

Teacher Professionalism in Learning Implementation: An Exploratory Study at SMP Negeri 5 Lahewa

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Abstract: Teacher professionalism is one of the key factors influencing the quality of education and the effectiveness of learning implementation in schools. This study aimed to explore teacher professionalism in learning implementation at SMP Negeri 5 Lahewa, North Nias Regency, Indonesia. The study employed a descriptive qualitative approach. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation involving the school principal and a science teacher as key informants. The collected data were analyzed using data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing techniques. The findings revealed that teacher professionalism at SMP Negeri 5 Lahewa is generally well implemented. Most teachers have obtained teaching certification and demonstrate commitment to their professional responsibilities. Teachers prepare instructional materials, teaching modules, worksheets, and learning media before conducting classroom instruction. Learning activities are carried out using various teaching methods that encourage student participation and active engagement. The school also supports teacher professionalism through academic supervision, participation in teacher professional development programs, seminars, training activities, and subject teacher forums (MGMP). In science learning, teachers attempt to connect scientific concepts with students' daily experiences and utilize available laboratory facilities to support practical activities. However, several challenges remain, including differences in students' learning abilities and limitations in laboratory facilities. Overall, teacher professionalism at SMP Negeri 5 Lahewa contributes positively to the effectiveness of learning implementation and educational quality improvement.

Keywords: teacher professionalism, learning implementation, science learning, academic supervision, qualitative study.

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Introduction

Teacher professionalism is a fundamental component in improving the quality of education and achieving effective learning outcomes. Teachers are expected not only to master subject matter but also to demonstrate pedagogical competence, professional competence, social competence, and personal competence in carrying out their responsibilities. According to Law Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers, teachers are professional educators whose primary duties include educating, teaching, guiding, directing, training, assessing, and evaluating students in formal education. Therefore, teacher professionalism plays a crucial role in determining the success of educational processes and student achievement.

Professional teachers are characterized by their ability to plan, implement, and evaluate learning effectively while continuously improving their competencies in response to educational developments. Mulyasa (2021) stated that teacher professionalism is reflected in teachers' commitment to improving the quality of learning through proper preparation, the use of appropriate teaching strategies, and continuous professional development. Similarly, Rusman (2022) emphasized that professional teachers should be capable of creating active, innovative, creative, effective, and enjoyable learning environments that encourage student participation and improve learning outcomes.

The implementation of learning is one of the most important indicators of teacher professionalism because it directly reflects how teachers apply their knowledge, skills, and competencies in classroom practice. Effective learning implementation requires adequate preparation, including the development of teaching modules, learning materials, student worksheets, and instructional media. In addition, teachers are expected to employ appropriate teaching methods and classroom management strategies to accommodate students' diverse learning needs and abilities (Sanjaya, 2019). Consequently, the quality of learning implementation is closely associated with the level of professionalism demonstrated by teachers.

Several previous studies have highlighted the importance of teacher professionalism in improving educational quality. Harefa and Hulu (2023) reported that teachers who demonstrate high professional competence tend to

organize learning more effectively and contribute positively to student learning achievement. Likewise, Uno (2020) argued that teacher professionalism is not only reflected in academic qualifications and certification status but also in teachers' ability to adapt to educational changes, utilize learning technologies, and engage in continuous professional development activities.

Based on preliminary observations and interviews conducted at SMP Negeri 5 Lahewa, teachers generally demonstrate a strong commitment to carrying out their professional responsibilities. Most teachers have obtained teaching certification and actively participate in various professional development activities organized by the school and educational institutions. Teachers also prepare instructional materials and utilize available learning facilities to support classroom instruction. Furthermore, the school administration regularly conducts academic supervision to monitor and improve teaching performance. These conditions indicate that teacher professionalism has become an important aspect of educational practice at SMP Negeri 5 Lahewa. Despite these positive conditions, several challenges remain in the implementation of learning. Differences in students' learning abilities and levels of understanding often require teachers to employ diverse teaching approaches and strategies. In addition, limitations in laboratory facilities and instructional resources may affect the effectiveness of practical learning activities, particularly in science education. These challenges highlight the need to examine how teacher professionalism contributes to learning implementation under existing school conditions.

