

Teacher's Professionalism in Teaching Social Sciences

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Abstract: This research examines the professionalism of teachers in teaching social studies at the SMP Cerdas Murni. The aim is to describe how professional teachers teach social studies at this school. Using a qualitative approach, the research applies an analytical descriptive method with data collection through observation, interviews, and documentation. The findings show that social studies teachers at the SMP Cerdas Murni demonstrate strong mastery of the four key competencies: pedagogical, personality, social, and professional. These competencies are critical in creating an effective learning atmosphere, sparking student interest in learning, developing their potential, and motivating achievement, thereby significantly contributing to the success of the learning process. The professionalism of these teachers is influenced by input factors, such as educational background and teaching experience, and output factors, including facilities and a supportive work environment. The principal actively enhances teacher professionalism through several strategies: involving teachers in professional development activities, holding regular performance evaluations, encouraging innovative teaching practices, and providing both formal and emotional support. These efforts aim to continuously improve teaching quality, positively impact student achievement, and raise overall educational standards.

Keywords: Teacher's Professionalism, Teaching, Social Sciences

A. Introduction

Education is an important element in nation building, and in it, teachers play a central role as main actors in the learning process (Intan Kusumawati, 2023). In the context of Social Sciences education, the teacher's task is not only limited to transferring knowledge, but also building students' awareness of social, political, cultural and economic issues that occur in their environment (Damanik, 2020). This is becoming increasingly important in facing the challenges of the 21st century, where critical thinking skills, collaboration and diversity are key elements in building a competitive and tolerant society.

However, one of the main challenges in social studies learning in schools is ensuring that teachers are able to carry out their duties with a high level of professionalism (Yusnaldi, 2019). Teacher professionalism involves a combination of various

competencies, including mastery of subject matter, application of appropriate learning methods, ability to utilize educational technology, and a reflective attitude to continuously improve the quality of learning (Budiman et al., 2020). Without adequate professionalism, the goal of social studies learning, namely forming students who think critically, have social empathy, and are able to face global change, is difficult to achieve (Jahro et al., 2023).

In the era of education that continues to develop, the professional competence of teachers in teaching Social Sciences subjects to students is becoming increasingly important (Sulastri et al., 2020). Teacher professional competence is one of the factors that has a significant impact on achieving learning and education goals in the school environment (Hartanti & Yuniarsih, 2018). This illustrates that teachers' professional abilities in creating quality learning have a major impact on overall educational success. The success and efficiency of the learning process is very dependent on the teacher's professional competence, especially in providing a supportive learning environment for students (Nirmayanthi, 2023).

Social studies learning has unique characteristics because it involves many multidimensional aspects, such as history, geography, economics, and sociology. Professional teachers must deeply master these materials to prevent the dissemination of superficial or erroneous information (Eka Yuliana Rahman & Abdulkarim, 2024). In addition, interactive learning methods such as case studies, group discussions, simulations, and research-based projects need to be applied to make learning more relevant and engaging for students. In today's digital era, the use of technology such as digital maps, video documentaries, and simulation tools enriches the learning experience, requiring teachers to integrate technology effectively (Rahmadani et al., 2024), (Milidar et al., 2024). Social studies learning also aims to shape students' attitudes toward diversity, social justice, and global responsibility, which necessitates teachers serving as role models for these values (Asta Jaya, 2021).

Compared to other disciplines, the challenges of teacher professionalism in social studies are distinct. Unlike mathematics or science, which often have standardized frameworks and tools, social studies require teachers to address dynamic and context-specific issues such as cultural diversity and historical interpretation. These complexities demand a balance between theoretical depth and practical application. Additionally, while all subjects face resource limitations, the integration of contemporary issues such as climate change or social conflict into social studies curricula places unique demands on teachers (Pinto & Cervantes, 2024).

The context of the SMP Cerdas Murni is particularly unique due to its emphasis on developing both cognitive and character aspects through social studies learning. Teachers here not only focus on delivering curriculum-based knowledge but also prioritize fostering students' moral and social awareness. Despite challenges such as limited resources and high administrative burdens, the school's commitment to

integrating values of diversity, equity, and global responsibility into its social studies program highlights its distinctive approach. This positions the school as a model for addressing the complexities of modern social studies education while promoting 21st century skills (Rachmat Panca Putera, Royan Rosyadi, 2023).

Professional competence refers to a teacher's ability to understand learning material thoroughly, deeply and contextually, as well as the ability to deliver material using effective, relevant and interesting methods. This competency includes the skills to analyze student needs, use educational technology, and facilitate active learning so that students are able to understand and solve various academic problems well (Rahmawati & Salehudin, 2021). This is the basis of the teacher's role as a quality educator. According to Saphire as explained by Liu, Conner, & Li explains: Saphire describes the foundations of teacher professionalism as teaching expertise, knowledge foundations, and cultural proficiency, and describes the fully professional teacher as supporting individual student learning and acting as a team player to improve schools as a whole. She adds that professionalism recognizes multiple approaches to attaining objectives, and that skillful practice means choosing well from one's repertoire to match the student, the situation, or the curriculum (Liu et al., 2023).

