

The Role of Organizational Culture in Improving Elementary Teachers' Professional Competence in Kempas, Indragiri Hilir

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze teacher professional competence, the factors influencing teacher professional competence, and the role of school organizational culture in supporting the improvement of teacher professional competence at SD Kecamatan Kempas, Indragiri Hilir District. Based on interviews with the principal and teachers, it was found that although teacher professional competence is generally good, challenges still exist regarding the mastery of technology and the limited time available to implement new teaching methods. Individual, organizational, and managerial factors significantly affect the development of teacher competence, while organizational culture that supports collaboration among teachers has proven to strengthen professional competence improvement. However, there are barriers related to limited access to training and insufficient facilities that need to be addressed. A more open and collaborative organizational culture, along with increased access to training, is essential to supporting the sustainable development of teacher competence. This study is expected to contribute to more effective management of organizational culture in other schools

Informasi Artikel

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis kompetensi profesional guru, faktor-faktor yang memengaruhi kompetensi profesional guru, dan peran budaya organisasi sekolah dalam mendukung peningkatan kompetensi profesional guru di SD Kecamatan Kempas, Kabupaten Indragiri Hilir. Berdasarkan wawancara dengan kepala sekolah dan guru, ditemukan bahwa meskipun kompetensi profesional guru sudah cukup baik, masih ada tantangan terkait penguasaan teknologi dan keterbatasan waktu untuk menerapkan pembelajaran baru. Faktor individu, organisasi, dan manajerial sangat memengaruhi pengembangan kompetensi guru, sementara budaya organisasi yang mendukung kolaborasi antar guru terbukti memperkuat peningkatan kompetensi profesional. Namun, ada hambatan terkait akses pelatihan yang terbatas dan keterbatasan fasilitas yang perlu diatasi. Budaya organisasi yang lebih terbuka dan kolaboratif, serta peningkatan akses pelatihan, sangat penting untuk mendukung pengembangan kompetensi guru secara berkelanjutan. Penelitian ini diharapkan dapat memberikan kontribusi terhadap pengelolaan budaya organisasi yang lebih efektif di sekolah-sekolah lainnya.

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1. Introduction

Quality education is highly dependent on the quality of teachers as the main element in the learning process. As educators, teachers not only play a role in delivering subject matter but also in developing students' skills and character. Therefore, teachers' professional competence is a very important aspect in determining educational success. Teachers' professional competence refers to a teacher's ability to master learning materials, understand the structure of knowledge, and apply effective, creative, and innovative learning strategies. According to [1], a professional teacher is not only able to master teaching materials but is also able to deliver and adapt learning according to students' needs. A similar view is expressed by Uno (2016), who explains that teacher professionalism is reflected in the ability to design, implement, and evaluate learning continuously while being oriented toward improving student learning outcomes.

According to [2], teachers' professional competence includes the ability to master teaching materials, design learning strategies, and apply them in ways that are appropriate to students' needs. Professional teachers must possess pedagogical, personal, social, and professional skills that are harmoniously integrated into the learning process. Teachers are also required to continuously develop themselves through continuing education, training, and self-reflection.[3] emphasizes that teacher professionalism also includes the ability to adapt to changes in education and to maintain commitment to professional ethics. Professionalism is not only measured by academic qualifications or certification, but also by dedication, integrity, and interpersonal skills that help teachers create an effective learning atmosphere and support students' holistic development.

However, the results of observations and interviews conducted in one elementary school in Kempas District, Indragiri Hilir Regency, indicate that teachers' professional competence still needs to be improved. Some teachers have not fully utilized technology in learning, especially in designing interactive media and facilitating project-based learning. Interviews with the principal also revealed that some teachers have not actively participated in learning communities or online training through the Rumah Pendidikan Platform. In addition, several teachers were found to lack discipline in participating in school activities such as meetings, ceremonies, and student assistance in non-academic activities. Low motivation to participate in training is also influenced by the perception that such activities do not always have a direct impact on incentives or promotion credit points.

