

English Teachers' Professional Development During COVID-19: Indonesian Elementary English Teacher Context

Latifah Fatmawati¹, Dewi Rochsantiningsih², Slamet Supriyadi³

¹ Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta, Indonesia; fatmalatifaa@student.uns.ac.id

² Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta, Indonesia; dewi_roch@staff.uns.ac.id

³ Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta, Indonesia; pripus.lppmuns@yahoo.co.id 2

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ABSTRACT

Teachers have important role in learning process to improve the quality of education output and outcome Indonesia. Therefore, to be professional teachers, activities should be carried out during COVID-19 pandemic to develop professionalism of teachers. The purpose of this research is to discover what teacher professional development (TPD) activities that the teachers could engage during COVID-19 pandemic. This study also examines the viewpoints of teachers from both private and public schools. The method of the research employs qualitative research and focuses on case study technique utilized to investigate teachers' thoughts on what TPD activities they participated in during the COVID-19 pandemic. The result of the research indicates that elementary teachers can still participate in TPD activities using the existing online platform even during pandemic. Teachers can develop their professionalism in creating and developing online media in learning during COVID-19 pandemic. In conclusion, the COVID-19 pandemic provides new TPD opportunities for teachers and expands their understanding of internet technology and promote collaboration among teachers. However, further research should be conducted to address teachers' professional development in a deeper and broader perspective in Indonesia. It is expected to cover wider areas of teachers from different institution including higher education institutions. In order that we can learn about the types of TPD activities that may be done remotely during the pandemic from many perspectives.

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Corresponding Author:

Latifah Fatmawati

Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta, Indonesia; fatmalatifaa@student.uns.ac.id

1. INTRODUCTION

Teachers have important roles in educating students whether in normal condition or in COVID-19 pandemic. Teachers participate a lot in creating smart and skillful students in facing the global and disrupted situation nowadays. Since teachers' important roles in education, they have to develop their professional development in order to give better learning process in school. Teacher professional development (TPD) during COVID-19 pandemic is different from that in normal condition as both teachers and students didn't meet face to face in learning process. Teachers need to create innovation in learning process during COVID-19 pandemic by using online learning through learning management system (LMS). TPD in COVID-19 pandemic made teachers employ many kinds of learning media such as Google Classroom, Google Meet, Zoom, video and PPT.

Online learning media is a must COVID-19 pandemic and based on the Minister of Education and Culture's Circular Letter Number 4 of 2020, it is recommended that the teaching and learning process was required to be done through online learning. When participating in online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, the accessibility, connectivity, devices, low bandwidth, and flexibility of time have become a concern for the teachers to be able to prepare good online learning for the students (Al-Balas et al., 2020; Hassan, 2020; Mohd Zulkefli, 2020). TPD involves not only formal events including conferences, workshops, and seminars, but also informal activities including reading, group discussions, and teaching experiences. Sharma & Pandher (2018) had conducted research and revealed the most important activities to improve teachers' professional development. The result identified eight TPAs such as regular self-assessment and reflection, deep commitment to make difference, increasing students' curiosity, creative problem-solving approach, knowledge updating, cross-disciplinary collaborations, participating in courses and conferences, and collaborative works.

However, due to the changes in teaching and learning, TPD was critical during the COVID-19 outbreak. Because teachers must modify their professional activities to be compatible with distance learning. Darling-Hammond & Hylar (2020) emphasized that educators must adapt and improve their expertise in order to create genuine and meaningful learning that engages students in the learning process needed by emerging conditions. It pushes the teachers to completely use technology in the learning and teaching processes. Unfortunately, not all teachers are prepared for the inevitable changes. As a result, problems such as creating content for an online class, learning new tools, understanding online pedagogy, and experimenting with various pedagogical strategies to address both synchronous and asynchronous teaching and learning have arisen (Hartshorne & Baumgartner, 2020).

TPD changes continuously and the research conducted in Indonesia by Amri et al. (2021) that the teachers equipped themselves with a new teaching method to aid in a new normal situation ranging from young learners to learners with special needs. The other research related to TPD was conducted by Alwafi (2021) that some professional developments have shifted to social media during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was discovered that there is a rise in social interaction through social media among teachers in the same specialty in order to express their digital teaching concerns, share experience, and get emotional support. It was all done to help them become more professional in the midst of the pandemic. Online professional development has been proved to give the same effective result to improve teachers' professional development when the distance and the time are practical barriers to face-to-face meetings (McConnell et al., 2013). The following are the research questions:

1. What activities done by elementary teachers to develop teacher professionalism in learning process during the Covid-19 pandemic?
2. What kinds of teacher professional development were conducted by the elementary English teacher during the Covid-19 pandemic?

