Improving Teacher Competence in Supporting the Achievement of Basic Education Goals

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ABSTRACT

Improving teacher competence plays a crucial role in achieving optimal goals in basic education. This article aims to discuss the importance of enhancing teacher competence in supporting the achievement of basic education goals. The study adopts a qualitative approach, utilizing interviews with six teachers and a literature review consisting of articles. The research procedure involves data collection through in-depth interviews with teachers and literature analysis to identify factors influencing teacher competence. The findings indicate that a deep understanding of the subject matter, the use of innovative teaching methods, effective classroom management skills, and professional development for teachers are essential factors in improving teacher competence. Furthermore, suggested strategies and initiatives include professional development programs, collaboration among teachers, effective supervision and mentoring, optimizing the use of supportive resources, and developing comprehensive assessment systems. It is emphasized that serious attention from the government and educational institutions is crucial in enhancing teacher competence to improve the quality of basic education and provide a better future for the next generation.

Keywords: Teacher Competence, Goals, Basic Education.

INTRODUCTION

Basic education plays a crucial role in shaping the foundation of students' knowledge, skills, and character. At the primary education stage, students acquire fundamental knowledge and skills that serve as the building blocks for further learning at higher levels (Kasri, 2023). In addition, basic education also aims to shape the character and positive attitudes of students, preparing them to become active citizens in society (Kasri, 2023). In the process of basic education, teachers play a crucial role as the primary leaders and facilitators in delivering subject matter to students (Dwijayanti, 2019). They are not only responsible for delivering information but also for helping students understand and apply the concepts taught in their everyday lives. Teachers also play a role in building students' motivation to learn, assisting them in overcoming learning barriers and facilitating the development of social and emotional skills (Irmadani, 2021). The quality of basic education is highly dependent on the competence of teachers (Fitriadi et al., 2020). Teacher competence encompasses a deep understanding of the subject matter, effective classroom management skills, mastery of teaching methods, and good communication skills. Competent teachers can provide meaningful learning experiences, inspire students, and help them reach their full potential. In this context, enhancing teacher competence is crucial in achieving the goals of basic education.

The improvement of teacher competence has a significant positive impact on student learning outcomes (Fitriadi et al., 2020). Teachers with deep subject knowledge have better abilities to deliver the curriculum effectively and provide students with a profound
understanding. They can provide clear answers to students’ questions and overcome learning barriers that may arise. Effective classroom management skills are also crucial factors in improving student learning outcomes. Teachers who can manage their classrooms well create a disciplined, structured learning environment that encourages active student participation. They can manage time effectively, provide clear instructions, and establish consistent rules. In a well-organized classroom environment, students tend to be more focused and engaged and learn more effectively. Quality teachers also possess skills in applying diverse teaching strategies. They employ innovative, varied approaches that meet students’ needs. These teachers don’t rely solely on conventional teaching methods but also utilize technology, group discussions, collaborative projects, or problem-based learning. By using relevant teaching strategies, teachers can stimulate students’ creativity, activate their participation, and help them develop their potential optimally. Overall, improving teachers’ competence in subject knowledge, classroom management, and diverse teaching strategies has a positive impact on student learning outcomes. Quality teachers can motivate students to learn enthusiastically, stimulate their creativity, and help them develop their full potential. Thus, enhancing teacher competence is a crucial endeavor in achieving optimal goals in basic education.

The improvement of teacher competence is closely related to the challenges faced in achieving the goals of basic education. The challenges include the low quality of basic education, which can affect student learning outcomes. Teachers without adequate competence may struggle to deliver the curriculum effectively, fail to motivate students or be unable to create an effective learning environment. Enhancing teacher competence is a necessary solution to address these challenges.

This article aims to discuss the importance of improving teacher competence in supporting the achievement of basic education goals. In this context, the article will explore factors influencing teacher competence, such as subject knowledge, innovative teaching methods, classroom management skills, and professional development for teachers. Additionally, the article will provide insights into strategies and initiatives that can be taken to enhance teacher competence at the basic education level. By emphasizing the importance of improving teacher competence, it is hoped that this article can contribute to improving the quality of basic education and providing a better future for the next generation.

