

THE FAILURE OF CERTIFICATION PROGRAM TO UNIFY INDONESIAN TEACHERS' PERCEPTION ON TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM: THE CASE OF BENGKULU JUNIOR AND SENIOR HIGH-SCHOOL TEACHERS

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Abstract: Teacher professionalism has become a very important topic for teachers in Indonesia including in Bengkulu since all teachers have been and will be certificated to be competent and professional teachers; however, they may still have various different perception on the topic. The purpose of this study is to know the perception of certificated teachers on professional teachers and how they should behave in and outside the school. The data of this study were obtained through a set of questionnaire distributed to 80 already certificated teachers. The results show that the majority of teachers still have different opinion on professional teachers and how they should behave in and outside the school. This implies that the certification intensive program is not effective enough to unify the teacher's view on teacher's professionalism. It is suggested that although they have been certificated, teachers must be introduced to characteristics of professional teachers and how to be professional teachers.

Keywords: teacher professionalism, professional teacher, teacher certification program, teacher perception, professional teacher characteristics

KEGAGALAN PROGRAM SERTIFIKASI UNTUK MENYATUKAN PERSEPSI GURU INDONESIA TENTANG PROFESIONALISME GURU: KASUS GURU SEKOLAH MENENGAH PERTAMA DAN SEKOLAH MENENGAH ATAS DI BENGKULU

Abstrak: Profesionalisme guru telah menjadi topik yang sangat penting bagi guru di Indonesia termasuk di Bengkulu akhir-akhir ini karena semua guru telah dan akan disertifikasi sebagai guru yang kompeten dan profesional; namun, persepsi mereka tentang profesionalisme guru masih berbeda-beda. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui persepsi guru bersertifikat terhadap guru profesional dan bagaimana seharusnya perilaku mereka di dalam dan di luar sekolah. Data penelitian ini diperoleh melalui seperangkat angket yang disebarkan ke 80 guru yang telah disertifikasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa mayoritas guru masih memiliki pendapat yang berbeda tentang guru profesional dan bagaimana mereka semestinya bersikap di dalam dan di luar sekolah. Ini menyiratkan bahwa program sertifikasi guru tidak cukup efektif untuk menyatukan pandangan guru terhadap profesionalisme guru. Oleh sebab itu, disarankan bahwa guru harus diperkenalkan terhadap karakteristik guru profesional dan bagaimana menjadi guru profesional walaupun mereka telah disertifikasi.

Kata kunci: *profesionalisme guru, guru profesional, program sertifikasi guru, persepsi guru, karakteristik guru profesional*

INTRODUCTION

Teacher professionalism has become a very important topic for teachers in Indonesia including Bengkulu province since all teachers have been and will be certified to be professional teachers through a process of teacher certification program organized by Indonesian government. Indonesian government has declared in “Republic of Indonesia Act Number 14 on Teacher and Lecturer” that teacher is a professional educator who has a main task of teaching, educating, guiding, supervising and evaluating students at preschool, primary school and secondary school levels (Republic of Indonesia Act Number 14 Article 1 and Verse 1) since the end of 2005. In this act, the term professional is defined as the occupation or activities which is done by someone and become his or her income source to earn his or her living which requires skills, competence which meet the quality standard or a particular norms and needs profession education (Republic of Indonesia Act Number 14 Article 1 and Verse 4).

Since professionalism is a new term and concept for the majority of Indonesian teachers, it is very likely that these teachers have very different understanding and perception on professional teacher and teacher professionalism. A particular teacher may have

been categorized or perceived as a professional teacher by some teachers but not by others while an already professional teacher may not yet be perceived or viewed as professional by some teachers. Similarly, if asked to define what teacher professionalism is they may have very different definitions and when asked to describe how a professional teacher looks like, they may also have different opinion about it. Thus, Indonesian teachers may still have very different opinion and perception on teacher professionalism and professional teachers.

Different Perception of the Teachers on Teacher Professionalism

The main questions faced by Indonesian teachers nowadays are who professional teachers are and what they may look like. Indonesian government regulation number 74 on teachers, states that teachers are professional educators whose main tasks are educating, teaching, guiding, directing, orienting, training and evaluating students at formal preschool, elementary and secondary school levels. Similarly, according to Crouse (2003), professional teachers are those teachers who could supply students with teaching, advice, orientation, assistance, motivation and happiness. These teachers are usually the ones whom the students prefer to

other teachers who could not provide these services in and outside the classroom.