However, many teachers have difficulty in making good online learning media for remote learning, especially for elementary students in rural area. Such situation will be a big challenge to develop teacher professionalism in learning process. Teachers are expected to move from comfort zone to new change so that they can pass the transition from conventional method to online one. Many teachers have problems, especially elementary teachers in remote area, therefore, this research need to

be performed to know what activities done by teachers to develop teacher professionalism. Based on previous research, understanding of professional development among educators during the COVID-19 pandemic has become a vital feature that teachers must-have during the online teaching-learning period. To develop professionalism or TPD, teachers should discuss how they manage to keep their online classes operating smoothly so that other teachers can pick and choose what works best for their situations. This is beneficial for the teachers who are wondering how to handle their online classes or as additional knowledge for the teachers and pre-service teachers.

The difference with the previous research that this study focuses more on finding out TPD activities during the COVID-19 pandemic and investigates in-depth the kinds of activities that teachers do during the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia as well as giving new insight for the teachers or teachers candidate.

2. METHODS

This research used a qualitative method and focused on case study to get an in-depth understanding of the kinds of teacher professional development during the COVID-19 pandemic. In line with Creswell (2013), the qualitative method is seen to be the best method to find out the problem being studied as natural setting as possible. This method also allowed to get personal views of participants about how elementary English teachers develop their professional development to meet the students' needs' during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The participants consist of six elementary English teachers from different school (three teachers from public school and three teachers from private school). The participants were chosen by using convenience sampling because of a pandemic. Convenience sampling was used to get participants who were easy to contact and find (Edgar & Manz, 2017). This is important during a pandemic where meeting in person is still prohibited.

The conduct of the research involves collecting and analyzing non numerical data (e.g., text, video or audio) to understand concept, opinion, or experiences. It can be used to gather in-depth insights into a problem or generate new idea for research. Qualitative research aims at getting a better understanding through first hand experiences, truthful reporting and quotation of actual conversation.

The use materials can be primary, secondary and tertiary depending on when it was created and its purpose and scope. While instruments according to Ary (2010) the most common research instruments used in qualitative research are observation, interview and document analysis. In this research, the researcher uses observation and interview.

The data collection techniques uses interview, observation and questionnaire. The participants in this research were interviewed online to validate the data and to get a better understanding of the kinds of online professional development during the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, an online questionnaire was done to collect the data related to online professional development. Additionally, observation is also carried out to complete the data collection.

Moreover, the data were analyzed by using interactive model analysis. Interactive model analysis was proposed by Miles et al. in 2014 which focused the analysis on three steps which consist of data condensation, data display, and drawing conclusions. the first step was carried out to select the data which related to the problem. then the data were simplified to be easy to understand. in the second step, the data were displayed in the table, diagram, or graph so that it can be easy to draw a conclusion. Before conducting the last step, the researchers tried to look back at the data collection, data analysis, data condensation, and data display to prevent the data lost during drawing a conclusion.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Long lockdowns during the COVID-19 outbreak forced the closure of educational establishments in Indonesia, with no exception in elementary school. Although the closure of educational institutions

did not result in a stop of instructional activities, teachers were asked to adjust to online instruction rather than face-to-face teaching.

The current conditions that do not allow for gathering have made teachers more aware of the value of online platforms for professional development. Teachers are beginning to search for various types of online PD in order to improve their teaching abilities during the pandemic. This research examined the kinds of professional developments that the teachers can do during the COVID-19 pandemic. The result of the research showed that the teachers were assigned to different kinds of PD. This research has identified four online PD that the teachers possibly did during the COVID-19 pandemic.

There are many activities done by elementary teachers to develop teacher professionalism in learning process during the Covid-19 pandemic, namely; teachers create innovation in learning process during COVID-19 pandemic by using online learning through learning management system (LMS). TPD in COVID-19 pandemic made teachers employ many kinds of learning media such as Google Classroom, Google Meet, Zoom, video and PPT. All of those activities done support the teacher professional development.

Many kinds of activities supporting teacher professional development were conducted by the elementary English teachers during the Covid-19 pandemic such as:

Online Conferences and Workshop

Before the coronavirus swept over the world, conferences and workshops were popular forms of professional development among teachers. Teachers can gain fresh knowledge from professionals directly by attending conferences or seminars (Jenkins, 2015). They were also given the opportunity to ask questions and engage with other attendees. However, because of the rising spread of COVID-19, conference and workshop activities had come to a halt. Following the introduction of working from home (WFH), several educational institutions recognized that online platforms might be used to host seminars and workshops. They may readily conduct seminars online, and teachers can easily follow them without leaving the house.