METHODS

This research adopts a qualitative approach, utilizing interview methods with six teachers and a literature review of relevant articles to gain a deep understanding of teachers’ perspectives, experiences, and viewpoints in the context of their competence improvement. The qualitative approach was chosen as it allows researchers to explore the complexity of the phenomena under investigation and obtain rich and in-depth insights into the participants’ experiences. The research procedure consists of three steps: 1) Participant Selection: Six teachers with diverse experiences and competencies were selected as participants based on relevant criteria aligned with the research objectives; 2) Interviews: Individual interviews were conducted with the participants using a pre-designed interview guide. The interviews took place in a comfortable and open atmosphere, enabling the participants to share their experiences, views, and knowledge regarding teacher competence improvement; and 3) Data Collection from Literature: In addition to
interviews, data were also collected through a review of relevant literature. Articles about the research topic were collected and analyzed to gain a broader understanding of the factors influencing teacher competence improvement. The data obtained from interviews and literature were analyzed using a qualitative analysis approach. The interview data were analyzed by identifying patterns, themes, and consistent statements that emerged. The literature data were analyzed by carefully reading, identifying relevant information, and comparing findings from various sources. The results of the data analysis will be further developed in the Results and Discussion section, which will describe the factors influencing teacher competence improvement and provide insights into strategies that can be undertaken to enhance teacher competence at the basic education level.

**RESULTS**

The importance of enhancing teacher competence in supporting the achievement of basic education goals. Based on the interview results, teachers acknowledge that improved teacher competence will have a positive impact on student motivation, the quality of teaching and learning, and student learning outcomes. They also recognize that in-depth subject matter understanding, the use of varied teaching methods, good classroom management skills, professional development, collaboration among teachers, constructive assessment, and appropriate implementation of educational technology are important factors contributing to the enhancement of teacher competence. By understanding these teachers' perspectives, effective strategies and initiatives can be identified to improve teacher competence at the basic education level. The interview results with the six teachers can be seen in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Enhancement of Teacher Competence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewees</th>
<th>Enhancement of Teacher Competence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>&quot;Improvement in teacher competence can enhance student motivation and create an effective learning environment.&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>&quot;In-depth subject knowledge, the use of varied teaching methods, and good classroom management skills can influence student learning outcomes.&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>&quot;Professional development of teachers through training and workshops helps improve the quality of teaching and understanding of educational advancements.&quot;</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>&quot;Collaboration among teachers allows for the exchange of ideas, best practices, and resources to enhance the quality of classroom learning.&quot;</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>&quot;Assessment that provides constructive feedback can assist teachers in identifying weaknesses and improving the quality of their teaching.&quot;</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>&quot;The appropriate implementation of educational technology can enrich students' learning experiences and facilitate more interactive teaching.&quot;</td>
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</table>

3.1 Factors Influencing the Enhancement of Teacher Competence

**In-depth Understanding of the Subject Matter**

In the interviews with the teachers, it was found that having a deep understanding of the subject matter is the most important factor in enhancing their competence. Teachers who have a strong grasp of the content they teach are better equipped to effectively convey
understanding to their students (Irmadani, 2021). They can explain concepts clearly, provide relevant examples, and respond to student questions appropriately. Deep understanding also enables teachers to face challenges and difficulties that may arise during the learning process. With a strong understanding of the subject matter, teachers can more easily identify the difficulties experienced by students and provide appropriate assistance.

Teachers can adapt their teaching strategies to overcome students' learning barriers and bridge gaps in understanding. A deep understanding of the subject matter also allows teachers to integrate interdisciplinary knowledge. They can help students understand the relationships between various concepts and apply their knowledge in relevant contexts. A strong understanding of the subject matter also provides a solid foundation for teachers to develop engaging and challenging instructional materials. To enhance teacher competence, sufficient attention needs to be given to a deep understanding of the subject matter. Training and professional development focused on conceptual understanding, curriculum updates, and the latest developments in the field of education can be effective strategies for improving teachers' competence in terms of a deep understanding of the subject matter.

A deep understanding of the subject matter is an important foundation for teacher competence. The constructivist theory, developed by Jean Piaget, emphasizes that students are actively involved in constructing their knowledge through interaction with the subject matter. With deep understanding, teachers can better facilitate the process of knowledge construction for students, provide accurate explanations, and connect concepts to real-world contexts.