This phenomenon is consistent with the 2025 Education Report in one elementary school in Kempas District, Indragiri Hilir Regency, which shows several declining trends. In the literacy aspect, student achievement was in the moderate category (62.5%) with an average score of 55.12, representing a significant decrease of 23.86 points from the previous year. Most

students were only able to make simple interpretations of texts. The numeracy aspect also decreased, with a score of 45.72 (moderate category), particularly in the ability to solve problems based on data and uncertainty (-17.15 points). Meanwhile, student character was in the good category (56.1), although the aspects of cooperation and noble character experienced a fairly sharp decline.

Based on further observations of organizational culture in one public school that served as the research site, it was found that there was still a gap between the organizational values declared by the school and the actual practices in the field. Although the school has a vision that encourages collaboration and innovation, its implementation has not been consistent. For example, routine learning reflection activities that should be carried out every month have not been implemented continuously because teachers still consider them administrative activities. Communication between teachers and school leaders also tends to be formal and has not yet fostered a culture of mutual learning. As a result, teachers tend to work individually, engage in limited cross-subject collaboration, and rarely share good practices.

According to [4], organizational culture is a pattern of basic assumptions developed by a group of people when they face external and internal challenges. The values and norms within this culture are transmitted to new members through socialization to help them adapt to the organizational environment. [5] explain that organizational culture has seven main characteristics that distinguish one organization from another, namely innovation and risk taking, attention to detail, outcome orientation, people orientation, team orientation, aggressiveness, and stability. These characteristics play an important role in influencing member behavior and overall organizational performance. A strong organizational culture encourages efficiency, productivity, and collaboration among members, creating an environment that supports the achievement of organizational goals. According to [6], a strong school organizational culture is characterized by collegiality, shared commitment to quality, and mutual trust among school members.

However, the observation results show that the organizational culture in several elementary schools in Kempas District, Indragiri Hilir Regency, is still top-down, where many learning policies are determined by the principal without involving teachers in the planning process. This pattern has an impact on teachers' low sense of ownership of school programs, which ultimately affects their enthusiasm for innovation in learning.

Various previous studies confirm that organizational culture has an important influence on improving teachers' professional competence. Several studies show that organizational culture and teachers' professional competence have a significant effect on teacher performance in various school contexts. [7] found that an organizational culture that supports collaboration and innovation, along with high professional competence, can improve teacher performance. Similar findings were also reported by [8], who

showed that a strong school organizational culture can be a major determinant of improving teacher performance in public vocational schools in Bandung City.

[9] emphasizes the important role of organizational culture as a moderating factor that strengthens the relationship between professional competence and organizational commitment toward teacher performance. Meanwhile, [10] identify that a positive work climate, including a collaborative organizational culture, has an impact on improving teacher performance.

Research by [11] also shows that a conducive school organizational culture, together with high work motivation, has a significant influence on the performance of public senior high school teachers in Pemalang Regency. In addition, [12] found that innovative work behavior driven by a supportive organizational culture acts as an intervening variable in improving teacher performance, particularly among teachers of public special schools in Semarang. Other studies by [13] also confirm that school organizational culture has a positive impact on teacher performance, although challenges remain in its implementation in the field. These findings indicate that a strong school culture, with values of collaboration and innovation, can strengthen teachers' professional competence and improve their performance at school.

This study is important because there is an urgent need to improve teachers' professional competence through strengthening school organizational culture. Teachers are key elements in education, serving as instructors, mentors, motivators, and role models. However, observations and interviews indicate that teacher professionalism still needs to be improved, particularly in the use of learning technology, discipline in participating in school activities, and involvement in learning communities or continuous professional development. The 2025 Education Report also shows significant declines in literacy, numeracy, learning quality, teacher reflection, and school community participation. In addition, the existing school organizational culture has not consistently implemented the values of collaboration and innovation, with teacher-leader communication tending to be top-down and limited sharing of good practices. This condition reflects a gap between national education policy and field realities. Therefore, this study is urgently needed to identify effective strategies for strengthening teachers' professional competence through a participatory and collaborative school organizational culture in order to improve learning quality and student learning outcomes sustainably.

This study aims to analyze teachers' professional competence in elementary schools in Kempas District, Indragiri Hilir Regency; to analyze the factors influencing teachers' professional competence from individual, organizational, and managerial aspects; and to analyze the role of school organizational culture in supporting the improvement of teachers' professional competence.