From the explanation above, the author concludes that teacher professionalism is a teaching skill and a foundation of knowledge. A truly professional teacher will pay attention to various approaches to achieving student needs. To achieve the status of a professional teacher, mastery of several special competencies is required (Jamin, 2018). This competency includes skills and knowledge obtained from experience in various social and professional environments, which are then internalized, mastered and applied as a means of creating value through the optimal implementation of tasks and work. Assessment of a teacher's competency is a marker of the extent to which the educator can be considered a professional (Pingkan Imelda Wuisan, Atwi Suparman, 2023). In fact, the level of competence of a teacher plays an important role in determining the success that can be achieved by the students being taught.

According to Minister of National Education Decree Number 16 of 2007 stated by Sudrajat emphasizes the criteria for abilities that a teacher must have, namely: Pedagogical competence: Pedagogical competence refers to a teacher's ability to master the theoretical and practical aspects related to the learning process, including planning and implementing learning, assessing learning outcomes, and developing students' potential to achieve optimal performance. Personality competence: Personality competence involves attributes that are steadfast, consistent, mature, wise, authoritative, an example to students, and moral. Professional competence: Professional competence includes career development, conceptual understanding and mastery of academic material. Social competence: Social competence is a teacher's ability to communicate and interact effectively with various individuals, including learners, parents, fellow teachers, and the surrounding community (Sudrajat, 2020).

A teacher must have all these competencies when teaching at school. A professional teacher always tries to improve his abilities. Thus, teachers must have sufficient ability to master all these skills so that students can easily understand the subject matter. Teachers are expected to have adequate qualifications so that learning objectives can be achieved effectively. Teacher competency is the key in carrying out the learning process. Therefore, demanding teacher competency is a natural thing to ensure the effectiveness of learning in schools. Hilmi stated the aim of learning Social Sciences is to create responsible citizens, who have the awareness to obey the law, and understand and respect applicable regulations (Hilmi, 2017).

Teacher professional competence plays a crucial role in achieving Social Sciences learning objectives. Teachers who have a deep understanding of social studies material can convey information clearly, support the development of students' critical thinking, and design appropriate learning strategies. The teacher's skills in carrying out classroom management effectively create a supportive learning atmosphere, allowing students to feel comfortable and involved in learning. Comprehensive and constructive learning evaluation by teachers helps measure students' understanding of social studies concepts. In this way, developing teachers' professional competence creates meaningful learning experiences, motivates students, and encourages the achievement of social studies learning goals

Observation results show that the implementation of learning activities by teachers is still not fully in line with the four basic competencies that an educator must have. Teachers appear not to be using a variety of learning media, which is important for increasing student involvement and making it easier to understand the material. Apart from that, teachers' mastery of learning material also appears to be less than optimal, thus potentially hampering the effectiveness of conveying information to students. In the technological aspect, teachers have not demonstrated the ability to utilize the latest technology as a learning support tool, which should be part of modern educational innovation. Teachers also appear not to pay enough attention to emotional aspects and students' needs, which are important elements in creating an inclusive and conducive learning environment. Apart from that, the behavior of teachers who should be role models for students still does not seem to reflect professional values. Based on these problems, the researcher was interested in researching further about the professionalism of teachers in teaching social studies, especially in the SMP Cerdas Murni environment, to contribute to improving the quality of learning in the school.

B. Methods

This research uses a qualitative approach by applying analytical descriptive methods. According to Moleong, qualitative research is research that aims to gain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena experienced by research subjects, such as behavior, perceptions, motivations, and actions, through descriptions using

words or language and involving other aspects holistically (Moleong, 2017). According to the analytical descriptive method is a research method that involves collecting data in accordance with the actual situation, then the data is organized, processed, and analyzed to provide an overview of the problem being studied (Anggoro et al., 2013). In other words, in analytical descriptive research, the focus is on the problems that exist when the research is conducted, where the results are then processed and analyzed to reach relevant conclusions.

The qualitative approach was chosen because it is suitable for exploring in-depth information about the phenomenon that is the focus of the research, namely teacher professionalism in social studies learning at SMP Cerdas Murni. The analytical descriptive method is used to provide a comprehensive and systematic description of how teachers apply their professionalism, both from the aspect of mastery of material, use of learning methods, utilization of technology, to the ability to build relationships with students. The researcher aims not only to describe the existing situation, but also to analyze the factors that influence the level of professionalism, so as to provide more in-depth and relevant insights in the context of improving the quality of social studies learning in the school.