Innovative Teaching Methods

Teachers who use innovative teaching methods can create engaging and effective learning experiences for students (Krisnamurti & Salamah, 2022). They utilize various creative and interactive teaching strategies, such as group discussions, collaborative projects, and the use of educational technology. With this approach, teachers can enhance student engagement in the learning process, motivate them to learn, and enrich the learning experience. Through the use of innovative teaching methods, teachers can create dynamic and interactive learning environments. Group discussions allow students to actively participate in the learning process, share ideas, and expand their understanding through collaboration with classmates. Collaborative projects provide opportunities for students to work together in creating solutions to given problems or tasks, which not only develop teamwork skills but also broaden their understanding through different perspectives. The use of educational technology also plays a significant role in innovative teaching methods.

Teachers can leverage various technological tools and resources, such as multimedia presentations, instructional videos, online learning platforms, and educational applications, to create engaging and relevant learning experiences for students. By utilizing appropriate educational technology, teachers can incorporate visual, audio, and interactive elements in their instruction, which can enhance student understanding and provide a more enjoyable learning experience. Improving teachers' competence in using innovative teaching methods can be achieved through training and professional development programs that provide knowledge and skills in creative teaching strategies and the utilization of educational technology. Adequate support and resources from schools and educational institutions are also important in encouraging teachers to adopt innovative teaching methods.

The social constructivism theory of learning by Lev Vygotsky emphasizes the importance of social interaction in the learning process. Through innovative teaching methods such as group discussions and collaborative projects, teachers create an environment where students can interact with peers, share knowledge, and support each
other. This encourages active learning, strengthens students' understanding, and promotes the development of social skills.

**Classroom Management Skills**

Good classroom management skills are an important factor in enhancing teacher competence (Irmadani, 2021). Teachers who are effective in classroom management can create a conducive, disciplined, and harmonious learning environment. They have skills in organizing the physical space of the classroom, managing time efficiently, and maintaining student discipline. Teachers with good classroom management skills can consistently implement rules and procedures. They explain the rules clearly to students and monitor compliance with those rules. Additionally, they can provide clear directions and realistic expectations to students regarding behavior and academic performance. By being consistent in rule enforcement, teachers can create a clear structure in the classroom and provide a sense of safety and comfort for students.

Teachers with good classroom management skills are also adept at handling conflicts wisely. They develop skills in listening and understanding students' perspectives, as well as employing appropriate strategies to resolve conflicts or differences of opinion within the classroom. Teachers also promote open communication and respect for diverse student viewpoints. In doing so, they create an inclusive environment and support positive collaboration among students. Effective classroom management encourages active participation from all students. Teachers create opportunities for students to interact, discuss, and contribute to the learning process. They provide support and guidance to students to actively engage in learning activities, thereby enhancing student engagement and motivation. Classroom management theories, such as Behaviorism and Cognitive Theory, provide insights into how teachers can create a structured and productive learning environment. By implementing rules, providing clear feedback, and building positive relationships with students, teachers can establish conditions that support student engagement and effective learning.

**Professional Development for Teachers**

Teachers who continually engage in professional development activities have enhanced teaching competencies (Rahmadini et al., 2022). They are aware of the importance of continuously enhancing their knowledge and skills to address the ever-evolving challenges in the field of education. Through professional development activities, teachers engage in training, seminars, workshops, and collaborative activities with their peers. Professional development provides opportunities for teachers to update their knowledge of the latest curriculum content, innovative teaching methods, and recent developments in the field of education. Teachers can learn effective teaching strategies, relevant educational technologies, and new approaches to supporting student diversity. They can also learn from the experiences and knowledge of their colleagues through discussions, reflections, and collaborations. Professional development enables teachers to adopt the latest practices in education. They can test and implement new approaches to teaching, adjust teaching methods to meet student's needs, and integrate technology in learning. By adopting best and innovative practices, teachers can enhance the effectiveness of their teaching and provide better learning experiences for students.

