A teacher is supposed to have accountability in his/her job, since this may encourage him/her to work hard and show the high sense of responsibility which will result in the feelings of pride in performing teaching roles (Cruickshan et al., 2006).

Teacher is a trained personnel who is prepared with a number of potentials, competence, and expertise in the specialized fields which need to be developed to be productive, creative and more effective, as to enable the teachers to play his/her roles in facilitating the government delivery system at the fundamental level. This has been clearly stated in the RI Law, No. 14 (2005) which suggests that every teacher needs to perform seven scopes of professional duties encompassing the roles of educating, teaching, guiding, instructing, training, evaluating, and reflecting. However, teachers are not banned from adding in any other scopes of duty in accordance with the criteria of the subject content and their creativity such as the skills of researching, writing, reporting, and documenting as these will complement the roles of teachers as the professionals.

Nowadays, the quality of teacher professionalism is improving (Mustafa, 2013). Rusyan (1997) agreed that the education discipline in Indonesia in the early 21st century has grown into the professional era. This can be seen through the affirmation that teachers regarded as professional workforces, as stated in the Law No. 20 (2003) and

Law No.14 (2005). To become a professional, a teacher is required to fulfil the three components of the teaching profession involving the elements of the knowledge base, teacher training, and practice. The knowledge base is an important base for teachers in Indonesia in the effort of achieving the vision of gaining the high knowledge, self-skills as a teacher, as well as values and positive attitudes towards the teaching profession. Contrarily, the component of the teacher training in the teaching profession rather focuses on the teacher's skills and practices in the classroom. These components aim to follow the directions of the missions which are to be accomplished through the teaching profession. Moreover, the component of practice demands the candidates of the professional workforce to implement the practical applications in their profession with the target of giving accurate and efficient service. The steadfast mastery and performance of the profession trilogy is the guarantee of the success of the implementation of the profession, which is crucial for satisfaction of the service target (Mulyasa, 2005).

2. Statement of the Problem

There are a lot of issues concerning quality in the education field such as the qualification, teaching quality, teacher's guidance and practice, quality of professionalism, as well the teacher's works (Mustafa, 2012). These qualities are closely-related to the quality of the administration performed by the leaders and stakeholders in education, limited funds, facilities, media, school climate, school environment, and support from the various parties involved. The weakness of all of the educational qualities is associated with the weakness of the teacher's academic qualifications which can accordingly influence their task performance. It is the teachers who do not show sincerity in performing their roles and concern in the improvement of their teaching quality. This is the condition that leads to teachers' poor performances (Soejipto & Rafli, 2007). This scenario certainly cannot be neglected; otherwise it will negatively affect the quality of teaching and learning, and thus eliminates the efforts done by the Indonesian government in developing the quality of education in this country, to be equivalent to the education level of the developed nations.

Schools are very influential in producing students who are knowledgeable, skilful, and having the spiritual and social values. Hence, school is the social agent which needs to be given much attention, especially in relation to the implementation of the teaching processes (Lefrancois, 1995). Teacher's roles cannot be denied. Teachers are the ones who determine the effectiveness of the instructional process based on their work motivation and professional competence (Jamal Ma'murAsmani, 2009). Despite the various endeavours made by the government in enhancing the quality of education, there are still a lot of complaints and comments given by the society regarding the calibre and quality of education as well as the instruction and process of developing students' personality. This possibly occurs due to the teachers' regularity in performing their routine tasks. This means that teachers' agenda from day to day is monotonous and always the same, although the students faced are diverse (Reigeluth et al., 1993).

Teachers are the controller of the education and teaching leadership in the classroom. Thus, teachers who are motivated and competent will produce excellent instructions. Teachers need to benefit from all of the available resources to the optimal level so that the teaching process may take place effectively and efficiently (Aminuddin, 1994). Teachers can prevent the deteriorating work performance as the result of the "burnout" phenomenon if they keep helping each other in completing tasks. A research by Morrison et al. (2005) found that the "burnout" phenomenon was caused by the high work pressure, heavy workloads, and conflict or confusions of their roles. Therefore, teachers should cooperate and communicate with each other in solving issues and problems.