Previous studies have generally focused on teacher competence, certification, and professional development programs. However, limited research has specifically explored how teacher professionalism is reflected in daily learning practices, classroom management, instructional preparation, utilization of learning media, and science learning implementation at SMP Negeri 5 Lahewa. Therefore, a more comprehensive investigation is needed to understand the actual implementation of teacher professionalism within the school context. Based on the above considerations, this study aims to explore teacher professionalism in learning implementation at SMP Negeri 5 Lahewa, North Nias Regency, Indonesia. The findings of this study are expected to provide valuable information regarding the current state of teacher professionalism, identify factors supporting effective learning implementation, and serve as a reference for improving educational quality and teacher professional development in secondary schools.

Methods

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to explore teacher professionalism in learning implementation at SMP Negeri 5 Lahewa, North Nias Regency, Indonesia. The study focused on examining teachers' professional practices in lesson preparation, classroom instruction, classroom management, utilization of learning media, academic supervision, and science learning activities.

The research was conducted at SMP Negeri 5 Lahewa. The participants consisted of the school principal and a science teacher who were selected as key informants because of their direct involvement in teaching and learning activities as well as school management. These informants provided information regarding teacher performance, instructional practices, professional development, and challenges encountered during the learning process.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, observations, and documentation. Interviews were conducted to obtain detailed information regarding teacher professionalism and learning implementation. Observations were carried out to examine teaching and learning activities and the use of available educational facilities. Documentation, including teaching modules, student worksheets (LKPD), and other supporting documents, was used to strengthen the research findings. The collected data were analyzed using the qualitative data analysis procedures proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which include data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. To ensure the credibility of the findings, data triangulation was applied by comparing information obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation. This process enabled the researchers to obtain a comprehensive understanding of teacher professionalism in learning implementation at SMP Negeri 5 Lahewa.

Results

Teacher Professionalism in Learning Implementation

The findings revealed that teacher professionalism at SMP Negeri 5 Lahewa has generally been implemented effectively. Based on interviews with the school principal, teachers demonstrate commitment and responsibility in carrying out their duties as educators. Most teachers have obtained teaching certification, which indicates that they have met professional standards established by the Indonesian education system. In addition to fulfilling administrative requirements, teachers consistently perform their instructional duties and contribute to school activities that support educational development.

Based on school documentation, SMP Negeri 5 Lahewa has 21 teaching staff members consisting of 11 civil servant teachers (ASN) and 10 non-civil servant teachers. Among the non-civil servant teachers, 8 have obtained teaching certification, while the remaining 2 teachers are still undergoing professional competency development. These data indicate that most teachers at SMP Negeri 5 Lahewa have met the professional standards established by national education policies, while others continue to improve their professional competence through ongoing development activities.

The school principal explained that teachers are expected not only to deliver learning materials but also to guide, motivate, and facilitate students throughout the learning process. Observations conducted during the study showed that teachers actively participated in school programs and demonstrated positive attitudes toward their professional responsibilities. These findings indicate that teacher professionalism at SMP Negeri 5 Lahewa is reflected not only in certification status but also in teachers' dedication to providing quality education and supporting student development.

The findings indicate that teacher professionalism plays a crucial role in ensuring effective learning implementation. According to Law Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers, professional teachers are required to possess pedagogical, professional, social, and personal competencies. The commitment demonstrated by teachers at SMP Negeri 5 Lahewa reflects these competencies through their dedication to instructional planning, classroom management, and student guidance. This finding is consistent with Mulyasa (2021), who stated that teacher professionalism is reflected in the ability to perform educational duties responsibly and continuously improve teaching quality.