This research was conducted at SMP Cerdas Murni, located at Gg. Education, Jl. Beringin No.33, Pasar V, Medan Tembung District, Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatra. The sampling technique in this study used purposive sampling technique. The main informant in this research is the principal at the SMP Cerdas Murni. The key informants consisted of Mrs. Rahmi Nurdin Tanjung and Mrs. Afrida Nasution. In addition, there were 17 additional informants, consisting of 15 students and 2 teachers at the school. The data collection techniques used in this research include observation, interviews, and documentation. To ensure the validity of the data in this study, triangulation techniques were used, including source triangulation, technique triangulation, and time triangulation. This approach helps in obtaining a more comprehensive picture. In addition, this study adhered to the principles of research ethics by ensuring that each participant gave informed consent to participate.

C. Results and Discussion

Test Research Instruments

Professional competence refers to a teacher's ability to understand subject matter deeply and thoroughly, and to teach that material in a way that helps students understand academic problems. This ability is very important for teachers in carrying out their duties as effective educators. Teacher competency includes four main aspects that support each other in improving the quality of education. Each competency has a significant role in creating a learning environment that is effective, interactive, and supports student development. The following is a further discussion regarding the four competencies possessed by social studies teachers at the SMP Cerdas Murni:

1. Pedagogical Competence

Pedagogical competence is one of the important aspects that a teacher must have to achieve effectiveness in the learning process. This competency refers to the teacher's ability to understand the characteristics of students, design, implement and evaluate the learning process effectively and educationally. Based on the results of research conducted through interviews and observations at the SMP Cerdas Murni, there are several interesting findings regarding the pedagogical competencies possessed by social studies teachers, which will be described as follows:

a) Teacher Education Background

Based on the results of interviews with two social studies teachers, Mrs. Rahmi Nurdin Tanjung and Mrs. Afrida Nasution, it is known that both of them have educational backgrounds that are not completely linear with the subjects taught. Mrs. Rahmi is a graduate of Bachelor of Accounting Education from Medan State University, while Mrs. Afrida is a graduate majoring in Economic Education. The principal, Mr. Dede Noviandi, also confirmed that the social studies teacher at the school came from an accounting and economics educational background, not specifically from the social studies study program. Even though it is not completely linear, the observation results show that both teachers are able to adapt and teach social studies competently. They rely on additional training and external resources such as books and the internet to deepen their understanding of social studies material. This shows that even though their academic backgrounds are not completely compatible, both teachers are trying hard to master the material being taught.

b) Mastery of Study Material

Mastery of subject matter is a crucial aspect of pedagogical competence. Based on the results of an interview with Mrs. Rahmi Nurdin Tanjung, she stated that she was actively improving her competence by participating in training and reading various literature and internet sources. This is also supported by a statement from the English teacher, Mrs. Miranti, who witnessed the way Mrs. Rahmi taught well in class. A statement from a class VII student, Dea Angelina Ramadhani, also shows that Mrs. Rahmi is able to explain the material well without always relying on textbooks, especially on memorized topics such as the names of provinces. Observations made by researchers also show that Mrs. Rahmi masters social studies material well when teaching in class. This confirms that even though their educational background is not from social studies, their ability to master the material is still maintained.

c) Learning Planning and Syllabus

Teachers' pedagogical competence can also be seen from their ability to plan learning through creating Learning Implementation Plans and syllabi. Based on the results of the interview, Mrs. Rahmi emphasized that making lesson plans and syllabi is an obligation set by the school. This is supported by the principal's statement which states that every teacher is obliged to prepare lesson plans and syllabi as part of their responsibilities. Observation results show that teachers at the SMP Cerdas Murni do prepare lesson plans and syllabus before carrying out learning. With good planning, it is hoped that the learning process can take place in a more structured manner and achieve the desired goals.

d) Motivation and Support to Learners

Another aspect of pedagogical competence is the teacher's ability to provide motivation and support to students. Based on the results of interviews, both with Mrs. Rahmi and several students, it appears that the social studies teacher at the SMP Cerdas Murni consistently gives praise and support to students for their achievements. For example, Mrs. Rahmi gave her appreciation to student Zahra who managed to get a high score in the social studies subject, which then increased the student's enthusiasm for learning. This approach is very important in creating a conducive learning atmosphere and building student self-confidence. By rewarding effort and achievement, teachers not only help students understand the subject matter but also motivate them to continue to excel.

e) Use of Learning Media

However, in terms of the use of learning media, the results of observations show that the social studies teachers at this school have not optimally utilized various learning media. Mrs. Rahmi revealed that the use of media, such as projectors (in focus), was only done alternately due to limited school facilities. Class VII student, Syakira, said that the teacher sometimes brought pictures as visual aids, but the frequency was not consistent. In fact, the use of learning media can help increase students' interest in learning and make it easier to understand the material, especially on abstract or complex topics. Thus, this aspect is an area that needs to be improved by social studies teachers at the Smart Middle School Foundation School so that learning becomes more interactive and effective.