In achieving the improvement of teachers' competencies through professional development, teachers need to have adequate access to professional development programs and resources. Schools and educational institutions can support teachers in attending training, provide time for collaboration with peers, and encourage participation in professional development activities. Additionally, teachers can take personal initiatives to
develop themselves by seeking professional development opportunities outside the school environment, such as attending seminars and conferences, reading current literature, and engaging in online educational communities. By prioritizing professional development, teachers can enhance their teaching competencies and have a positive impact on the achievement of basic education goals (Sueca, 2018). Professional development not only benefits teachers personally but also has an impact on the overall quality of education, creating a better learning environment for students and supporting the achievement of optimal educational goals.

The constructivist theory in teacher learning states that teachers must continuously develop themselves and adapt to changes in education. Professional development activities, such as training, seminars, and workshops, provide opportunities for teachers to acquire new knowledge, develop skills, and apply best practices in teaching. The Transformational Leadership theory also highlights the importance of school leadership support in facilitating teacher professional development. Teachers who possess high competency in these factors can provide a better learning experience, enhance student motivation, and achieve optimal learning outcomes, thus reaching the learning goals.

3.2 Strategies and Initiatives to Enhance Teacher Competence at the Elementary Education Level

Continuous Professional Development Program
Organizing a continuous professional development program is an important step in enhancing the competence of elementary school teachers. This program can include training, workshops, seminars, and courses that focus on developing teaching skills, understanding current educational concepts, and implementing innovative teaching techniques. Professional development programs can provide opportunities for teachers to enhance their teaching skills through the introduction of new teaching methods, the use of educational technology, and creative approaches to teaching. Training can provide teachers with insights into effective teaching strategies, good classroom management, authentic assessment, and instructional differentiation. Teachers can also learn about changes in the curriculum and the latest developments in educational theory and practice. Workshops and seminars can serve as platforms for teachers to share experiences, ideas, and best practices. They can interact with fellow teachers, discuss challenges they face, and learn from each other's experiences. Additionally, courses focusing on understanding current educational concepts can help teachers stay updated with developments in research and educational practices, enabling them to integrate this new knowledge into their teaching.

By organizing a continuous professional development program, elementary school teachers will have ongoing access to enhancing their knowledge and skills. Increasing teacher competence will have a positive impact on the quality of teaching and student achievement (Uno, 2020). Teachers who continuously develop themselves will also be better prepared to face challenges and meet the evolving demands of education. Therefore, educational institutions and governments need to support and provide the necessary resources to implement effective and relevant professional development programs for teachers at the primary education level.

Collaboration between Teachers and Collaborative Learning
Encouraging collaboration among teachers at the primary education level is an important step in enhancing their competencies. Through collaborative learning activities, such as teacher work groups, learning communities, or curriculum development teams, teachers can share their experiences, ideas, and resources to improve the quality of
teaching. In this collaboration, teachers have the opportunity to interact directly with their peers (Rosita et al., 2022). They can discuss relevant educational topics, explore effective teaching strategies, and solve problems together. This collaboration also allows teachers to engage in collective reflection on their teaching practices, provide constructive feedback to each other, and discuss the best solutions to the challenges they face in the learning process. Additionally, through collaboration, teachers can build valuable collective knowledge. They can share their findings, create shared resource banks, and develop evidence-based teaching practices based on the latest research. By building collective knowledge, teachers can continuously sharpen their skills and improve the effectiveness of their teaching.

Encouraging collaboration among teachers also creates a positive learning culture in the primary education environment. Teachers become more open to sharing and working together, as well as supporting each other in their professional development. This collaboration also strengthens the teacher community and builds solid relationships among them. Therefore, educational institutions and governments need to encourage and provide adequate space and time for teachers to collaborate. Consistent support and good facilitation can help strengthen the collaboration among teachers at the primary education level, which in turn will enhance the quality of teaching and achieve optimal goals in primary education.

**Supervision and Mentoring**

Implementing an effective supervision and mentoring system is one of the important strategies in supporting the professional development of teachers at the primary education level. This supervision can be conducted by school principals or educational supervisors who have extensive experience and knowledge in the field of education (Sumirat, 2019). Effective supervision involves various activities aimed at improving the quality of teaching by teachers (Fitriadi et al., 2020). One of the main activities is classroom observation, where the supervisor directly observes the teaching process conducted by the teacher. This observation allows the supervisor to identify strengths and weaknesses in the teacher's teaching practices and provide direct constructive feedback. In addition to classroom observation, supervision also involves discussions and reflections between the teacher and supervisor. The supervisor can engage in discussions with the teacher about the teaching approaches used, effective strategies, and challenges faced in the classroom. These discussions provide an opportunity for teachers to share experiences, receive advice, and broaden their insights into teaching.

