TEACHER PROFESSIONALITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY IN BASIC EDUCATION UNITS BASED ON INDEPENDENT LEARNING-TEACHING POLICY

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Abstract: Freedom to learn and teaching is a priority policy for the ministry of education in improving the quality of education. Of course there are many things that must be adjusted to this policy, including the professional development of teachers. Because there are many educational units that have not harmonized them. This study aims to analyze teacher professionalism development strategies based on the independent learning policy, and the obstacles they face. This research was conducted at SDIT Zia Salsabila as a school that implements an independent learning policy. The research method used is qualitative with a case study approach. The results of the study show that independent learning-based teacher professional development is divided into four keys, namely independence, competence, collaboration, and career. The development strategy is humanizing relationships, understanding concepts, building sustainability, choosing challenges, empowering contexts. The obstacles faced in the professional development of teachers are the lack of socialization by the government regarding the independent learning policy, the emergence of negative perceptions about the orientation of the independent learning policy, the lack of understanding of the concept of independent learning, the absence of driving teachers, low teacher competence, especially teacher who is still a student.

Keywords: Teacher Professionalism, Independent Learning, Independent Teaching

Abstrak: Merdeka Belajar-Merdeka mengajar merupakan kebijakan prioritas kementerian pendidikan dalam meningkatkan mutu pendidikan. Tentu banyak hal yang harus disesuaikan dengan adanya kebijakan ini, termasuk pengembangan profesionalitas guru. Sebab ada banyak satuan pendidikan yang belum menselaraskannya. Penelitin ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis strategi pengembangan profesionalitas guru berbasis kebijakan merdeka belajar, dan kendalanya. Penelitian dilaksanakan di SDIT Zia Salsabila sebagai sekolah yang menerapkan kebijakan merdeka belajar. Metode penelitian yang digunakan ialah kualitatif berbasis studi kasus. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pengembangan profesionalitas guru berbasis merdeka belajar fokus pada empat kunci yakni kemerdekaan, kompetensi, kolaborasi, dan karir. Adapun strategi pengembangannya ialah memanusiakan hubungan, pemahaman konsep, membangun keberlanjutan, memilih tantangan, memberdayakan konteks. Kendala pengembangan profesionalitas guru ialah kurangnya sosialisasi pemerintah tentang kebijakan tersebut, persepsi negatif tentang orientasi kebijakan merdeka belajar, minimnya pemahaman konsep merdeka belajar, ketiadaan guru penggerak.

Kata Kunci: Profesionalitas Guru, Merdeka Belajar, Merdeka Mengajar

INTRODUCTION

Teachers play a significant role in efforts to achieve educational goals. Trianto (2011) explains that a teacher is a profession (position) that requires unique expertise and can assume and carry out responsibilities towards his students, parents, community, nation, state and even religion related to the educational process for the nation's next generation towards the gate of intelligence. In escaping from the shackles of ignorance. This explains the heavy duties and obligations of a teacher that must be carried out, which requires a highly professional attitude in their performance. (Disas, 2017).

The teacher's professional attitude is one of the essential aspects in achieving this goal (Octavia, 2019). But to become an experienced teacher is not just mastering the fields of knowledge, strategies or learning methods; more than that, teachers must be able to motivate students to excel and develop. Thus professional teachers need to have good intellectual capacity and knowledge about the world of education to optimize the learning process. (Grangeat & Gray, 2007). On the other hand, experienced teachers also have social, moral and spiritual responsibilities towards their students so that one day they can become human beings with good potential and are also civilized for the good and welfare of a better life in the future. (Schrum, 1999).

However, it should be understood that becoming a professional teacher takes work. Teachers face many problems in fulfilling their professional attitude. The problem with teacher professionalism arises because many teachers only master knowledge but do not master several other aspects. So that it only teaches but ignores the essential value in education itself. These problems arise due to a need for more understanding of goals and professional development (Susanti et al., 2021). Therefore, both teachers and prospective teachers must know the target and develop their professionalism to develop as quality educators.

Remember that teachers as educators are a central and most important aspect in achieving educational goals (M. Anwar, 2018). Teachers need to understand their professional goals and develop their professional attitudes. Siahaan & Bayoangin (2014) believe that professionalism is essential for teachers to carry out their duties. Professional skills allow teachers to understand their duties, responsibilities and role as educators.

For this reason, to achieve quality education through professional educators, many programs have been prepared by the government under Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System and Government Regulation Number 19 of 2005 concerning National Education Standards. The quality of education is determined by the integrated improvement of educational elements, namely improving the quality of teachers supported by government policies, teacher equity, curriculum, adequate facilities and infrastructure, and a conducive learning atmosphere. (Sulastri et al., 2020).