2. Method

This study used a qualitative approach with a phenomenological descriptive method to understand the meanings, experiences, and perceptions of teachers and principals regarding the strengthening of teachers' professional competence through organizational culture in elementary schools in Kempas District, Indragiri Hilir Regency. The phenomenological approach was chosen because it aims to explore individuals' subjective experiences in dealing with the phenomenon of teacher competence development in schools. Through this approach, the study focuses not only on outcomes but also on the processes and dynamics that occur within the school environment. This approach allows the researcher to explore in greater depth the perceptions, motivations, and actions of principals and teachers in building an environment that supports the sustainable development of professional competence.

This research was conducted in elementary schools in Kempas District from August to October 2025. The selection of the location was based on its relevance to strengthening teachers' professional competence through school organizational culture. Elementary schools in Kempas District were selected because they provide a comprehensive understanding of the conditions of teacher professionalism development and organizational culture in primary education.

The data sources in this study consisted of primary and secondary data that complemented each other. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews and direct observations with key informants, namely the principal, teachers, vice principal for curriculum affairs, students, and parents. Interviews enabled the researcher to explore information related to the implementation of organizational culture in schools and its impact on the development of teachers' professional competence. Direct observations were conducted to monitor the implementation of organizational culture in daily school activities. In addition to primary data, secondary data were obtained from relevant documents, such as lesson plans, school policies on teacher competence development, activity reports, and literature in the form of books, articles, and scientific journals discussing theories of organizational culture and teacher competence development.

The data collection techniques used in this study included observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation was conducted to directly examine how organizational culture was implemented in schools, including the interactions between principals and teachers in implementing teacher professional development programs. In-depth interviews were conducted to explore the experiences, understanding, and perceptions of principals and teachers regarding the implementation of organizational culture in improving teachers' professional competence. Documentation was used to strengthen data obtained from observations and interviews by analyzing

academic supervision records, reports on teacher professional development activities, principal supervision schedules, and teachers' instructional documents.

Data validity was tested using four main criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility was maintained through triangulation of data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation, as well as through member checking to ensure that the researcher's interpretation was consistent with the experiences conveyed by the participants. Transferability focused on the extent to which the research findings could be applied to other similar contexts. Dependability ensured consistency in the research process, while confirmability ensured the objectivity of the research findings.

Data analysis was conducted using an interactive analysis model consisting of three main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation were reduced to filter relevant information and classify the data according to themes aligned with the research focus. Data were presented in the form of matrices, tables, and diagrams to facilitate understanding of relationships among variables. Conclusions were drawn after the data were presented, with the aim of understanding the phenomena occurring in the field, and verification was conducted to ensure the accuracy of the findings.

3. Results

This study aimed to explore teachers' professional competence, the factors influencing teachers' professional competence, and the role of school organizational culture in supporting the improvement of teachers' professional competence in elementary schools in Kempas District, Indragiri Hilir Regency. Based on interviews with principals and teachers, the study produced the following findings:

3.1. Teachers' Professional Competence

The results of interviews with the principal indicate that, overall, teachers' professional competence in elementary schools in Kempas District is already at a good level. The principal stated that teachers at these schools have a strong basic understanding of teaching materials and classroom management. However, there is still room for further improvement, particularly in mastering more innovative learning methodologies and utilizing increasingly developing educational technology.

Although teachers already have a strong foundation, the principal emphasized that teacher competence needs to be improved continuously through training, seminars, and workshops. The main obstacle encountered is limited time. The principal explained that, due to a dense curriculum, it is difficult for teachers to fully implement all training outcomes and new learning approaches. Therefore, although there are policies that support competence development, the major challenge remains the limited time available for learning and applying new concepts.

From the teachers' perspective, although they feel

sufficiently competent in teaching, they acknowledge that several areas still need improvement. One of the greatest challenges is the use of educational technology, which has not yet been fully mastered, as well as limited time that prevents them from continuously following the latest developments in education. Teachers stated that although training and seminars are very useful, they find it difficult to implement everything they have learned within the limited time available in class.

3.2. Factors Influencing Teachers' Professional Competence

The results of this study also show that several factors influence teachers' professional competence in elementary schools in Kempas District. These factors can be grouped into three main categories: individual factors, organizational factors, and managerial factors.