Rahayu and Astuti (2008 referring to Jackson, 1987) and Brown (2001) mention that teaching can not be viewed just as a job in common terms because teaching has 'professional' principles in it which makes it different from other occupations. They continue to claim that teaching is a very important activity for the 'well-being of society and individual' and thus it is normally acceptable to mention that teacher is 'an agent of change' (p:3). In other words, the professional aspects of teaching among other things have made teachers different from other workers, such as clerk or typist, drivers, carpenters and so on. In addition, Ur (2002) proposes two definitions for the word 'professional'; these are the general and specific ones. According to her, the general definition of professional,

... is someone whose work involves performing a certain function with some degree of expertise [while the specific definition of professional] is someone whose expertise involves not only skill and knowledge but also the exercise of highly sophisticated judgement and whose accreditation necessitates extensive study, often university-based as well as practical experience, such as doctors, teachers and lawyers (page: 388).

In this definition, Ur considers teachers similar to doctors and lawyers where in general people's perception at least in Indonesian TRIADIK

context are much harder to do and to some extent more commercial and much more highly paid than teachers. In addition, it is much more difficult to be doctors and lawyers than to be teachers in terms of education and training processes and their administrative requirements.

Villegas-Reimers (2003:36), however, find it difficult to classify teachers as professional because as she says,

... its is very hard to identify any particular set of values in the teaching profession comparable to those common in professions such as medicine and law. In most professions, professional values can be derived by making the professional accountable to the client. Yet this is nearly impossible to do with regard to teachers, as they have a multiple clients.

Thus, according to Villegas-Reimers, a teacher is not comparable to a doctor or a lawyer because teachers do not view students as clients as doctor and lawyer do to their patients and clients because there are too many of them although in the teaching practice there are similarities between what teachers do to their students and what doctors or lawyers do to their patients and clients. For example, teachers are expected to have records on their student's achievement and learning problems; teachers should give different advice to different student based on their characteristics and style; teachers should also help voice their students' needs and wants to the schools and/or government, and so on although we

must acknowledge that there are differences between how teachers work and how doctors and lawyers work.

The word 'professional' (an adjective) derives from the word 'profession' (a noun) which, according to Rohiat (2008) following Moore (1970), has the following characteristics: a) full time job, b) the person works to earn living and therefore comply with all available rules and regulation, c) the person becomes a member of a professional organization, d) the person masters the knowledge and skills necessary to carry out his or her work obtained from formal education and pre-service and in-service trainings and workshops, e) the person meets the competence and other requirements necessary for his or her work, and f) the person obtains an autonomy is performing his or her work because of his or her highly technical specialization. In addition, Rusman (2010) suggests that teacher professionalism is a set of condition, orientation, value, purposes, and

quality of a skill and right in education of someone's profession or occupation from which he or she earns his or her living. Thus, a professional teacher is someone who views his or her work or occupation as a profession not just as a job, hobby, or activities to do to kill the time. Professional teachers, for example, must have all the characteristics required to be a professional teacher from the view of either education experts, teachers, students or people at large.

Continuing Debates on Teacher Professionalism

Ur (2002) proposes the differences between professional people and lay, amateur, technician and academic people. According to Ur, the professional people are more comparable to academic people than to lay, amateur and technician although there are some differences. Below is a comprehensive list of important different characteristics between the academic and professional persons according to Ur (page: 390):