3. Literature Review

In general, profession refers to the acknowledgement of the ability, potential, and expertise in doing a job. Thus, from the perspective of the terminology, profession is a field of work which has certain requirements and qualifications concerning education. This means that the scope of duty of teacher professionalism are associated with the academic qualifications and skill training since these professional duties are related to the work of minds. According to Hargreaves (1994), professionalism gives the description of the quality of the execution and implementation. Regarding teaching, the process of instructional implementation will reveal the teacher's level of professionalism, to the extent which he/she is able to play his/her roles, teacher's ability to gain students' interests, and success in producing satisfactory outcomes.

Professionalism in occupation reflects the characteristic of the work implementation which tends to employ the techniques and procedures based on the intellectual fundamentals. The bases are learnt specifically and orderly; which are then directly used for the general interests (Beeby, 1979). In the context of teaching as a professional career, teachers can be considered as the professionals or experts who are able to play their roles effectively in performing their task as educators. Professional teachers educate the students not only by delivering the content

of the textbook, but also elaborating it and expanding the knowledge possessed by relating it to the current situations and students' existing knowledge. Teachers also take the responsibility to teach, which is delivering what was implicitly conveyed in the syllabus so that it can be clearly comprehended and in line with the systematic and acceptable approach used.

Hasyim Ashaari (2008) stated that the quality of a teacher must be made a priority in the effort of developing an effective trend of education. The quality of a teacher is usually measured through his/her work performance, motivational effort, and change in students' behaviour. Students also require teacher's guidance especially in the aspect of involving the individual tasks and activities, namely preparing reports and producing paperwork, and the group activities such as doing presentations, acting, and making demonstrations. Teacher's guidance should be provided for the students to enable them to complete what is assigned successfully. This can ensure that the students fulfil the given tasks and activities with their maximal effort.

Moreover, since teacher is a leader, the commands given must be direct, clear, comprehensible, and detailed so that students can follow them in the accurate manner, without getting astray. Therefore, a teacher should not only be qualified, but also capable of showing his/her authority as an accredited professional. Peter et al. (1982) explained that every professional discipline possesses the customers who are dealt with the skills and expertise owned. Furthermore, professional tasks will never be complete without the process of training, evaluating, and reflecting on the weaknesses and flaws that need to be improved in order to increase the efficiency of the job performed. Students demand practices and trainings, since practice is the therapy of knowledge in revising information and strengthening memory retention.

In the Education Development Plan 2013-2025 (the Ministry of Education of Malaysia, 2012), it has been stated that teacher is the prime mover in ensuring the students' aspirations to be achieved. The aspirations comprised the elements of entrepreneurship (taking the initiative to create and develop own solutions, being willing to invest from own resource for that reason, and being encouraged to ensure that the solutions are implemented); resilience (developing the constructive ways of thinking and being able to face obstacles); emotional intelligence (being capable of understanding and working efficiently with others as well being able to influence the people positively); and communication skills (being able to express opinions and desires orally and in writing clearly).

Just as proposed by Mustafa (2011), teacher's roles are obvious in fulfilling students' aspiration and developing their image, since teacher possesses the accreditation and authority based on his/her qualification and experience to mould the students according to the right basis and accurate thinking. With the professional competence as well, teacher will achieve the objectives set. Due to that reason this study focuses on the seven scopes of teachers' professionalism duty are as follow:

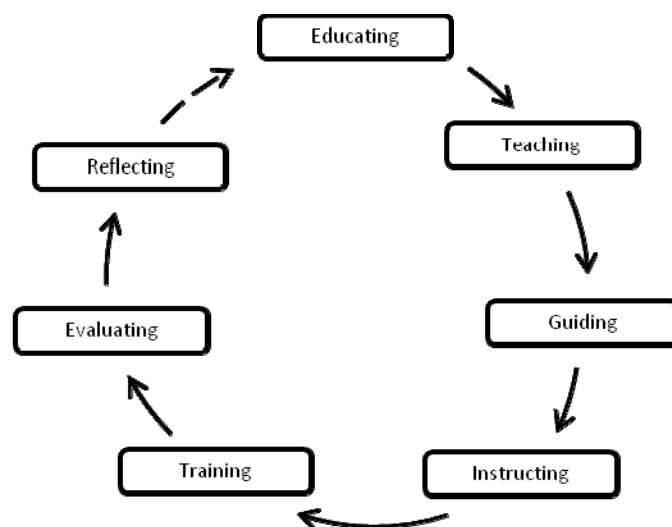


Figure 1. The cycle of teachers' scope of duty in teaching and learning

4. Purpose of the Study

This study aims at exploring teachers' perceptions of characteristics of teacher's professionalism. This study also identifies understanding of teachers on seven criteria of teacher professionalism that are educating, teaching, guiding, instructing, training, evaluating, and reflecting. Besides, this study was conducted to observe how the

seven elements of teacher professionalism have been practiced in high school classroom.

5. Methodology

This study employed the descriptive approach to give descriptions on the scope of the professional duty of the teachers of the Secondary High Schools. The sample was 10 teachers from various subjects from the selected High Schools in Pekanbaru, Indonesia, who were randomly selected.

Table 1. Distribution of the research sample

Subjects	Number of Teachers
Indonesian Language	2
Geography	1
Economy – Accounting	2
History	2
Arts and Culture	2
Biology	1

The research instruments were (1) open-ended questions to explore the teachers' perception of the characteristics of teacher's professionalism, (2) fixed-response forms to identify percentage of teachers' understanding on the scope of duty of teachers' professionalism, and (3) observation checklist to identify percentage of teacher's professionalism practices in classroom. The direct observation was executed with the aim of directly monitoring and observing the teachers' practices in implementing the activities which are associated with the scopes of the professional duties by recording the activities done by the teachers in the data card which was categorized according to the scopes of duty of teacher professionalism. Six teachers from different subjects were observed. Observation was made on the practice of the Indonesian Language teachers in analysing ideas in form of constructive paragraphs and making conclusions based on the argument of an issue. Observation on the Geography teachers was made to see the practices of the teacher in conducting the activities of analysing the change of the shape of lithosphere and *pedosphere* and its effects on animals and plants. The Economy teachers were observed on the aspect of their practices in explaining the techniques of nourishing the spirit of entrepreneurship among the students and ways of operating the school cooperation effectively. Directly observing how the History teachers analyse the causality regarding the Independence Proclamation of the Republic of Indonesia on 17th August 1945 as well as the establishment of the independent Indonesian government. Observation was made on the practices of the Art and Culture teachers in comparing the traditional arts and modern arts, as well as the development of both arts until the present days. The Biology teacher was observed on the aspect of his/her practices in making an explanation of the relationship between human activity and its effect on the nature, namely the destruction and pollution of the environment.

Data gathered from the fixed-response questions and observations were analysed using descriptive statistics. Meanwhile, data from open-ended questions were analysed by using qualitative and descriptive approaches.

6. Findings and Discussions

6.1 Themes Emerged from the Teacher's Perception of the Professionalism

Theme 1: Students' Behaviour Management

The perception of the ten teachers regarding managing students' behaviours while conducting the duty of educating was associated with the role of reproofing and improving any of the students' inappropriate behaviours; giving punishments for any misconduct with the intention of giving a lesson and educating the students so that they will be more sensitive to and more aware of the discipline and rules; solving all of the problems encountered by the students in adapting to the learning materials so that students will have higher motivation to learn; integrating positive and good values in the teaching materials; elaborating on the implicit content; and giving high expectations for the students with the hope that there will be a change in attitudes during the process of teaching and learning. Thus, teacher is the first and foremost personnel in education, as s/he shoulders an important responsibility in the implementation of teaching and learning.