“It was initially difficult to engage in TPD activities since many events were interrupted by COVID-19, but many institutions have since organized online conferences and seminars. So all I have to do is register through the website and attend the session that day.” (R, Private Teacher, Interview)

“Yes, it was correct that events such as conferences and seminars could not be organized during the start of the pandemic. However, I believe that attending conferences and seminars has gotten simpler during this pandemic. since I simply need to register online and watch the events from home. Besides, I can attend many conferences in a single day. As a result, even during a pandemic, I may learn a lot.” (U, Public Teacher, Interview)

Fortunately, COVID-19 enabled teachers to attend more than one conference, which was previously impossible due to the distance travel. Furthermore, using online conferences, teachers may attend conferences hosted outside of their area as well as worldwide conferences held by other hosts in different nations. Because teachers simply need to participate in these events remotely in front of a laptop screen, the costs are also lower than attending conventional offline conferences.

This finding also supports Falk & Hagsten (2021) stated that when confronted with COVID-19, all conferences shift format to virtual online. There is also evidence that as more time needed to prepare, the possibility of switching to a virtual format increases significantly. Furthermore, conferences planned for nations with high-speed broadband access are more likely to change the format. The chance of changing to a virtual format varies greatly among academic subjects.

In line with the statement Kalman, Kalender & Cesur (2022) stated that 80% respondents tracked online TPD by using technology like online conference and workshop. Teachers used online media to

develop their professionalism such as developing materials, examining their colleagues, and teaching practices.

Social Media Sharing

During the pandemic, teachers can utilize social media, which is often used to broadcast daily activities or personal stories, to share knowledge and exchange teaching experiences. Teachers are increasingly using social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram for professional development. Participants stated that they were able to discuss and exchange teaching experiences with other teachers, which they were unable to do previously due to the considerable distance.

"During the pandemic, I also utilized social media platforms like Twitter to ask about teaching challenges and share my teaching experiences with other teachers. I can even have a conversation with a foreign teacher. something I won't be able to accomplish if the pandemic hasn't spread" (D, Private Teacher, Interview)

"I'm spending more time on social media, and it's fascinating to see that social media is now frequently utilized by teachers as a platform for professional development. The things that could be difficult to occur if there is no pandemic (COVID-19). Apart from improving my education, I also met more teachers from various locations, and there are those that exchange information about seminars or something similar on social media." (W, Public Teacher, Interview)

According to the statements received from respondents, social media has witnessed a positive transformation. Teachers in Indonesia have begun to consider adopting social media to transfer information or interact with students. Teachers will eventually have to be able to use existing online platforms to carry out learning and teaching activities as normally as possible. This finding is in line with Rosell-Aguilar (2018) who stated that Twitter (social media) is used as a tool for continuous professional development. Another research conducted by Alzain et al. (2021) found that social media is regarded as a "highly useful" medium for improving our knowledge, creativity, critical thinking, and academic results.

In line with the statement Kalman, Kalender & Cesur (2022) stated teachers used online media to share material development, examine their colleagues, and practice teaching, and share professional issue with colleagues. The statement is also supported by Ghaisany, Handayani & Munajat (2017) one's motivation in sharing information tends to be consistent for each type of information, that is to share the impression of social media users on a matter and they discuss and exchange teaching experiences with other teachers, which they were unable to do previously because of the considerable distance.

Self-Study

Teaching activities are carried out from each teacher's home during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, the instructor must be more innovative in order to use the available time to produce more exciting learning. Teachers must be able to improve their current skills in order to make use of existing facilities in the issue of a pandemic (Efriana, 2021). The findings of the interview in this study indicated that with the adoption of working from home, teachers have time to enhance their own qualities. Things like studying educational technology, how to use digital technology in the classroom, and how to manage online classes are activities that can be done during a pandemic (Lubis & Dasopang, 2021). Not only that but free time is also used by teachers to learn non-academic things. they can learn new recipes, learn about social media, and also become closer to family.