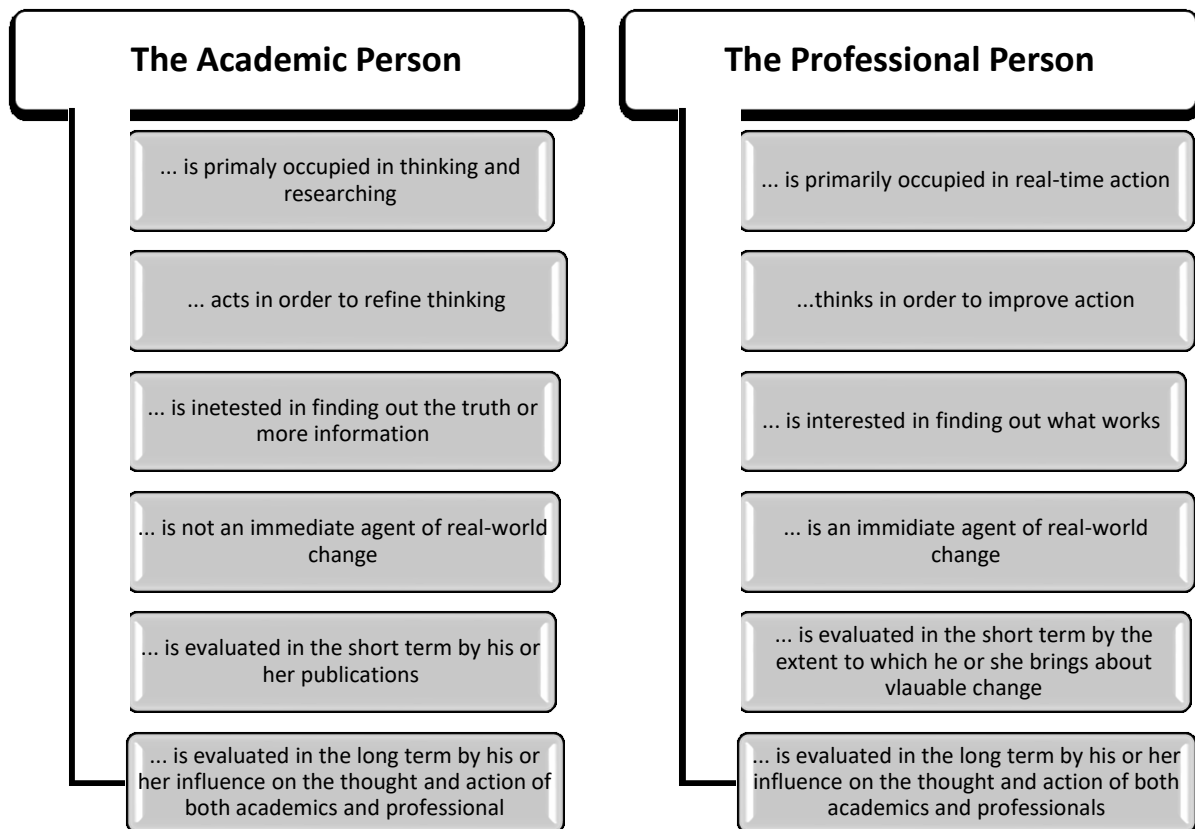


Figure: Similarity and Differences between Academic and Professional Persons

The only similarity between these two types of person, according to Ur, is that at the end they will be acknowledged and respected by other people based on their contribution to the field of their profession which can be followed by future generation as a good model or example.

Following Ur's definition on professional people, a teacher as has been classified as professional by the Indonesian government is not academician where his or her main task is not to help develop or extend the knowledge of his or her field of discipline but to try out the application of the knowledge or theory in teaching and/or educating activities at school for their students to make their teaching and learning processes effective

and efficient. Thus, it is not really appropriate to expect teachers to do research and produce academic papers during their work at school except on very simple and applicable problems found in their classes such as through classroom action research (CAR).

An analogy of a professional teacher with a doctor is suggested by Denning (2009). According to him, one doesn't become a doctor just because he or she graduated from a medical school, faculty or institution but because he or she is accepted by the community of physician as a doctor and to get this status one must fulfil a certain requirements including a medical doctor degree, doctor licensure, expertise and

membership in a medical college. To put it in another way, having a relevant degree is only one requirement to be a professional teacher; there are many other requirements such as having expertise, license or certificate, and the most important one is the acceptance as a member in a teacher association of a particular field of discipline.

The argument whether or not teacher is professional has also become a long controversial debate among education practitioners and educationists in today's America (Shon, 2006). According to Shon, although the majority of teachers in the United States completed their tertiary education to be a teacher and had enough experience in teaching; people still perceive that being a teacher is similar to being a sport coach, a cleaner or other jobs that do not require a specific qualification and sufficient experience to do it. This is, as Shon believes, one of the main reasons for the "emergence of home schooling and charter schools" (p,1); that is the view of common people who have not yet perceived teaching profession to be professional as other professions as doctor, lawyer, accountant and so on.

Objectives of the Study

This research is an attempt to find out how Bengkulu province teachers have perceived their new status since the Indonesian government has changed their status from nonprofessional to professional teachers

through the declaration of Act Number 14 on Teacher and Lecturer' in 2005. Since then, the Indonesian government has carried out various programs in acknowledging, appreciating and improving teachers' professionalism such as through certification program, salary raise, and continuing professional development programs. However, because this is a massive program involving millions of teachers in Indonesia including in Bengkulu province, there must be various perception and opinions of the teachers on professional teacher and teacher professionalism and this is the major motivation of this research.