Theme 2: Teaching and Learning in Classroom

Teacher's perception of the task of teaching is referred to the delivery of the learning materials which was clear

and conforming to the standards using the combination of various methods and techniques; and the use of the textbook as well the elaboration on its content continuously and progressively in order to facilitate the process of transferring knowledge to students. Teacher's perception of teaching is also concerned with the generation of the lesson plan according to the characteristics of the local area, teaching aids used, and syllabus as contained in the yearly and weekly lesson plan. In this regard, the evaluation is used for discovering the effectiveness and the accomplishment level of a program or activity, especially the instructional program (Supardiet al. 2009). Moreover, teacher's perception of the duty of educating comprised of the aspects related to the ways of dealing with students' problems and difficulty in learning, teaching them the techniques of remembering the lesson materials, introducing the techniques of learning how to learn to students, and providing the students with the tips on completing the tasks assigned according to the format and requirement specified. Additionally, teacher also takes the roles of guiding the students in understanding the duties and responsibilities concerning learning as well as the ways to overcome and encounter the challenges in learning and determining the field of the future career. Based on the teachers' perceptions of teaching and learning, it appears that they are familiar with professionalism in teaching and learning.

Theme 3: Encouragement and Evaluation

Furthermore, teacher's perception of the context of instructing centred upon the activity of briefing on the tasks assigned to ensure the production of the outcome that is perfect and conforming to the format; boosting students' motivation and spirit to complete the task with their maximal effort; demonstrating the techniques of referring to books available at the library; and thoroughly discussing the learning materials by giving instructions clearly and orderly. The implementation of evaluation functions to provide the teachers with the feedbacks which can be used as the guidelines in determining the suitability of the lesson organization and resources used (Davies 1997). In addition, teacher's perception of the duty of training is associated with the understanding students' comprehension and requirement; providing the formative and summative exercises to strengthen students' memory retention of the information gained; providing the question bank which can propel the implementation of the scheduled and periodical activities; giving students homework according to the achievement stages; using the ICT to create the exercise materials that are more challenging, innovative, and exciting; and providing the remedial and enrichment exercises to reinforce the information obtained by the students as well as get them well-versed with the content.

Thus, teacher's ability in planning and doing evaluation is highly demanded in the framework of enhancing the learning outcomes. Evaluation is a systematic process of collecting, analysing, and understanding in the effort of finding out the extent of students' achievement in the instructional information (Goodland, 1994). Therefore, teachers take the vital role of encouraging students to get them actively involved in the process of teaching and learning, and accordingly evaluate them.

Theme 4: Performance and Reflection

Teacher's perception of the role of evaluating revolved around the implementation of the evaluation which is parallel with the curriculum; the assessment of students' performance and learning tasks; the evaluation of the neatness and orderliness of students' homework and the assigned tasks; the overall evaluation of students based on the percentage of their attendance to class, cognitive ability to digest information, students' responses starting from the beginning of the lesson to the end; and the oral and written evaluation in monitoring students' performance topically and relatively. In addition, teacher's perception of the aspect of reflecting focused on evaluating and observing the overall activities of teaching and learning, deciding whether the objectives are achieved, identifying students' negative responses and finding out the factors causing the confusions, and reflecting on any weakness which needs to be improved. Teacher has to organize and ensure the aspects to be evaluated to include the element of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor (Samani Muchlaset al. 2006).

6.2 Understanding about the Scope of Professionalism Duty

Overall analysis of teachers' clarity and understanding about the scope of duty of their professionalism revealed that the scope of educating is the highest percentage (88%), followed by instructing (78%) and training (72%). This informs that most teachers in this study had a high level of understanding. This is in parallel with the previous studies in this area where most teachers agreed that creative teaching is vital (Awang et. al. 2013; Ahmad et al, 2013). On the other hand, some duties of teachers' professionalism are not well understood by most teachers, where the results showed that the level of understanding in guiding, evaluating and reflecting were between 40% and 55%.

Table 2. The level of the teachers' clarity and understanding about the scope of duty of their professionalism

<i>Scope of Teacher's Duty</i>	<i>Percentage of Understanding</i>
Educating	88 %
Instructing	78 %
Training	72 %
Teaching	62 %
Reflecting	55 %
Guiding	47 %
Evaluating	40 %

Detailed analysis based on the teacher's options revealed that all Indonesian Language teachers showed the highest level of the understanding of the scope of duty of their professionalism. This is followed by the Geography teachers, Arts and Culture teachers who scored 58%, and the History, Biology, and Economy-Accounting teachers with the scores of 43%. This indicates that the Indonesian Language teachers have performed all of the scopes of duty of teacher professionalism in leading the teaching and learning processes, followed by other teachers with the percentage of the duty performance as described in the table above.