Teachers' Responsibilities and Discipline

Teacher discipline was identified as an important indicator of professionalism. Based on interviews and observations, teachers regularly attend school according to the established schedule and carry out learning activities consistently. The school principal stated that teacher attendance and punctuality are continuously monitored to ensure the smooth implementation of educational activities.

In addition to teaching, teachers also provide guidance to students who experience learning difficulties and participate in various school programs. Their responsibilities extend beyond classroom instruction and include mentoring, counseling, and supporting students' academic growth. Observational findings showed that teachers arrived on time, prepared instructional materials before entering classrooms, and maintained classroom order during learning activities. These practices contribute to creating a conducive learning environment and improving the effectiveness of learning implementation.

Teacher discipline observed in this study demonstrates the importance of responsibility in maintaining effective learning activities. Mulyasa (2021) emphasized that discipline is one of the key characteristics of professional teachers because it directly influences instructional effectiveness. Teachers who consistently arrive on time and prepare learning materials contribute to a more organized and conducive learning environment.

Learning Preparation Conducted by Teachers

The study found that teachers at SMP Negeri 5 Lahewa conduct adequate preparation before implementing learning activities. Teachers prepare teaching modules, instructional materials, student worksheets (LKPD), assessment instruments, and learning media to support classroom instruction.

According to the interviewed teachers, lesson preparation is carried out in accordance with curriculum requirements and adjusted to students' needs and characteristics. Proper planning enables teachers to organize learning activities systematically and achieve instructional objectives more effectively. Observations confirmed that teachers utilized prepared learning tools during classroom instruction. This finding demonstrates that planning is considered an essential component of professional teaching practice and contributes significantly to learning effectiveness.

The preparation of teaching modules, student worksheets, assessment instruments, and learning media indicates that teachers understand the significance of instructional planning. Majid (2021) explained that effective lesson planning serves as the foundation for successful learning implementation. Well-prepared instructional materials enable teachers to conduct learning activities systematically and efficiently.

Classroom Management and Student Participation

Classroom management emerged as one of the important aspects of teacher professionalism. The findings revealed that teachers strive to create active and engaging learning environments that encourage student participation.

During classroom observations, students were given opportunities to ask questions, participate in discussions, and express their opinions regarding learning materials. Teachers used various instructional methods according to the characteristics of the subject matter and students' learning needs. The findings also showed that teachers maintained positive interactions with students and encouraged active learning. Such practices indicate that classroom instruction is gradually moving toward a student-centered learning approach, where students play a more active role in the learning process.

Active student participation found in this study suggests that teachers have successfully implemented student-centered learning approaches. Rusman (2022) argued that effective classroom management encourages students to engage actively in learning activities, thereby improving understanding and academic achievement. The positive interaction observed between teachers and students supports the development of meaningful learning experiences.

Utilization of Learning Media and Educational Technology

The utilization of learning media and educational technology was found to support instructional activities at SMP Negeri 5 Lahewa. Available facilities include textbooks, internet access, whiteboards, government-supported learning media, and science laboratory facilities.

Teachers reported that learning media help students understand concepts more easily and make learning activities more interesting. The use of visual materials and supporting resources also contributes to increased student attention and participation during classroom instruction. Although technological resources remain limited in some areas, teachers attempt to maximize the available facilities to improve learning effectiveness. This demonstrates teachers' efforts to adapt instructional practices to contemporary educational demands.

The use of learning media and available technology supports the delivery of instructional content and increases students' motivation to learn. According to Sanjaya (2019), instructional media function as important tools that facilitate communication between teachers and students. Therefore, the utilization of educational facilities at SMP Negeri 5 Lahewa contributes positively to learning effectiveness.

Academic Supervision and Teacher Evaluation

Academic supervision is conducted regularly by the school principal as part of efforts to improve teacher professionalism and instructional quality. Supervision activities include classroom observations, monitoring of learning implementation, and evaluation of teacher performance.

According to the school principal, supervision provides opportunities to identify strengths and weaknesses in instructional practices and to provide constructive feedback to teachers. The results of supervision are used to support professional improvement and enhance learning quality. Teachers acknowledged that academic supervision helps them improve lesson planning, classroom management, and instructional strategies. Therefore, supervision plays an important role in supporting continuous professional development.