The main question addressed in this research is how are the perceptions of teachers in Bengkulu province on teachers' professionalism and professional teachers? This question has been broken down into several more specific questions as follows:

- 1) How is the teacher's perception of professional teachers in conducting classroom teaching and learning activities?;
- 2) How is the teachers' perception of a professional teachers in developing their professionalism?;
- 3) How is the teachers' perception of a professional teachers in sustaining good relationship with other teachers at school?;

- 4) How is the teachers' perception of professional teachers in providing service excellence to students?;
- 5) How is the teachers' perception of professional teacher in collaborating with the headmaster?;
- 6) How is the teacher's perception on his or her own professionalism?; and
- 7) How is the teachers' perception on teachers certification processes?

METHODS

The design of this research viewed from its objectives is a survey research, i.e. to obtain information or data about the teachers' perception or opinion on professional teachers and teacher professionalism from the individuals and the main instrument used is a set of questionnaire (Mackey and Gass, 2012). The questionnaire was developed using a close and open format in which the respondents may choose more than one answers or options and there is a space for them to write more answers for every question if the answer is not given in the options yet.

The population in this research are all teachers in Bengkulu province who are teaching at secondary schools (junior and senior high schools); there is no specific reason for not including elementary school teachers into the population of this study. Among the secondary school teachers as the

population of this research 100 teachers of them were chosen as the samples or respondents for this study through a purposive sampling technique. The research samples or respondents were asked to fill out a set of questionnaire in Indonesian (the questionnaire is given in the appendix). Out of 100 sets of questionnaire distributed to the respondents, 80 of them were returned after they have been filled out. The data analyses were done based on the information given in the returned questionnaire.

Data analysis was done by tallying the same choice of answers among the respondents for every question in the questionnaire and then calculated to get the percentage for every chosen answer. The frequency of each answer for each question and its percentage were then presented in tables in the results section of this article while the answers given in the open space of the questionnaire were added in full form after the description of each table.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Below is presented the summary of the research data which have been processed from the questionnaire obtained from the research respondents. From 100 questionnaire distributed to respondents, 80 or 80% of them were returned after they had been filled out. The results of this study are taken from the information in the 80 questionnaire returned

by the respondent teachers. The questionnaire consists of five parts, namely 1) teacher's identities, 2) teacher's perception of the characteristics of a professional teacher, 3) teacher's evaluation of his or her own professionalism and of other teachers that they know, 4) things the teacher will do to be a professional teacher and 5) their perception of the processes of teacher certification in Indonesia.

Teacher's Perception on the Characteristics of a Professional Teacher

The first question in the questionnaire is on the teachers' perception on the characteristics of professional teachers in classroom teaching and learning activities; the respondents could choose more than one answers. The results are summarized in the Table 1:

Table 1: Teachers' Perception on the Characteristics of Professional Teachers in Conducting Classroom Teaching and Learning Activities

No.	Professional Teachers' Characteristics in the Classroom	F	%
1.	... always come to the class on time	80	100%
2.	... always go out the classroom on time	52	65%
3.	... always use media in teaching	58	72,5%
4.	... always use lesson plan in teaching	74	92,5
5.	... always read lesson plan before coming to the class	44	55%
6.	... always use student/text book in teaching	40	50%
7.	... always read student/text book before teaching	54	67,5%
8.	... always prepare some extra teaching and/or learning materials (hand-outs) before teaching	54	67,5%
9.	... always correct student's work or assignment	72	90%
10.	... always return student's work after being corrected	58	72,5%

N = 80 teachers

As can be seen in Table 1 above, all respondents or 100% agree that a professional teacher must come to the class on time while 74 or 92.5 % of them agree that a professional teacher use a lesson plan in teaching. In addition, 72 respondents or 90% agree that a professional teacher corrects student's work; however only 40 respondents or 50% agree

that a professional teacher should use student or text book in teaching.

The second question in the questionnaire is on the teacher's perception on the ways a professional teacher develops their professionalism. The respondents' answers to this question is summarized in the Table 2.