Based on the findings of this research, it can be concluded that the social studies teacher at the Smart Middle School Foundation School has demonstrated good mastery of pedagogical competencies, especially in terms of mastery of material, lesson planning, and providing motivation to students. However, there are still weaknesses in terms of using more diverse and interactive learning media. Therefore, further efforts are needed to increase the use of learning media to create

a more interesting and effective learning atmosphere for students. Overall, the pedagogical competencies possessed by social studies teachers at the SMP Cerdas Murni contribute positively to the creation of a conducive learning environment, although there is still room for improvement, especially in maximizing the use of learning media.

2. Personality Competencies

Personality competency is a key quality that enables teachers to be role models with strong, wise, and ethical characteristics, positively influencing students' character development alongside academic success. At the SMP Cerdas Murni, Mrs. Rahmi Nurdin Tanjung, a social studies teacher with over 10 years of experience, exemplifies excellent personality competence. Observations and interviews with colleagues highlight her role as a respected figure. Mrs. Miranti, an English teacher, describes her as a role model, while Mrs. Fariza, a Mathematics teacher, notes her ability to create a cheerful and engaging learning atmosphere. Her simple and honest nature is well-liked by students, further reflecting her outstanding personality competence.

Further observations showed that Mrs. Rahmi not only taught the subject matter, but also set a real example in behavior and appearance. Mrs. Rahmi's way of dressing, which is always neat and polite, is one of the aspects that stands out, reflecting the professionalism of an educator. Her clothing choices not only conform to modesty standards, but also provide an example to students about the importance of maintaining an appropriate appearance in an educational environment. Apart from that, his attentive and wise attitude in interacting with students makes him a role model who is respected by his students.

Mrs. Rahmi's personality competence is further reflected in her good morals and discipline. According to colleagues Mrs. Miranti and Mrs. Fariza, she consistently demonstrates respect and politeness both in and out of the classroom, speaking softly, treating all students fairly, and adhering to rules. Observations reveal her objective assessment of students' work, making students feel valued for their efforts. Additionally, her discipline is evident in her punctuality and adherence to teaching schedules, as highlighted by interviews and research observations. This professionalism serves as a positive example for students, emphasizing the importance of time management and respect for others.

Mrs. Rahmi's demonstrates a strong, thoughtful and authoritative character in her interactions with students, balancing firmness with caring, earning their respect. She emphasizes academic success and positive character building through advice, motivation and recognition of achievements, positioning herself as both teacher and mentor. Interviews and observations highlighted her mastery of personality competencies, which was evident in her exemplary behavior, good morals, and mature character. Her consistency in teaching duties and time discipline further

contribute to a conducive learning atmosphere, fostering academic excellence and student character development.

Based on the results of interviews and observations, it can be concluded that social studies teachers at the Cerdas Junior High School Foundation School, especially Mrs. Rahmi, have shown good mastery of personality competence. This is evidenced by her ability to be a role model for students, show good morals, and have a strong, mature, wise and authoritative character. In addition, her consistency in carrying out teaching duties and time discipline are important aspects that contribute to creating a conducive learning atmosphere. Mrs. Rahmi's personality competence plays a major role in building a learning environment that not only focuses on academic achievement, but also on positive character building among students.

3. Social Competence

Social competence is essential for educators to foster an inclusive and supportive learning environment. It encompasses the ability to interact effectively with students, colleagues, parents, and the community, as well as proficiency in information and communication technology in the digital era. At the SMP Cerdas Murni, research highlights that social studies teacher Mrs. Rahmi Nurdin Tanjung demonstrates exceptional social competence. She fosters student social interactions by creating an environment that encourages communication, collaboration, and mutual respect for diverse perspectives, as revealed through interviews.

As stated by Mrs. Rahmi, she often uses the group discussion method which requires students to share ideas and work together to complete assignments. This strategy not only improves understanding of the material, but also develops students' social skills, such as the ability to communicate, work together, and respect other people's opinions. This is in accordance with the findings obtained from observations, where Mrs. Rahmi always gives full attention when students speak, so that students feel appreciated and heard. The empathetic attitude shown by Mrs. Rahmi makes her a teacher who is liked by students, because they feel comfortable and supported in the learning process.

A teacher's social competence is reflected in their ability to build relationships with colleagues, parents, and the community. Based on interviews, Mrs. Rahmi is described as humble and approachable, fostering harmonious working relationships and a collaborative atmosphere among colleagues. This support enhances teacher professionalism through knowledge and experience sharing, benefiting both classroom teaching and broader school activities. Additionally, Mrs. Rahmi demonstrates effective communication with parents, actively engaging in discussions about students' development to foster strong school-family collaboration, which supports student success. Her ability to connect with the community helps build a positive school image and create wider social networks to support educational

initiatives.

