

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background Of The Study

Teaching is a profession that requires not only academic qualifications but also specific competencies, a deep sense of responsibility, and continuous self-development. Teachers play a central role in the education system, as they guide students in achieving knowledge, values, and skills. Without the active involvement and commitment of teachers, education would lack its essential meaning (Lomi & Mbato, 2020). The success of an educational institution does not depend only on the curriculum or facilities, but also on the quality of its teachers. Therefore, the concept of the professional teacher has become an important focus in the effort to improve education.

A professional teacher is expected to master subject content, apply appropriate pedagogical strategies, demonstrate commitment to student learning, and continuously develop their professional skills. According to Mahmoudi-Gahrouei et al. (2016), professional teachers combine knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors to meet professional standards and support students' development. Saud, in Siburian (2013), also identified characteristics such as strong commitment to the school and student learning, mastery of teaching methods, critical thinking, and participation in professional learning communities as essential components of teacher professionalism.

One important aspect of a professional teacher is pedagogical competence: the ability to manage learning effectively through appropriate strategies, methods, and assessments. Teachers are expected to design learning activities that meet the needs of diverse students and create environments where learning can take place meaningfully. Pedagogical competence

also requires the ability to reflect on teaching and adapt methods when necessary to ensure students achieve learning goals.

Another essential element is professional commitment. Teachers who are committed to their profession tend to show a strong sense of responsibility toward their students, their schools, and their own professional growth. As Meyer et al. (2023) noted, many English teachers value professional development, yet they often face obstacles that affect their participation and engagement. Commitment is strongest when teachers integrate professional growth into their routine practice, not merely as a requirement, but as a personal goal.

In addition to competence and commitment, motivation also plays an important role in shaping professionalism. Motivated teachers are more likely to be enthusiastic, proactive, and open to change. They have a positive attitude toward their work and are willing to invest time and energy to improve the learning experience for students. Motivation helps teachers remain resilient, even when faced with challenges in their teaching environment.

Lastly, teacher relationships both with students and colleagues form the foundation of a healthy school climate. Teachers who build strong and respectful relationships can foster trust, promote collaboration, and encourage student participation. As classroom leaders, they also benefit from positive relationships with other educators, which can lead to a supportive and collegial work atmosphere. These relationships play a significant role in maintaining teacher satisfaction and long-term engagement in the profession.

The writer also reflects on the importance of experience in shaping her professional development in teaching. During the PPL (*Praktik Pengalaman Lapangan*) period, the writer observed that becoming a committed teacher is a gradual process that requires time, adaptability, and reflection. Teachers must learn to adjust to the diverse characteristics of

their students so that the learning process can run smoothly and effectively. Professionalism in teaching also demands the ability to provide meaningful educational experiences and a willingness to learn and grow continuously.

In the context of Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT), especially in Kupang, many teachers work in challenging situations, such as limited teaching resources, minimal access to training, and remote school locations. While previous research has discussed these external challenges, there is a need to explore teachers' internal perceptions about their professionalism, especially concerning pedagogical skills, commitment, motivation, and relationships. Understanding these perceptions is essential to better understand how teachers in this region view and experience professionalism in their daily practices. In particular, the perspectives of teachers with different years of teaching experience are not often highlighted, even though their views can offer valuable insights into the meaning of commitment in real teaching situations. This study will capture teachers' personal experiences and reflections. For this reason, the writer believes it is essential to conduct a study that explores the perceptions of teachers at different stages of their careers, in order to better understand their views on professional commitment and development in the local context.

Based on the explanation above, the writer decided to investigate further: “**English Teachers’ Perceptions of Their Professional Development.**” This study aims to explore how English teachers understand and experience these four aspects of professionalism in the context of their teaching environments.

1.2 Research Problem

1. What is the English teachers’ perception of their professional development?
2. What are the factors influencing perception about their professional development?

1.3 Objectives

Based on the formulation of the problem above, the objectives of writing are as follows:

1. To investigate English teachers' perceptions of professional development in teaching.
2. To find out the factors influencing teachers' professional development.

1.4 Significance Of The Research

1. Educators

Further research on commitment to professional development will underscore the value of career development in improving teacher effectiveness and education quality. Research has shown that career development has a favorable impact on teacher commitment.

2. Future researchers

Future studies on professional development commitment are likely to investigate the effectiveness of various training methodologies and their impact on teachers. This study could also examine the relationship between career advancement and teacher commitment by emphasizing the importance of commitment and professionalism in work.

3. Teaching Quality Improvement

Exploring teachers' perceptions of their commitment to this research can identify the motivations and barriers that influence their engagement in professional development activities. Understanding these factors can lead to a more effective commitment that is aligned with teachers' needs and aspirations.