Table 2: Teachers' Perception on the Characteristics of Professional Teachers in Developing Their Professionalism

No.	Professional Teachers' Ways of Developing Their Professionalism	F	%
1.	... always read new books on teaching and education	70	87.5%
2.	... always participate in seminar and/or workshop programs	46	57.5%
3.	... improve their education qualification	68	85%
4.	... always read new book on their field of discipline	68	85%
5.	... always read new books on teaching methodology	52	65%
6.	... always read new journal articles on their field of Discipline	32	40%
7.	... always read new journal articles on teaching Methodology	34	42.5%
8.	... always want to discuss with other teachers their teaching and learning experiences and problems	58	72.5%
9.	... always improve their performance as teachers	70	87.5%
10.	... are open to critics from other teachers and/or students	72	90%
11.	... always learn from their own experiences and the one from other teachers	48	60%

N = 80 teachers

The above table indicates that the majority of the respondents (70 or 87.5%) agree that a professional should always read new books on teaching and education while 68 or 85% of them agree that a professional teacher should improve his or her qualification and read new books on his or her field of discipline. Also, 70 or 87.5% of the respondents agree that a professional teacher should always improve their performance in teaching and 72 or 90% of them agree that a professional teacher should be open to criticism from other teachers. The other answers to the same question from the respondents vary.

The third question in the questionnaire is about the respondent's perception on the

ways a professional teacher sustains a good relationship with other teachers. The answers are shown in the Table 3.

As seen in the Table 3, all respondents (100%) agree that a professional teacher should always want to share his or her knowledge and experience and want to socialize with other teachers while the majority of them or 66 (82.5%) agree that a professional teacher have empathy and sympathy with other teachers. In addition, 60 of them or 75% agree that a professional teacher should participate in voicing teacher's needs and wants to the local and national governments.

The fourth question in the questionnaire is about teachers' perception on

professional teachers in providing the best service to their students and the answers are given in the Table 4.

Table 3: Teachers' Perception on the Characteristics of Professional Teachers in Sustaining Good Relationship with Other Teachers at School

No.	Professional Teachers' Characteristics in Sustaining Good Relationship with Other Teachers at School	F	%
1.	... always attend the meeting organized by the school	52	65%
2.	... always want to share their knowledge and experience with other teachers at school	80	100%
3.	... always socialize with other teachers	80	100%
4.	... always have empathy and sympathy on other teachers	66	82.5%
5.	... always participate in voicing teachers needs and wants to the government	60	75%
6.	... are active members of teacher association	48	60%

N = 80 teachers

Table 4: Teachers' Perception on the Characteristics of Professional Teachers in Providing the Best Service to the Students

No.	Professional Teachers' Characteristics in Providing the Best Service to the Students	F	%
1.	... are always willing to help students with problems	70	87.5%
2.	... always concern with their students' learning achievement	80	100%
3.	... are always willing to discuss something necessary with their students	64	80%
4.	... always try to remember their students' names	36	45%
5.	... always appreciate their students' achievement	72	90%

N = 80 teachers

Table 4 above indicates that all respondents or 100% agree that a professional teacher always concerns with his or her student's learning achievement and the majority of them or 90% agree that a professional teacher always appreciate their student's learning achievement. Also, 70 respondents or 87.5% agree that a professional teacher is always willing to help his or her students with problems to solve their learning and/or

individual problems while 64 of them or 80% agree that a professional teacher is always willing to discuss something necessary with his or her students.

The next question in the questionnaire is about the teacher's perception on professional teacher's ready-ness to work with the school principal and the answers to the question are summarized in the Table 5.

Table 5: Teachers' Perception on the Characteristics of Professional Teachers in Cooperating with the Headmaster

No.	Professional Teachers' Characteristics in Cooperating with the Headmaster	F	%
1.	... always obey the rules and regulations available at school	74	92.55
2.	... always give suggestion to the headmaster for school improvement	66	82.5%
3.	... are always ready to help the headmaster improve the quality of graduates	74	92.5%
4.	... are always ready to help the headmaster improve school image	66	82.5%

N = 80 teachers

As indicated in Table 5 above, almost all respondents (74 or 92.5%) agree that a professional teacher should obey the rules and regulation available at school and are ready to help the headmaster improve the quality of graduates. Other respondents (66 or 82.5%) agree that a professional teacher should give suggestion to the headmaster for school

improvement and are always ready to help the headmaster improve school image.

Teacher's Perception on His or Her Own Professionalism

The respondents of this research were also asked questions on his or her own professionalism and the answers are given in the following table.

