

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background**

It is undisputable that “teacher is the ultimate key to educational change and school improvement” (Hargreaves, 1994, p.ix). A teacher is considered professional if he possesses technical knowledge, pedagogical skills, interpersonal skills, and personal qualities (Brown, 2011). Brown asserts that these four important characteristics can be acquired through a long process of learning which becomes the soul of professional development. Professional development can be defined as activities undertaken by teachers, in a continuous way, to improve their quality (Craft, 2000; Day & Sachs, 2004; Diaz-Maggioli, 2004, as cited in Creemers, Kyriakides, & Antoniou, 2013; Guskey, 2000; Rhodes, Stokes, & Hampton, 2004).

The improvement of teachers’ professional learning influences the improvement of students’ academic achievement (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Hargreaves, 1994, as cited in Day & Sachs, 2004). Not only the increased demand of high quality education but also the rapid change and development in the world require teachers to update and improve their skills through professional development (Ball & Cohen, 1999; Brown, 2001; Calderhead & Shorrock, 1997; Campbell, McNamara & Gilroy, 2004; Craft, 2000; Creemers, Kyriakides, & Antoniou, 2013; Day & Sachs, 2004; Harmer, 2007). Despite its importance, there are several factors which hinder teachers from their efforts to do professional development, namely financial hardship, time management, and lack of employer support (OECD, 2009).

Teacher professional development has been reported to be beneficial, both in ESL (English as a Second Language) and EFL (English as a Foreign Language) context (see Bell & Gilbert, 1994; Bell & Mladenovic, 2008; Christodoulou, 2010; Dasrizal, 2009; Drew & Kloppe, 2014; Karaaslan, 2003; Lan & Wang, 2013; Maisa, 2009; Mardiana, 2013; Pajarwaty, 2009; Sadler, 2012; Subramanian & Genni, 2013; Thongthai, 2011; Warahmah, 2009; Yani, 2012; Zepke & Stevens, 1987). Thus, this present study attempts to investigate activities

undertaken by teachers to support their professional development within the period of 2015—2017. Additionally, this study will also explore advantages of doing professional development on teachers' teaching practice. This study focused on reflective model in which teachers were required to reflect on what professional development activities they have undertaken and how those activities helped them in their teaching practice. This study is expected to provide information for teachers in selecting effective professional development activities and for stakeholders in accomodating teachers' needs for the sake of better teaching-learning process.

### **1.2 Research Questions**

This study addresses these following research questions:

1. What activities are undertaken by teachers to support their professional development?
2. What are the advantages of professional development activities on teachers' teaching practice?

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

This study aims to:

1. Investigate activities undertaken by teachers to support their professional development;
2. Investigate advantages of professional development activities on teachers' teaching practice.

### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

This study is expected to give significant contribution on theoretical benefits, practical benefits and professional benefits. In theoretical level, the result of this study will enrich the literature on teacher professional development, specifically in the place where this study was conducted. In practical level, this study presented activities that are considered essential to support teachers' professional development. The information can be a basis for teachers to select professional development that suits their needs. Additionally, the findings of the

study can promote a lifelong learning for teachers. Teachers who do professional development will be good models for their students in terms continuous learning concept.

In professional level, this study will provide information for policy makers in the place where this study is conducted, about activities that support teacher professional development. Besides, this study also informs them about advantages of doing professional development. That way, the policy makers will be able to select and design professional development activities that suit teachers' need in relation to their real teaching and learning condition.

### **1.5 Clarification of Main Terms**

To avoid misunderstanding, some main terms are defined as follows:

1. Professional development is about taking responsibility and making a personal commitment to teachers own continuous self-improvement as a teacher (Tyler, 2012). Specifically, this study focuses on professional development for in-service teachers.
2. Teachers' activities are activities undertaken by teachers to support their professional development, such as workshops, teacher support groups, keeping a teaching journal, peer observation, teaching portfolios, team teaching, action research (Richards & Farrell, 2005).