

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter highlights the whole study in general. Included in this chapter are background of the study, research questions, purpose of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study, clarification of terms, and outline of the study.

1. 1. Background of the Study

Teaching is a profession which demands one's continuous learning. Brown (2001) stated that "one of the most invigorating things about teaching is that you never stop learning" (p.426). Keep continuing learning is not only beneficial for teachers' professional development, but also influential for students' learning experiences. In their learning process, students deserve teachers who keep up-to-date with what is going on, knowledgeable, skillful (Hall, Quinn, & Gollnick, 2014; Harmer, 2007). Therefore, teachers should always learn and be aware of the importance of teacher professional development for their lifelong learning.

Teacher professional development (or TPD) is a part of teacher career long process (Vries, Grift & Jansen, 2013) which is important to educational reform (Bredeson, 2000; Villegas & Reimers, 2003). It receives much attention and has so long become an important issue and discussion among professionals in education. Many studies have been conducted and proved that TPD is important because of its positive effects on many ways (Hoffman & Harris, 2015, Kempen & Steyn, 2015). Kempen and Steyn (2015) in their study said that professional development of teachers has been found to be a key initiative in raising standards in South African School. Their study indicates that there is a positive value gained from the continuous professional development program on teachers' learning, learners' outcomes, and school improvement in special schools in South Africa.

Indonesian government also concerns with supporting professional development of teachers (Rahman, 2016). A number of programs are provided and

held either in formal or informal form such as training, workshop, or seminar. One of TPD programs in Indonesia which receives much attention by the government is MGMP (Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran/ Subject Teacher Forum). MGMP is a teacher support group program for middle school teachers (junior and senior high school) which are typically held once a week. The teachers are supported to attend this professional communication network program in order to develop their professionalism by discussing and practicing the preparation of the annual program, teaching unit program, evaluation tools, teaching materials, and others (Hasyim, 2015).

The government has done much effort and invested much fund for providing TPD programs and teachers themselves have also spent their time and cost to participate. However, despite the importance of TPD, and how much government pay attention to this, how exactly teachers' perception about their professional development has rarely been exposed (Beale, 2003; Yates, 2007). Whether the teachers have learned many things as a result of their professional development activities or not has rarely been questioned. In addition, as the researchers' personal experience and observation, it is found in some schools in a district area, teachers have less interest to a program of TPD such teacher support group (MGMP), that they are rarely attend this meeting which is held once a week in a school in central district. In broader scope, teachers from several districts in a province have less motivation to continue their study to advance level, although there are chances given by the government or the institution where they are belong to continue their study. They are even offered to get scholarship by the government by previously having some tests, but still, it less of participants found.

Taking the problems above into account, knowing how actually teachers perceive about TPD is considered important. Understanding teachers' perceptions and views may be helpful to facilitate and improve continuing development processes for teachers (Wan, 2011). Therefore, this study was conducted to investigate teachers' perception of TPD and their perception' of MGMP in particular.

1. 2. Research question

This study is intended to answer the following questions:

1. What are the teachers' perceptions of Teacher Professional Development?
2. What are the teachers' perceptions of subject teacher forum (Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran/ MGMP) as one of Teacher Professional Development programs?

1. 3. Purpose of the Study

Referring to the question formulated above, the investigation is intended to meet the following purpose:

1. To investigate the teachers' perceptions of Teacher Professional Development.
2. To investigate the teachers' perceptions of subject teacher forum (Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran/ MGMP) as one of Teacher Professional Development programs.

1. 4. The Scope of the Study

This study concerned on teachers' perception of their professional development in general as well as their perception of MGMP in particular. The focus of the investigation is on teachers' thought and view regarding Teacher Professional Development based on principles of effective teacher professional development as proposed by CERI/ Center for Educational Research and Innovation (1998) in Yates (2007). In addition, the present study investigates teachers' perception of subject teacher forum (Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran/ MGMP) as one of professional development programs for teachers based on categories of learning proposed by Katz (2001). Teachers' needs, preferences and expectations regarding teacher professional development are also investigated. More specifically, this study is aimed to investigate how teachers in a junior high school in Kabupaten Pelalawan-Riau who have involved in several professional development programs view these issues.

1. 5. Significance of the Study

The result of this research is hoped to enrich the literature about TPD. Particularly, the finding is expected to indicate teachers' perception on TPD based on principles of effective TPD as proposed by CERI (1998) in Yates (2007) as well as their perception of subject teacher forum (Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran/ MGMP) as one of professional development programs for teachers seen from how much they learn and change from the activity which is based on categories of learning proposed by Katz (2001). The result is expected to be beneficial as self-reflection, to evaluate teachers' motivation and effort on their professional development. Finally, it is hoped that this study would be beneficial as consideration for the improvement of programs as well as to ensure the effectiveness of programs brought by the government or the professional development providers.

1. 6. Clarification of Terms

The following are several key terms in the study that are defined to avoid misunderstanding:

1. Teachers' perception in this research refers to students' views and opinions to Teacher Professional Development.
2. Teacher Professional Development in this study is activities that develop teachers' knowledge and skills either in formal or informal situations.
3. MGMP (Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran) in this study refers to Subject Teacher Forum, a teacher support group in Indonesia as one of Teacher Professional Development programs.

1. 7. Outline of the Study

This research consists of five chapters. The first chapter is introduction. This chapter elaborates general information regarding the study providing background of the study, the objectives of the study, the scope of the study, the significance of the study, definition of key terms, and organization of the study.

The second chapter is theoretical framework. This section presents relevant literature to this study as well as provides some relevant previous study regarding this issue.

The third chapter is research method. It elaborates the research design that is used in this study, sample, and the method in collecting and analyzing the data.

The fourth chapter is data analysis. This chapter presents the findings that are gained from collected data. It also covers the discussion from the findings.

The fifth chapter is conclusion. This chapter concludes this study and followed by some recommendation for further researches.