Table 6: Teacher's Perception on His or Her Own Professionalism

No.	Questions	Yes	No	Don't know
1.	Do you think that you can be classified as a professional teacher?	38	40	2
2.	Do you think that there is a teacher at your school who has been professional?	50	28	2
3.	Do you think that there are already professional teachers in Bengkulu province?	60	12	8

As Table 6 indicates, about one half of the respondents believe that he or she is already a professional teacher while another one half regard them as not yet professional teachers.

However, 60 respondents or 75% believe that there are already professional teachers in Bengkulu province.

The Teachers' Perception on Teachers Certification Processes

should do to be a more professional teacher and their answers are displayed in the Table 7.

The research respondents were then asked what a teacher who has been certificated

Table 7: Teachers' Perception on What Should be Done in order to be a More Professional Teachers

No.	What should be done in order to be a more professional teacher	F	%
1.	Pursue a further education, such as to a postgraduate level	60	75%
2.	Do a classroom action research (CAR)	60	75%
3.	Read more relevant reference and teaching methodology books and other reading materials	70	87.5%
4.	Supervise junior or novice teachers	56	70%
5.	Give a good example as a teacher to other teachers	76	95%
6.	Publish academic articles in journals	42	52.5%

N = 80 teachers

Table 7 shows that the majority of respondents (76 or 9.5% and 70 or 87.5%) agree that a professional teacher should give a good example as a teacher to other teachers and read more relevant books on journal articles on teaching methodology. However, only 42 respondents or 52.5% agree that a professional teacher should publish academic articles in journals.

Discussion

As presented above there are seven questions addressed in this study and from the results it can be concluded that the majority of Bengkulu teachers have different perceptions on what a professional teacher and how they should behave at school and outside the school although they agree each other on some

aspects. These different perceptions on teacher professionalism and professional teachers may imply that different teachers in Bengkulu have different access to information on professional teacher and teacher professionalism. Therefore, some teachers may still view themselves as Ur (2002) calls it as an amateur, technician or academician while some others may have viewed them as a professional. This also implies that although Indonesian government has declared teacher as a professional position through Act Number 14 on teacher and lecturers toward the end of 2005 (i.e., it has been more than ten years now), Bengkulu teachers and possibly Indonesian teachers have not done enough effort yet to study and understand what a

professional is and how they look like from various references and sources.

Several similar studies have been carried out to see the effect of teacher certification program in Indonesia including Bengkulu province towards the improvement of teacher's performance in the classroom, such as by Mulyono (2008) in Lubuk Linggau in South Sumatera province and Solikin (2010) in Bandung West Java province. The findings of these studies show that there is no significant positive effect on the change of teacher's status to a professional teacher through certification program towards the improvement of teacher's performance in teaching and the quality of learning activities and results. The reason, according to Mulyono and Solikin, is the teachers themselves who are not yet fully aware of what teacher professionalism is and how professional teachers should behave at and outside schools as this study also found. As a result, the teachers are also not aware of the appropriate ways of becoming a professional teacher and/or of improving their professionalism as a teacher.

Studies on teacher's perception on professionalism conducted outside Indonesia have also found that it is difficult to define what a professional teacher is. According to Ifanti and Fotopoulou (2011), this is because the complexities of teacher's professionalism itself such as the 'incomplete

usages or varying meanings' of the term itself (page.41). Ifanti and Fotopoulou further suggest that the concept of professionalism is usually constructed by a particular social and cultural group in a particular geographical area and therefore, it may get different interpretation among different social and cultural groups of people. Thus, in order to avoid various interpretation of the definition of professional teacher and teacher's professionalism, educators in a particular area must have an agreed definition of these two very important terms.

Conclusion and Suggestion

Conclusion

From the results and discussion of this research as discussed above it can be concluded that:

1. Bengkulu teachers have different perception or opinion on the characteristics of professional teachers although the majority of them agree on several characteristics;
2. the majority of Bengkulu teachers have different opinions on the ways to be a more professional teacher although they also agree on several activities;
3. Bengkulu teachers have almost similar perceptions on how a professional teacher should behave in and outside of the classroom, and

4. the teachers also have different perception and opinion on whether or not there are examples of professional teachers near them and whether or not they are already professional themselves.

Suggestion

Since Bengkulu teachers have various perceptions and opinion on what teacher professionalism is, what a professional teacher should do and how professional teachers look

like, there must be socialization programs for the teachers on every aspects of teacher professionalism so that they have similar view on the topic and therefore, similar actions will be taken by the teachers to be a professional teacher and more professional teachers. The most important thing is that Indonesian educators must agree on a standard definition of a professional teacher and how he or she should behave in and outside the schools.

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