Based on the results of interviews and observations, it can be concluded that the social studies teachers at the SMP Cerdas Murni, especially Mrs. Rahmi, have demonstrated good mastery of social competencies. This can be seen from his ability to develop social interaction in the classroom environment through group discussion activities, as well as his ability to communicate effectively with students, colleagues, parents and the community. Mrs. Rahmi's humble attitude, empathy and listening skills create an inclusive and supportive learning environment, which ultimately improves the quality of social studies learning in schools. Thus, the social competence possessed by teachers is not only important for creating a conducive learning atmosphere, but also has an impact on good relations with various parties who support the educational process. This proves that social competence is one of the keys to improving teacher professionalism and the quality of education at the SMP Cerdas Murnis.

4. Professional Competence

Professional competence is a teacher's ability to master subject matter in depth and the ability to convey this material in a way that is relevant and interesting to students. This competency includes a comprehensive understanding of academic material, career development, and the ability to align learning concepts with the real life needs and context of students. At the SMP Cerdas Murni, this ability is reflected in the teaching practices of social studies teachers, especially Mrs. Rahmi Nurdin Tanjung.

The research results show that social studies teachers at the SMP Cerdas Murni, like Mrs. Rahmi, actively participate in various training to improve their professional competence. Based on interviews, Mrs. Rahmi revealed that she had participated in a number of trainings, such as KTSP 2006 training, Curriculum 2013 (K13) training, as well as the Merdeka Curriculum training which she recently participated in. These trainings help him understand changes in the curriculum and update teaching strategies according to the demands of the times.

Support from the school is also very important in teacher professional development. Based on an interview with the principal of the SMP Cerdas Murni, Mr. Dede Noviandi, the school regularly holds training and workshops aimed at strengthening teachers' mastery of the material. One of the mandatory programs that is emphasized is the Independent Learning Platform (PMM), which requires teachers to issue certificates at least twice a year as proof of increased competency. These activities not only help teachers understand the new curriculum but also equip them with the skills needed to implement more effective and relevant learning.

Professional competence is not only seen from participation in training, but also from the teacher's ability to convey material contextually. Mrs. Rahmi shows this ability by relating social studies material to everyday life. In the interview, he gave an example

of how topics such as socializing can be linked to the importance of maintaining good relationships and working together in everyday life. Apart from that, he also instills practical values, such as maintaining cleanliness and carrying out religious obligations, as part of learning in Islamic-based schools.

Mrs. Rahmi effectively enhances students' understanding by connecting theoretical material with real-life examples, such as teaching social interaction skills for both school and home settings, as noted by class IX student Khaidir Al Azam. Her professional competence is further demonstrated by her ability to maintain students' focus through varied teaching methods, including ice-breaking, educational games, and outdoor learning, creating a dynamic and engaging classroom atmosphere. Observations reveal her interactive teaching style, using a clear, expressive, and enthusiastic voice. Class VIII student Ci Kesya Lufita highlights her humor and storytelling skills, which keep students focused and enjoying the learning process, making her a respected and well-liked teacher.

The social studies teacher at the Smart Middle School Foundation School demonstrates strong professional competence, as evidenced by participation in relevant training and the ability to present material connected to real life. Their creative and interactive teaching methods effectively maintain students' focus, contributing to improved learning quality and academic achievement. By continuously enhancing contextual teaching skills and attending training, the teacher equips students with both academic knowledge and practical life skills.

Overall, the mastery of pedagogical, personality, social, and professional competencies is crucial to a successful learning process. Teachers with these competencies create effective learning environments, inspire student interest, and help develop their cognitive, affective, and psychomotor potential. The social studies teacher at this school exemplifies these qualities, making a significant impact as a competent educator who motivates students to learn and excel.

Factors that can influence teacher professionalism in teaching social studies at the SMP Cerdas Murni

Factors that influence teacher professionalism can be differentiated/grouped into two parts, namely from an input perspective and an output perspective. What is meant by input perspective are things that exist within the teacher's personality. Apart from that, there are also output factors that come from the environment around the teacher. The following are factors that can influence teacher professionalism in teaching social studies at the SMP Cerdas Murni.

1. Input Perspective

The following is an input perspective that can affect the professionalism of teachers in teaching social studies learning at the SMP Cerdas Murni:

a) Educational Background

Based on the results of interviews with teachers and school principals, it is known that the social studies teachers at this school have educational backgrounds that do not directly come from the social studies field of study. For example, Mrs. Rahmi Nurdin Tanjung has a Bachelor of Education degree in Accounting from Medan State University. Likewise with Mrs. Afrida Nasution, who graduated with a Bachelor of Education in Economics. This was confirmed by the school principal, Mr Dede Noviandi, who stated that the social studies teachers at his school had an educational background in economics and accounting, because most of them were senior teachers who had been teaching at the school for a long time.