Another highly prioritized policy by the ministry of education is the independent learning program in education units. (Yamin & Syahrir, 2020). The program aims to transform education for the realization of Superior Indonesian Human Resources (HR) who have a Pancasila Student Profile. Freedom learning is prioritized because students must have the freedom to develop themselves to be ready to face the challenges of the times and needs. (Muslim, 2022). This policy also requires teachers to be independent in teaching, and an independent teaching platform is dedicated to making it easier for teachers to teach according to students' abilities, provides training to improve competency, and works to inspire colleagues. (Baro'ah, 2020).

This policy must be in line with the professional development of teachers because if not, then teachers will grow not in line with the government's demands. Harmonizing it not all schools can quickly answer it, and many things need to be prepared, such as socialization of understanding, and the readiness of qualifications and competencies, curriculum and so on. Because independent teaching is a new policy, many educational units have yet to be able to implement this fully. As in this case, the Zia Salsabila Integrated Islamic Elementary School. Even though he has participated in free learning socialization several times until now, some problems still need to be resolved. Based on the initial observations of researchers, there are at least four main problems, namely the lack of socialization from the government, the lack

of understanding of teachers, a negative orientation towards the policy, and the incompatibility of policy demands with natural conditions in education units.

For this problem, the headmaster must first manage the teacher's readiness to carry out this independent teaching. So about professionalism, as previously disclosed, this study will further analyze the alignment between increasing teacher professionalism and the policy of independent teaching. In particular, this research will focus on two things: the strategy for developing teacher professionalism and the constraints faced in this development.

This research certainly has a distinction from other studies, so for this reason, several explorations were carried out related to previous research; this was done to find the differences in this research compared to previous research. Some previous study that is relevant, namely, developing teacher's professional attitude through improving performance (Anwar, 2020), developing teacher professionalism through training in writing scientific papers (Noorjannah, 2014), analysis of teacher professional competence (Bagou & Suking, 2020), model development management teacher professionalism in school (Ikbal, 2018), independent learning in the reflection of teacher professionalism in school (Pendi, 2020), strategy development of teacher competence; welcoming the independent learning curriculum (Alfath et al., 2022), driving teachers and their role in

independent teaching (Sibagariang et al., 2021), the role of the teacher in developing children's intelligence in the era of independent learning (Indriyani, 2022), the meaning of independent learning and strengthening the role of teachers in elementary schools (Daga, 2021), independent teaching policies in increasing understanding of learning media for teachers (Surani et al., 2022).

Previous research focused on above, analysis on harmonizing teacher professional development independent learning policies has never been carried out, so the development strategies and constraints faced at Zia Salsabila Integrated Islamic Elementary School will be the target of this research novelty. Based on the description above, it is necessary to carry out in-depth research and analysis of the efforts made by academic units in developing teacher professionalism based on the independent learning-free teaching policy.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative research method with a case study approach. As Creswell explained, case studies explore studies that start with a particular topic. (Creswell, 2012). The issue or problem in this study is the difficulty in harmonizing the increase in teacher professionalism with the independent learning independent teaching policy. This research was carried out over eight months, from January to August 2022. This research was carried

out at the integrated Islamic elementary school Zia Salsabila. The reason for choosing this research location was due to the problems at that location, and the school had participated in the socialization of independent learning-free teaching.

Collecting data using observation, interviews, and documentation studies. Observation is used to observe in depth related to the activities of school headmaster in developing teachers professionalism and teachers activities in organizing, manage learning by applying independent learning independent teaching. Interviews were structured with the school principal to obtain data on the strategy he was carrying out in developing teacher professionalism and the obstacles he faced. Meanwhile, the documentation study is related to the analysis of documents related to the independent learning-independent teaching policy, which is used as the basis for developing teacher professionalism.