Academic supervision serves as an important mechanism for improving teacher competence and instructional quality. Telaumbanua and Gea (2024) reported that regular supervision provides constructive feedback that helps teachers improve classroom practices. The findings of this study further confirm the positive contribution of supervision to teacher professionalism.

School Efforts to Improve Teacher Professionalism

The findings showed that the school actively supports teacher professional development through various activities and programs. Teachers are encouraged to participate in seminars, workshops, training programs, and Subject Teacher Consultation Forums (MGMP).

Participation in these activities enables teachers to improve pedagogical competence, update professional knowledge, and exchange experiences with educators from other schools. Teachers reported that professional development programs contribute positively to their teaching practices and classroom performance. These findings suggest that school support is an important factor in maintaining and improving teacher professionalism. Continuous professional development allows teachers to respond to educational changes and implement innovative teaching practices.

Participation in professional development activities such as MGMP, seminars, and workshops demonstrates the school's commitment to enhancing teacher competence. Musfah (2020) stated that continuous professional development is essential for helping teachers adapt to educational changes and improve instructional quality.

Science Learning Implementation

Science learning at SMP Negeri 5 Lahewa is implemented through a combination of theoretical instruction and practical activities. Based on interviews with the science teacher, learning activities are designed to encourage students to actively participate in discussions, questioning sessions, and problem-solving activities.

The science teacher explained that classroom instruction is conducted for four lesson periods per week, while practical activities are allocated one lesson period. This arrangement allows students to acquire both conceptual understanding and practical experience. Observations indicated that students were actively involved during science lessons and demonstrated enthusiasm toward learning activities. These findings suggest that science learning implementation at SMP Negeri 5 Lahewa supports the development of students' scientific understanding and learning engagement.

The combination of theoretical instruction and practical activities reflects an effective science learning approach. According to Zebua and Laia (2023), science learning becomes more meaningful when students are actively involved in scientific investigations and practical experiences. Therefore, the learning practices implemented at SMP Negeri 5 Lahewa support the development of scientific literacy and critical thinking skills.

Relating Science Concepts to Students' Daily Lives

One of the strategies employed by the science teacher is connecting scientific concepts to students' daily experiences. According to interview results, teachers frequently use examples from the local environment and students' everyday activities when explaining science concepts.

Topics related to ecosystems, environmental conservation, energy, and living organisms are often associated with phenomena that students encounter in their surroundings. This contextual approach helps students understand abstract scientific concepts more easily and meaningfully. The findings also revealed that students show greater interest and participation when learning materials are connected to real-life situations. As a result, contextual learning contributes positively to students' understanding and retention of scientific knowledge.

Contextual learning helps students connect scientific concepts with real-life situations. Sanjaya (2019) explained that contextual learning enhances students' understanding because knowledge is linked to experiences that are familiar to them. This explains why students in this study showed higher levels of engagement and understanding when science concepts were related to their daily lives.

Utilization of the Science Laboratory

The study found that SMP Negeri 5 Lahewa possesses a science laboratory that supports practical learning activities. The laboratory is utilized for experiments, observations, and demonstrations that help students understand scientific concepts through direct experience.

According to the science teacher, laboratory activities play an important role in developing students' scientific skills, including observation, measurement, data collection, and problem-solving abilities. Practical activities also help students apply theoretical knowledge in real situations. However, observations revealed that laboratory facilities and equipment remain limited. Some experiments cannot be conducted optimally due to insufficient tools and materials. Despite these limitations, teachers continue to utilize available resources to provide practical learning experiences for students.

Laboratory activities provide students with opportunities to develop science process skills through direct observation and experimentation. Hamalik (2021) emphasized that practical experiences help students understand scientific concepts more deeply than theoretical explanations alone. Although laboratory resources remain limited, their utilization still contributes positively to science learning.