Even though they do not have a direct background in the field of social studies, the competence of teachers at the SMP Cerdas Murni is still supported by additional training and professional certification. Observation results show that Mrs. Rahmi, for example, has obtained an educator certificate since 2015. This certificate is formal proof that a teacher has met the competency standards set by the government and is fit to teach. This kind of certification is very important because it shows that a teacher not only has theoretical knowledge, but also practical skills to deliver the material effectively,

b) Teaching Experience

Teaching experience is the amount of time and various situations that a teacher has experienced while carrying out his profession in educating and teaching students inside or outside the classroom. Teaching experience is also an important factor in teacher professionalism. Mrs. Rahmi Nurdin Tanjung has been teaching for 19 years. This experience gives him an edge in creating an effective learning atmosphere, understanding students' emotional needs, and adapting learning strategies to classroom situations. Mrs. Afrida Nasution has experience teaching in several schools before joining the SMP Cerdas Murni. He seems skilled in managing class dynamics to maintain a conducive learning atmosphere.

The results of observations show that the long experience of these two teachers helps them in implementing varied and adaptive learning methods. This experience also increases their sensitivity to students' needs and their ability to face various learning challenges. The teaching experience possessed by the two social studies teachers at this school has made a major contribution to their professionalism, especially in terms of classroom management, application of

learning methods, and adaptation to curriculum changes.

The following is an output perspective that can influence teacher professionalism in teaching social studies at the SMP Cerdas Murni:

2. Input Perspective

The following is an output perspective that can affect the professionalism of teachers in teaching social studies learning at the SMP Cerdas Murni:

a) School Facilities and Environment

School facilities and environment refer to the facilities and infrastructure available at the school as well as the physical and social conditions that influence the learning process. The availability of complete facilities and a supportive school environment greatly influences the learning process. Good facilities and environments have benefits, namely: increasing students' motivation to learn through a comfortable and interesting atmosphere, encouraging creativity and innovation in teachers' teaching methods, facilitating access to various learning resources, such as technological devices or textbooks, creating a comfortable learning atmosphere, so that student concentration is more optimal.

Based on the results of the interview, the facilities available at the SMP Cerdas Murni support teachers to teach professionally. The school principal, Mr Dede Noviani, stated that facilities such as teaching equipment, in focus and learning media are always provided according to teacher needs. The social studies teacher, Mrs. Afrida Nasution, also confirmed that the school was able to meet the needs of teacher facilities to support the teaching and learning process. Mrs Rahmi Nurdin Tanjung highlighted facilities such as buildings, in focus and the internet, which were considered to be very helpful in the teaching process.

The results of the researcher's observations show that the SMP Cerdas Murni has facilities such as comfortable classrooms, a computer laboratory, sports fields (basketball, futsal, badminton, volleyball), as well as a multimedia language laboratory. In addition, an organized school layout, a clean physical environment, and friendly social relations among students, teachers, and staff create a positive learning atmosphere.

Based on the description above, the researcher concludes that the complete facilities and supportive physical and social environment at the SMP Cerdas Murni have created a conducive learning atmosphere, thereby supporting teachers to carry out their duties professionally. This support also has a positive impact on student motivation and comfort during learning.

b) Supportive Work Environment

A supportive work environment at the SMP Cerdas Murni plays an important role in improving teacher professionalism. With a positive atmosphere and support from colleagues and leaders, teachers feel motivated and appreciated. Access to adequate facilities and opportunities to take part in training encourage teachers to continue developing their teaching skills. All this not only increases teacher confidence, but also has a positive impact on the quality of learning in the classroom, creating a productive and inspiring educational atmosphere.

Based on the results of the interview, Mrs. Rahmi Nurdin Tanjung said that support from the school principal, such as providing facilities and training opportunities, is one of the motivations for teachers to continue to improve their professionalism. Mrs. Afrida Nasution emphasized that good working relationships with fellow teachers help overcome difficulties in the teaching and learning process, both through input and motivation.

The results of the researcher's observations show that the working relationship between teachers and staff at the SMP Cerdas Murni is very good. Teachers share learning materials, teaching strategies, and creative ideas. This collaborative work environment supports the development of teacher competency and creates a productive work atmosphere.

Based on the description above, the researcher concludes that the work environment at the SMP Cerdas Murni allows teachers to carry out their roles professionally. Support from fellow teachers, principals, and staff increases teachers' motivation and confidence, which directly positively impacts the quality of their teaching in the classroom.