3.2.1. Individual Factors

The principal explained that teachers' professional competence is strongly influenced by teaching experience, attitudes toward self-development, and teachers' personal commitment to continuous learning. Teachers who have the motivation to grow and update their skills tend to have better teaching quality. Teachers also agreed that personal commitment and the desire to continue developing are key factors in their success as educators.

3.2.2. Organizational Factors

The principal revealed that organizational support, such as school policies that support teacher professional development, plays an important role in improving teacher competence. The school provides opportunities for teachers to attend training and develop their skills through activities that support competence development. Teachers also stated that adequate facilities, such as comfortable classrooms and extracurricular activities that support character learning, contribute to creating a conducive environment for improving competence.

3.2.3. Managerial Factors

The principal emphasized that managerial factors, such as how the principal manages time and resources for teacher training, also have a major influence on the development of teachers' professional competence. Principals who understand the importance of teacher development and allocate time for training, whether through workshops or internal and external training programs, can encourage teachers to continue improving their skills.

3.3. The Role of School Organizational Culture in Supporting the Improvement of Teachers' Professional Competence

One important finding in this study is the role of school organizational culture in supporting the development of teachers' professional competence. The principal succeeded in creating an organizational culture that encourages collaboration among teachers through learning communities and routine reflection

sessions. The principal stated that this culture not only improves individual abilities but also strengthens togetherness among teachers in their collective effort to improve the quality of learning.

Teachers stated that an organizational culture that supports collaboration and knowledge sharing is very helpful in developing their competence. They felt that opportunities to learn from one another, both through informal discussions and learning community activities, provided new insights that improved the quality of their teaching. Teachers also stated that a school culture that supports self-development and provides appreciation for efforts to keep improving makes them feel valued and more motivated to improve their teaching skills.

However, although this supportive organizational culture is very positive, several challenges remain, particularly in terms of training accessibility and limited facilities. Teachers stated that although the existing organizational culture is supportive, limited facilities and training budgets remain significant obstacles to obtaining quality training.

4. Discussion

The results of this study show that teachers' professional competence in elementary schools in Kempas District, Indragiri Hilir Regency, is generally good, although there is still room for further improvement. This is in line with the findings of [14], which emphasize that although teachers may have a good basic understanding, continuous development through training and seminars is very important for maintaining teaching quality. However, the major challenge faced is limited time. Both principals and teachers stated that limited time to attend training or apply new knowledge in class is the main obstacle to competence development. As stated in the study by [15], time constraints and a dense curriculum make the integration of knowledge learned through training into classroom practice less optimal.

The factors influencing teachers' professional competence include individual, organizational, and managerial aspects. Principals and teachers agreed that school support, both in terms of policies and facilities, is very important in improving teacher competence. Sauda [16] states that good managerial support from principals, such as providing time for training and sufficient resources, is very important for teachers' professional development.

A school organizational culture that supports teacher professional development has a strong influence on improving competence. Principals and teachers agreed that a culture that supports collaboration among teachers and knowledge sharing improves teaching quality. This finding strengthens the view of [17], who emphasize the importance of a collaborative culture in schools to encourage the development of teachers' professional competence. However, limited facilities and limited access to training remain obstacles that need to be addressed immediately so that teacher competence development can run more

effectively.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Overall, the results of this study indicate that teachers' professional competence in elementary schools in Kempas District, Indragiri Hilir Regency, is already good but still requires further development. Individual, organizational, and managerial factors greatly influence the improvement of teacher competence. An organizational culture that supports collaboration among teachers has been proven to improve teaching quality, although obstacles such as limited time, limited access to training, and inadequate facilities need to be addressed immediately. The principal has an important role in creating policies that support competence development and in building a culture that strengthens collaboration and improves teachers' skills. In the future, schools need to improve access to higher-quality training and provide more adequate facilities to support teacher competence development more optimally.

Based on the findings and discussion of this study, it is recommended that schools, particularly principals, continue to strengthen policies that support the development of teachers' professional competence by increasing access to training and seminars relevant to current educational developments. Considering the challenges of limited time and facilities, schools should optimize the use of online learning platforms and technology resources that are more easily accessible to teachers so that they can continue developing their skills outside school hours. In addition, strengthening collaboration among teachers and expanding spaces for teachers to share knowledge and experiences will further improve the quality of teaching. Budgets for professional development also need to be allocated more effectively so that teachers can gain broader access to quality training that supports their continuous competence development.

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