Overall, most of the teachers were able to show a clear understanding and give a thorough description of each of the scopes of the professional duty mentioned. It can be concluded that the teachers performed their professional roles well enough although they have not reached the level of a perfect performance. Nevertheless, there were various efforts of learning, improving, and gaining trainings undertaken by the teachers.

6.3 Professional Practices in the Classroom

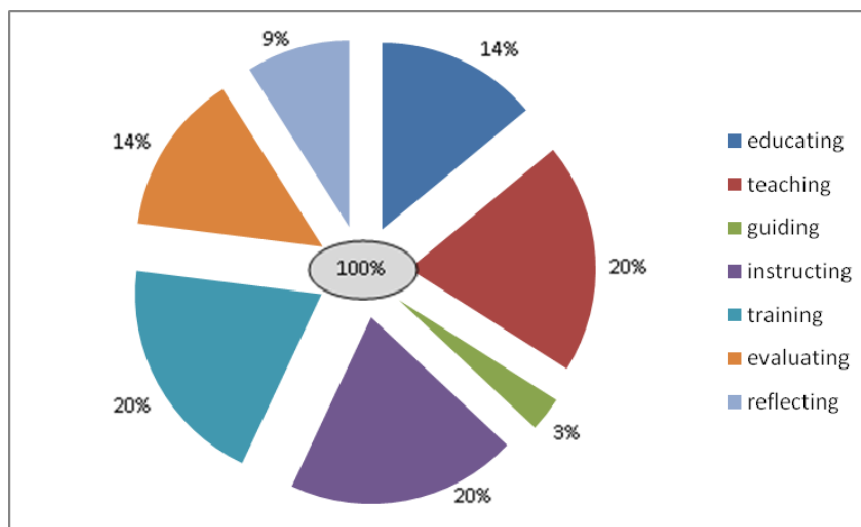


Figure 2. Teacher's professional practices in the teaching and learning sessions

By using the observation checklists, the data showed that 20% teachers often carried out the role of teaching, instructing and training in the classroom respectively. It followed by evaluating (14%) and reflecting (9%). On the other hand, 3% of teachers rarely guided students in the classroom. It can be seen that teachers of different subjects performed their professional roles with the distributions of the duty scopes as described in the pie chart. The responsibilities of teaching, instructing, and training were prioritized more than the other duties. This findings are parallel with the statement given by Soejipto and Rafflis (2009), which explained that the scopes of duty of teaching, instructing, and training were directly associated with the teacher's roles as the source of information and the driving force of the teaching and learning activities.

7. Recommendation and Conclusion

Based on the thematic analysis, it was discovered that teachers of different subjects are familiar with the

characteristics of teachers' professionalism. Furthermore, the data from the fixed-response form supports the idea of professionalism understanding. However, when it comes to real practice in the classroom, it appears that teachers' performances are unsatisfactory. This problem is rooted in the following issues. For example, the teachers' teaching method is traditional, teacher centred, exam-oriented, and product-oriented (vs. Process-oriented). The teachers are not trained enough in the latest and updated methods of teaching. Further, the teachers must satisfy the benchmark set by ministry of education. To tackle this problem, accordingly the current study has the following recommendations:

At the school level, it is suggested that the teachers encourage peer group to share experience through group observation and then evaluation. Furthermore, the application of effective and practical methods of teaching, which is process-oriented and involves all students actively, enthusiastically and attentively, is suggested.

At ministry level, it is recommended that ministry of education review teacher training services with more focus on creativity and innovation in teaching and learning in the classroom. At the research level, there should be experimental research to find the effect of application of various methods in the classroom especially in various subjects in local secondary high schools, as different schools may have different issues regarding the implementation of various teaching methods.

In conclusion, as classroom is considered as the heart of school to achieve the academic excellence, the ministry of education, the schools and the teachers need to work more cooperatively and collaboratively.

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