Based on the description above, the author concludes that the factors that influence teacher professionalism in teaching social studies at SMP Cerdas Murni can be categorized into two perspectives: Namely the input perspective which includes educational background and teaching experience, and the output perspective which includes facilities and a supportive school and work environment. All of these factors are interrelated and influence teachers' ability to teach effectively and professionally, as well as create an optimal learning environment for students at SMP Cerdas Murni.

Efforts Made to Improve Teacher Professionalism in Teaching Social Studies at the SMP Cerdas Murni

Various steps and efforts taken by the principal of the SMP Cerdas Murni in increasing teacher professionalism in teaching social studies are as follows:

1. Involving Teachers in Teaching Potential and Ability Development Activities

Involving teachers in activities that support their potential and abilities in teaching is an important strategic step to improve the quality of education. This strategy not only improves teachers' professional competence, but also has an impact on the effectiveness of the learning provided to students. At the SMP Cerdas Murni, the principal plays a key role in ensuring teachers are actively involved in various development programs.

Teacher participation in development activities, such as training, seminars, workshops, or professional conferences, has a number of benefits, including: Teachers gain knowledge about the latest teaching methods, classroom management strategies, and learning evaluation techniques, Teachers can deepen their understanding of the subject matter, especially in the field of social studies, providing teachers with the opportunity to build networks, share experiences, and increase self-confidence in teaching. Teachers who participate in training tend to be more creative and innovative in designing learning.

Based on interviews conducted, the school principal, Mr. Dede Noviandi, provided support in the form of transportation facilities for teachers attending training or technical guidance. The social studies teacher, Mrs. Rahmi Nurdin Tanjung, appreciated the role of the school principal in providing information and encouragement to attend training, such as the Olympics or similar activities, as well as providing the necessary facilities.

Based on the results of observations, the principal not only provides facility support but also time flexibility for teachers participating in training. This can be seen from the school principal's policy of giving special permission to teachers to attend training without disturbing their teaching duties. Apart from that, the school principal also arranges substitute schedules or assigns other teachers temporarily, so that tasks at school continue to run smoothly.

From the results of interviews and observations, it can be concluded that the principal at the SMP Cerdas Murni actively involves teachers in various activities to develop their potential and abilities. This support includes providing transportation facilities, information about training programs, and arranging flexible work schedules. This strategy shows the school's commitment to improving teacher professionalism, which ultimately has a positive impact on the quality of learning. With this policy, the SMP Cerdas Murni has created a conducive environment for developing teacher competency, so that it can support the maximum achievement of educational goals.

The principal's policy in supporting teacher professional development is in line with (Guskey, 2002) research, which states that professional training has a significant impact on changes in teacher behavior and effectiveness in teaching. Additionally,

(Desimone, 2009) emphasized the importance of institutional support in facilitating teacher training, as was done by the principal of SMP Cerdas Murni. This approach also supports the principles of continuous professional learning as explained by (Timperley, 2011), which highlights the importance of continuous learning to improve teacher competence and its impact on the quality of learning.

2. Hold a Teacher Performance Evaluation Meeting

Holding evaluation meetings at schools is one of the strategic steps aimed at improving the quality of education. In this forum, teachers and school management can discuss achievements that have been achieved, obstacles faced in the classroom, and design solutions to existing problems. This evaluation not only helps identify the strengths and weaknesses of the learning process, but also functions as a means of coordination that strengthens relationships between school principals, teachers and students.

Benefits of teacher performance evaluation meetings: Evaluation meetings provide teachers with the opportunity to express the challenges they face, such as difficulties in delivering material, less than optimal student responses, or limited facilities. Principals can monitor teacher performance directly through discussions in meetings, evaluating their achievements, as well as providing constructive feedback to increase professionalism. This forum allows teachers and school management to find joint solutions to existing problems, such as innovation in teaching methods, curriculum adjustments, or increasing the use of learning technology. With regular meetings, teachers feel supported and appreciated for having space to express their aspirations. This can increase their enthusiasm for teaching.

Based on the results of the interview, Mr. Dede Noviandi, principal of the SMP Cerdas Murni, evaluation meetings are held every year as a form of assessment of teacher performance. The principal, together with the deputy principal for curriculum, is responsible for evaluating subject teachers, including social studies teachers. The social studies teacher, Mrs. Afrida Nasution, explained that the school principal also directly monitors the learning process in class through an observation schedule, ensuring that each teacher carries out their duties well. After monitoring, the principal holds a discussion to provide input and develop improvement strategies.

Based on the results of observations, researchers directly observed the implementation of evaluation meetings involving school principals and teachers. This meeting discussed various issues faced by teachers in the classroom, as well as providing recommendations to improve the quality of teaching. This shows that evaluation meetings are not just an administrative routine, but also a moment of constructive reflection and coordination.