Data analysis using data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion. Checking the validity of the data by triangulating the data, extending the research time, and cross-checking members. The overall research focus, flow and research procedures mentioned above, if described in chart form, will look like the figure below. The chart below is not the result of the research, but a design in the form of a schematic for the research to be carried out. Here's the chart Research focus and flow:
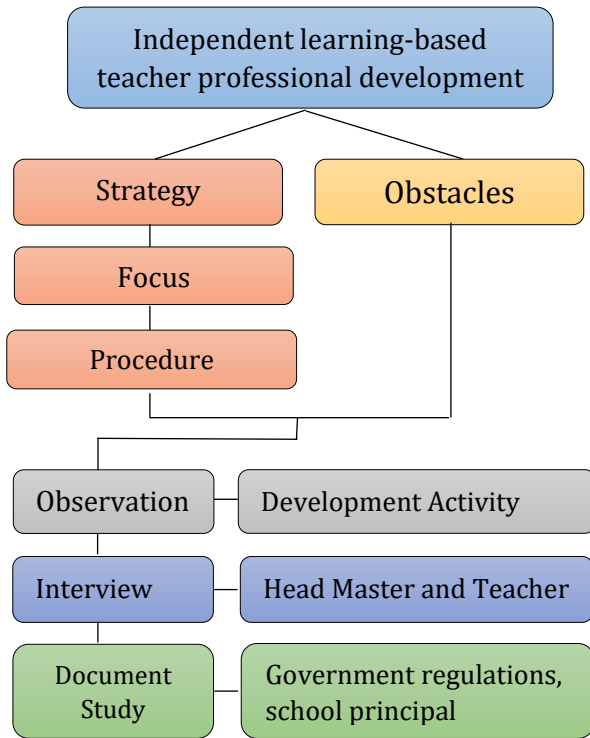
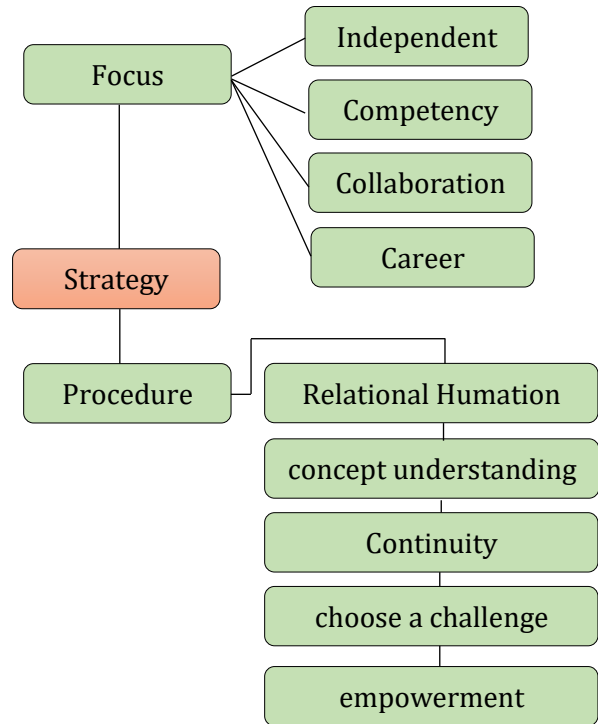**Figure 1.** Research focus and flow

Figure 2. Main Research Focus findings

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As explained in the introduction, this research focuses on strategies and constraints. Soon that basis the results and discussion are also grouped based on the focus of the problem.

Teacher Professional Development Strategy Based on Independent Learning-Independent Teaching

The research findings explain that the focus of teacher professional development in the integrated Islamic elementary school Zia Salsabila consists of four: Independence teaching, competence, collaboration, and career. The research findings also explain that there are five steps or procedures in teacher professional development: Humanize relationships, understanding of a concept, building sustainability, choosing challenges, and empowering contexts. Here's the chart:

Professional ability is essential for teachers, especially in increasing learning effectiveness. The word professional comes from adjectives that are livelihood and nouns that denote people with expertise, such as teachers, doctors, judges and so on (M. Anwar, 2018). According to Law Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers, professional work can only be done by people prepared explicitly for it, not work done by them because they cannot get another job.

In his research, Rahmat Rifai Lubis (Lubis et al., 2021) stated that teachers must be professional, whereas teachers can plan and organize learning and use media. So concerning independent learning, the professional development of teachers is aligned with several focuses, namely the principle of independence, meaning that independent learning teachers have the

opportunity to determine goals, ways and reflections of learning to continuously carry out self-development, such as: being involved in setting school and teacher performance targets, choosing training that according to their learning needs, and conduct periodic reflections on achievements and the process of achieving targets.

So the principal, in this case, Nana Mahrani, M.A stated that teachers are given convenience and freedom in developing their competencies and skills; in this case, the principal no longer imposes his will but provides the opportunity to the teacher concerned to offer training or development according to his needs and teacher's interest. With this offer, the training will be more targeted because it is under their needs and passion.