"During a pandemic, we have a lot of time to learn new things. I can, for example, learn about online platforms that could be used for teaching. I can even acquire new skills outside of the classroom, such as cooking. In addition, I spend a lot of time with my family." (M, Public Teacher, Interview)

"I've got a lot of free time since the implementation of WFH. Normally, I use this time to search for study materials, but because of the pandemic, I am learning new things. I learned about teaching technology, I discovered YouTube, and I even had time to work out at home. Teaching from home is tough, but if we are innovative, we can make the most of our time." (H, Private Teacher, Interview)

Based on the findings above, it can be inferred that participants used the time provided during the pandemic to improve their own competencies (Purwanto et al., 2020). Activities that were previously difficult to complete in school can now be completed as a result of teaching activities at home. Allow teachers to be more creative in how they use their time. In line with the statement Kalman, Kalender & Cesur (2022) stated that 80.9 % teachers carried out personal studies using technology in education during pandemic. Teachers attempted to learn and develop for professional development personally through technology.

Cross-Disciplinary Collaboration

Based on the findings from the data, the respondents formed a discussion group in WA to discuss the issues they had or to learn about online learning platforms. Unlike social media sharing, this discussion group consists of teachers from one institution but different disciplines. Participants believe that sharing with teachers from the same institution is more useful since they encounter the same students and situations. Factors that may be difficult for teachers from other institutions to comprehend. Knowledge sharing also reported by Eiriemiokhale & Idiedo (2020) who said that the teachers had a favorable opinion toward knowledge sharing among peers. The study also emphasized the benefits of knowledge sharing, such as increased knowledge, academic productivity, and the support of teamwork, among other possibilities. Furthermore, it is suggested that teachers encourage students to share their knowledge and experience among them (Sriratanaviriyakul & El-Den, 2017).

"Since the pandemic, my institution (the teachers) has started a WA group in which we exchange concerns about online classes, share how to teach online, and share what apps are used to educate. What's unique is that we don't just share the problems with subject teachers, but we also exchange from different subjects. It turns out that they, too, have issues that are occasionally solved by other subject teachers." (Br, Private Teacher, Interview)

However, it is different with teachers who teach in the public school, they prefer to collaborate with teachers from outside the region or even from abroad. because according to them, by collaborating with different teachers, they will get new insights and also add colleagues. They even said that collaborating with teachers from other schools or even from abroad sometimes opened up opportunities for them to do research together.

"I enjoy collaborating with instructors from other locations and discussing difficulties or knowledge. since we will get new experiences and insights that will be beneficial to our learning in the future I've also met instructors from other countries (overseas). I discuss a lot about teaching in the pandemic period from diverse viewpoints and have unique experiences. very interesting and enjoyable." (Re, Public Teacher, Interview)

It can be noted that there are diverse perspectives on teacher collaboration between private and public teachers. Whereas private teachers prefer to collaborate with teachers from the same institution because they have a better understanding of the problems being faced, public teachers prefer to collaborate with teachers from different institutions or from outside (overseas) because they can gain unique experiences that can be used to teach later, as well as opportunities to collaborate in research (Hali et al., 2021).

The statement above is in line with Kalman, Kalender & Cesur (2022) that teachers found communicating and sharing with colleagues in one institution in different disciplinary to find opportunities for personal development in order to improve TPD. Online activities carried out by

teachers have proved to develop teacher professionalism during COVID-19 pandemic since teachers were not allowed to attend any off line training, seminars and workshops. Kind of teacher professional development were conducted by the elementary English teacher during the Covid-19 pandemic through online media such as WhatsApp, facebook, instagram, google classroom and zoom.

4. CONCLUSION

Teacher professional development is critical for teachers in order to enhance their expertise and the quality of learning process. The COVID-19 pandemic, on the other hand, has impeded many professional development programs. Fortunately, no longer after the pandemic, many institutions began to adopt various types of online professional development programs. In the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, several institutions have hosted online conferences and workshops for teachers to help them to develop their teaching quality. Online conferences and workshops are mostly attended by teachers from both public and private schools. Moreover, teachers also use social media to provide information on how to educate or share challenges they encounter when teaching in the current situation. In addition, they also use their free time to study non-academic talents to enhance themselves or simply spend time with family. The participants also share their knowledge with one another as teachers. There are two opposing viewpoints in this study amongst teachers from public and private schools. Teachers in public schools prefer to share with teachers outside of their institutions. They reported that discussing with teachers outside of the institution offered more fresh teaching insights. Private school teachers, on the other hand, tend to communicate their difficulties among teachers (in one institution) since they (teachers in one institution) understand the situation better.

Furthermore, this research empirically contributes the ideas for teachers to continue carrying out self-development activities even throughout the pandemic. This research also offers teachers a new perspective on the fact that there are several internet platforms available for usage by teachers. Nonetheless, this study is currently lacking in participants and has a limited research scope. Future study is intended to cover a broader range of topics and includes additional participants.

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