Challenges in Learning Implementation

Several challenges were identified during the implementation of learning activities at SMP Negeri 5 Lahewa. One of the primary challenges is the variation in students' learning abilities and levels of understanding. Teachers reported that students learn at different speeds and require different instructional approaches.

To address these differences, teachers employ various teaching strategies, provide additional explanations, and offer individual guidance to students who require extra support. Nevertheless, differences in learning abilities remain a challenge in achieving optimal learning outcomes for all students. Another challenge concerns the limited availability of laboratory equipment and instructional resources, particularly for science practical activities. Although the school provides learning facilities, some resources are still insufficient to fully support all instructional needs. Despite these

constraints, teachers continue to adapt their teaching methods and make effective use of available resources to achieve learning objectives.

The challenges identified in this study are common issues faced by many educational institutions. Differences in students' learning abilities require teachers to apply differentiated instructional strategies, while limited facilities demand creativity in utilizing available resources. Nevertheless, the ability of teachers to adapt to these challenges reflects their professional commitment to ensuring effective learning implementation.

Table 1. Teaching Staff Profile of SMP Negeri 5 Lahewa

Category	Number of Teachers
Civil Servant Teachers (ASN)	11
Certified Non-Permanent Teachers (GTT)	8
Teachers Undergoing Professional Competency Development	2
Total	21

Table 2. Summary of Research Findings on Teacher Professionalism at SMP Negeri 5 Lahewa

No	Aspect	Main Findings
1	Teacher Professionalism	Most teachers are certified and demonstrate professional commitment.
2	Responsibilities and Discipline	Teachers perform their duties responsibly and maintain discipline.
3	Learning Preparation	Teachers prepare teaching modules, LKPD, assessment instruments, and learning media.
4	Classroom Management	Learning activities encourage active student participation.
5	Learning Media Utilization	Teachers utilize available educational facilities and technology.
6	Academic Supervision	Regular supervision is conducted by the school principal.
7	Professional Development	Teachers participate in MGMP, seminars, workshops, and training.
8	Science Learning	Learning combines theory, discussion, and practical activities.
9	Contextual Learning	Science concepts are connected to students' daily experiences.
10	Science Laboratory	Laboratory facilities are available but still limited.
11	Challenges	Differences in student abilities and limited laboratory resources.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, teacher professionalism at SMP Negeri 5 Lahewa has generally been implemented effectively and contributes positively to the learning process. Teachers demonstrate professional commitment through their responsibilities in planning, implementing, and evaluating learning activities. Most teachers have obtained teaching certification and actively participate in professional development programs, such as seminars, workshops, training activities, and Subject Teacher Consultation Forums (MGMP), which support the improvement of their professional competencies.

The study also revealed that teachers prepare instructional materials, teaching modules, student worksheets (LKPD), assessment instruments, and learning media before conducting classroom instruction. Learning activities are implemented using various teaching methods that encourage student participation and engagement. In science learning, teachers attempt to connect scientific concepts with students' daily experiences and utilize available laboratory facilities to support practical learning activities. Furthermore, academic supervision conducted by the school principal plays an important role in improving teacher performance and instructional quality.

However, several challenges remain, including differences in students' learning abilities and limitations in laboratory facilities and instructional resources. Despite these challenges, teachers continue to adapt their teaching strategies and maximize the use of available resources to achieve learning objectives. Therefore, continuous support from schools, educational stakeholders, and government institutions is needed to strengthen teacher professionalism and improve the quality of learning implementation. Overall, teacher professionalism at SMP Negeri 5 Lahewa serves as an important factor in supporting effective learning and enhancing educational quality.

AI Declaration

The authors acknowledge the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology, specifically ChatGPT (OpenAI), as a supporting tool during the preparation of this manuscript. The AI tool was utilized to assist with language improvement, sentence construction, grammar checking, academic writing enhancement, manuscript organization, and overall readability of the text. All content generated with the assistance of AI was carefully reviewed, revised, and validated by the authors before being incorporated into the manuscript.

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