Furthermore, the principle of competence means that independent learning teachers have the opportunity to develop their competencies so that they are ready to face teaching challenges according to the field of study, the students being taught and relevant to the context, such as the opportunity to attend training according to their learning needs, the opportunity to carry out pilot projects, the chance to get quality feedback and opportunity to assess competence. (Sappaile, 2017).

Professionalism teacher requires competence under quality standards or specific rules related to professional duties. (Manora, 2019). This explains that it is not arbitrary to become a teacher because it requires particular skills or abilities to carry out the tasks and responsibilities given. As for the duties and responsibilities of a teacher, it is namely providing teaching, educating, and training students so that they become a generation that has intellectual and moral qualities (Darmadi, 2015). Then, in addition to duties and responsibilities, teachers in their profession also have multiple roles in the process of learning activities, such as: as a facilitator, informers, motivators, role models, administrators, evaluators and even an inspiration for their students (Darmadi, 2015).

In accordance with law number 14 of 2005 concerning teachers and lecturers, it is explained that there are four teacher competencies: pedagogic competence, personal competence, social competence, and professional competence. If it is associated with independent learning-free teaching, professional development must refer to the ability to master the subject matter being taught.

The teacher's duties and responsibilities are not only in mastering the material, but it is expected to have good performance to produce human resources and output that are very beneficial for the growth and development of the nation and state. For this reason, the professionalism of teachers in carrying out their duties is essential so that they can provide changes according to the needs and demands of the world of education today. (Suryana & Iskandar, 2022).

Furthermore, the principle of collaboration means that in terms of

professional development based on independent learning-independent teaching, independent learning teachers have the opportunity to collaborate with teachers and the community to produce work or achieve common goals, such as opportunities to interact with other schools, opportunities to be involved in relevant communities and opportunities do a project together. (Wahyuni, 2022).

The research findings explain that the principal of an integrated Islamic elementary school, Zia Salsabila always facilitates her teachers to interact internally and externally within a professional community. Internally, it means interactions within the internal school with colleagues or teachers across different fields of study. This is done at least once weekly, packaged as a teacher meeting. At the meeting, the teacher can convey problems while teaching and other teachers can provide suggestions and input on these issues. Externally, it means delivery as if within one region or maybe outside the region. That is between teachers in a professional community outside the school. This activity is usually packaged in the form of subject-teacher deliberations carried out in certain regions or by the ministries of education and culture, research and technology. (Kayati, 2020)

These activities are not just meetings; at these meetings, teachers can exchange ideas and thoughts related to their professional development.

Sometimes problems cannot be solved alone, but if discussed together, they can certainly be solved.

The next focus of professional development that is in line with the independent learning-independent teaching policy is a career. This means that independent learning teachers have the opportunity to recognize, choose, plan and develop a career according to their potential and aspirations by continuing to teach in class, such as opportunities to work, opportunities to introduce works through presentations, exhibitions or on the web/applications and get feedback on their work.

Zia Salsabila's integrated Islamic elementary school, under the leadership of Nana Mahrani, M.A, carries out professional development that not only fulfils job demands but also aspects of the teacher's career in the future. The various pieces of training exist not only to train them to be skilled at teaching but to train them to have sensitivity and motivation to develop their careers higher. Even this integrated Islamic elementary school provides advanced study program facilities.

The research findings also explain that the strategy for developing teacher professionalism is carried out through five procedures, namely:

The first procedure, Humanization of Relationships, means that in this case, Humanizing relationships is a way of teaching that emphasizes understanding of students' learning dispositions and growing

strength and identity as students to develop teacher, student and parent relationships that are mutually trusting, close and based on mutual agreement. This book explains concepts, describes classroom practices and demonstrates the positive impact of teaching Human Relationships.

The second procedure is understanding the concept of independent learning-independent teaching. This means that this procedure requires the teacher first to understand the idea because otherwise, it will be difficult for him to understand the direction of teacher professional development. There are various policies with which different teachers need to be familiar. Because by understanding it, will be easy to implement it in the professional development of teachers.

The third procedure, building sustainability, means that teacher professional development is not enough just once, but there is continuity of development. Periodic and structured programs define this continuity. Professional development must be well structured in terms of material development to those responsible, but it must also be periodic, having clear and coherent stages. Development is a knowledge construct or building that is gradually given.

As a professional teacher, the principle of sustainability must also be accessible to students, meaning learning practices that guide students through a directed and sustainable learning

experience through feedback and sharing good practices. So how is a teacher's effort in building sustainability when implementing Distance Learning? Here are some recommendations that can be implemented.