From the results of interviews and observations, it can be concluded that the principal

at the SMP Cerdas Murni actively carries out regular teacher performance evaluation meetings. Through this activity, obstacles faced by teachers in the classroom can be identified and overcome together. Apart from that, this evaluation also creates a good coordinating relationship between the principal and teachers, as well as between teachers and students.

Teacher performance evaluation meetings as held at the SMP Cerdas Murni are in line with the concept put forward by (Danielson, 2007), which emphasizes the importance of performance evaluation as an integral part of teacher professional practice. Additionally, (Glickman, C. D., Gordon, S. P., & Ross-Gordon, 2014) explained that the principal's role as an instructional leader is very important in providing constructive feedback to support teacher professional development. This strategy not only improves teacher performance, but also has a direct impact on the quality of student learning.

3. Give encouragement to teachers

Providing encouragement to teachers is a strategic step taken by school principals to increase professionalism and motivation in carrying out their duties. This encouragement not only creates a positive work environment, but also encourages teachers to continue to develop and improve the quality of teaching. This form of support can be provided through formal awards, such as financial incentives, or appreciation in non-material forms such as recognition of teacher contributions.

Based on the results of the interview, the Principal of the SMP Cerdas Murni, Mr. Dede Noviandi, explained that the teacher appreciation program does not only come from the school but is also supported by the foundation. The incentives provided include cash awards with varying amounts depending on the level of achievement of the students being supervised by the teacher, from district to international level. A similar thing was expressed by Mrs. Fariza, a Mathematics teacher, who stated that awards in the form of cash incentives were given to teachers who successfully guided students to win competitions, including district and national Olympiads.

Based on the results of observations, researchers noted that formal awards in the form of cash and certificates are often given directly by the foundation to teachers who succeed in scoring student achievements, such as in district-level Olympic competitions in 2023. This support shows that recognition and appreciation for teacher performance is part of integral to the foundation's policy to motivate teaching staff.

Based on interviews and observations, it can be concluded that SMP Cerdas Murni actively provides encouragement to teachers through formal recognition and awards. Financial incentives and moral appreciation have a positive impact on teachers' professionalism and dedication in carrying out their duties. This step creates a

conducive work environment, where teachers feel valued and supported, so they are able to provide higher quality teaching and have an impact on student achievement.

The Principal of the SMP Cerdas Murni has succeeded in implementing various strategies that support increasing teacher professionalism, especially in social studies learning. Various steps are taken to create a conducive work environment, starting from encouraging teacher participation in training and workshops with the support of transportation facilities and flexible time arrangements, to holding regular meetings to evaluate performance and find solutions to obstacles faced during the learning process. Apart from that, awards and appreciation in the form of formal rewards and verbal recognition are given to teachers who excel, especially those who are able to guide students to achieve achievements at various levels. This effort not only increases teacher motivation but also creates a positive and appreciative work atmosphere. The principal's commitment to supporting teacher professional development has been proven to contribute to improving the quality of education in schools, especially in social studies learning. Giving rewards to teachers, as explained in this research, in line with the motivation theory expressed by (Deci, E. L., & Ryan, 2000), which states that external incentives, such as financial awards, can motivate individuals to achieve better performance. In addition, research by (Aydin, A., Sarier, Y., & Uysal, 2013) shows that a school principal's supportive and rewarding leadership style can increase teachers' organizational commitment and their job satisfaction, which ultimately has an impact on the quality of learning in the classroom.

D. Conclusions

Teacher professionalism in teaching social studies at the SMP Cerdas Murni is influenced by four main competencies: pedagogical, personality, social, and professional. Teachers at this school demonstrate good mastery of these competencies, though there is room for improvement, particularly in utilizing innovative learning media. Pedagogical competence is shown through thorough preparation and strong understanding of materials, while personality competence is reflected in wise attitudes and moral character as role models for students. Social competence involves effective interaction with stakeholders, and professional competence includes active participation in training and the relevance of learning to everyday life. Key factors affecting teacher professionalism include input and output perspectives. From an input perspective, educational background and teaching experience significantly influence teacher abilities. From an output perspective, facilities, a supportive environment, and leadership play vital roles. Efforts by school principals include participation in training, regular performance evaluations, and providing motivation, demonstrating the importance of supportive leadership in fostering teacher development. To further enhance teacher professionalism, national-level teacher competency frameworks should be implemented. These frameworks could include clear standards for developing competencies, mandatory training on innovative teaching methodologies, funding for professional development, and consistent

performance evaluations. These measures aim to create a conducive work environment for continuous improvement in teaching quality, ultimately benefiting student achievement and overall educational standards. With ongoing efforts from schools and policymakers, it is hoped that teacher professionalism will be elevated, ensuring a positive impact on education quality.

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