The fourth procedure, selecting challenges in carrying out professional duties. This procedure poses a challenge to teachers so that the professional development they receive is comprehensive and integrated. Independent learning requires teachers to be accustomed to facing challenges because the 21st century is very vulnerable to internal and external challenges. As a teacher, you should be familiar with it and be able to pass it on to your students.

Integrated Islamic elementary school Zia Salsabila often provides training to teachers, so they are skilled at delivering challenging and meaningful learning. Learning that has challenges is marked by the involvement of students to be independent, creative, and think critical. And that's all the principal strives for in developing teacher professionalism.

The fifth process provides context-empowering skills. Teachers must be accustomed to conducting learning in real-life contexts. Learning must give an accurate impression in their lives, in the sense that learning is not just theoretical notes in books but can be used in their daily lives.

In this regard, teachers who do not have the ability do not deserve to be called professional teachers. Because this inability will have an impact on student failure in

wading through real life, that is why the teacher's task is said to be not just teaching but educating them to live in the real world.

Obstacles in independent Learning-independen Teaching Based Teacher Professional Development

Before discussing the obstacles encountered, the research findings first describe that teachers at the integrated Islamic elementary school Zia Salsabila are said to be professional with the following indicators:

a. Obeying the regulations, teachers are required to carry out all government policies in the field of education and are regulated by the Ministry of Education and Culture. Therefore, the teacher must know and implement the policies that have been set. All teachers in Indonesia must comply with the established guidelines and regulations in the field of education.

b. Joined professional organizations, where teachers must have professional bodies empowered to regulate matters related to professional duties.

c. Care and collaboration with colleagues. Teachers must maintain professional relationships, family spirit, and social solidarity and create and maintain teacher-student relationships in their work environment.

d. Empathy for students, teachers must guide students to become complete Indonesians with the spirit of Pancasila. This foundation includes several principles teachers must understand in carrying out their daily duties, namely

the goals of national education, the principles of coaching, and the principles of forming a complete Indonesian human being.

e. comply with the rules at work, the teacher must create an excellent working atmosphere, in this case, the school atmosphere.

f. obeying the leader, the teacher seems always to be subject to the guidance and supervision of superiors and accepts criticism and suggestions from superiors

The obstacles faced in the professional development of teachers in the Integrated Islamic Elementary School Zia Salasabila are as follows:
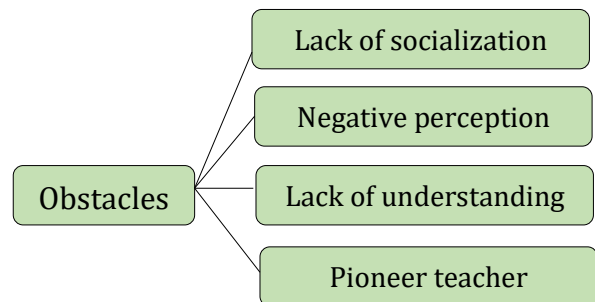

Figure 3. Second Research focus Finding

The lack of socialization from the government related to the policy of independent learning-free teaching is an obstacle for school principals in developing teacher professionalism. This is because it is still a new policy; of course, socialization has yet to be carried out massively by the government. The results of the interviews show that up to now, There have been only three teachers at the integrated Islamic elementary school Zia Salsabila participating in the independent learning-

free teaching socialization.

The existence of negative perceptions of teachers about this new policy is an obstacle to developing their professionalism. Teachers consider that the government often makes curriculum changes in the near future, and even though these changes do not always make the teachers' tasks easier, they are considered difficult for teachers; on this basis, teachers are sometimes reluctant to understand them and align them with their professional development.

Teachers' low understanding of the policy of independent learning-independent teaching is also one of the obstacles. This can be seen from several observations made on teacher-teaching activities that still seem monotonous and force the teacher's will on students, even though in this policy, learning independence is a top priority that must be given to students.

The absence of a driving teacher at Zia Salsabila integrated Islamic elementary school is also an obstacle because, as mandated by the ministry of education, an ambitious teacher is a motor for making changes in schools, including developing the professionalism of teachers based on independent learning independent teaching.

CONCLUSION

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that the independent learning-independent teaching-based teacher professionalism development strategy focuses on learning independence,

teacher competency, internal and external collaboration, and future career planning. The procedures for implementing the strategy consist of five: humanizing relationships, understanding concepts, building sustainability, choosing challenges, and empowering contexts. Obstacles to developing teacher professionalism are the lack of socialization by the government regarding the policy, negative perceptions of the orientation of the independent learning policy, the lack of understanding of the concept of independent learning, and the absence of pionner teachers.

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