Mentoring is also an essential component of the supervision system. The supervisor can guide teachers in overcoming challenges encountered in the teaching process. This guidance can involve offering alternative strategies, providing additional resources, or even providing opportunities to attend specific training or workshops. Supervision may also involve developing follow-up plans to improve the quality of teaching. The supervisor and teacher can collaborate to develop specific action plans, including competency development targets, training activities, and progress monitoring. By implementing an effective supervision and mentoring system, teachers have the opportunity to continuously enhance their competence through structured support and guidance. Good supervision builds a trusting relationship between teachers and supervisors and creates an environment that supports professional growth. School principals and educational supervisors play a crucial role in implementing effective supervision. They should have a good understanding of effective teaching practices, possess excellent communication skills, and be able to provide constructive feedback. Additionally, they should involve teachers in the decision-making process related to competence development. Through the implementation of an
effective supervision and mentoring system, it is expected that teacher competence can be continually improved, the quality of teaching enhanced, and the goals of primary education achieved more optimally.

The Provision of Resources and Technology

Optimizing the use of supportive resources, including educational technology, in the learning environment is one important strategy to enhance the competency of teachers at the primary education level (Rahmadin et al., 2022). Educational technology has become an integral part of modern learning processes, and teachers need to utilize it effectively to improve the quality of teaching and learning. By providing teachers with access to digital resources, educational software, and relevant online libraries, they have the opportunity to access information, instructional materials, and other supportive resources that can be used in the teaching process. Through the appropriate use of educational technology, teachers can present lesson materials in a more engaging, interactive, and understandable manner for students.

One of the key benefits of using educational technology is its ability to deliver learning content in multimedia formats, including images, audio, video, and animations. This can enrich students' learning experiences and make the learning process more engaging and interactive. Teachers can use multimedia presentations, instructional videos, simulations, and interactive applications to illustrate complex concepts in a more visual and captivating way. Educational technology also enables teachers to provide additional resources that students can access outside of class hours. With online libraries, students can access supplementary lesson materials, references, journals, and relevant e-books related to the topics being studied. This allows students to deepen their understanding and conduct further research.

The use of educational technology can also facilitate communication and collaboration between teachers and students. Through online learning platforms, discussion forums, or other communication tools, teachers can interact with students beyond the classroom, provide feedback, and facilitate group discussions. This creates opportunities for more effective communication and allows teachers to provide additional support to students on an individual or group basis. However, teachers need to use educational technology wisely and in the learning context. Teachers need to select digital resources and educational software that align with the curriculum, learning objectives, and student's needs. They also need to develop skills in integrating educational technology into their teaching practices in an effective and relevant manner. By optimizing the use of supportive resources, including educational technology, in the learning environment, it is expected that teachers can enhance the quality of teaching and learning, provide more engaging learning experiences, and support the achievement of primary education goals. The appropriate use of educational technology can help create a more dynamic, interactive, and motivating learning environment for students.

Improving Assessment and Feedback

Developing a comprehensive assessment system and providing constructive feedback to teachers is a crucial step in enhancing their competency at the primary education level. A good assessment system provides an accurate overview of teachers' performance in carrying out their duties and the extent to which they have achieved learning objectives. One form of assessment that can be conducted is classroom observation. Through classroom observation, educational supervisors or school principals can directly observe the teaching and learning activities conducted by teachers. This observation can encompass aspects such as student engagement, implementation of teaching strategies, classroom
management skills, and interactions between teachers and students. The results of these observations provide valuable information about the strengths and weaknesses of teachers in the teaching process.

In addition to classroom observation, the development of teacher portfolios can also be an effective assessment tool. A teacher portfolio is a collection of documents and performance evidence that includes lesson plans, teaching materials, student assignments, evidence of student achievements, as well as reflections and analyses from the teacher. By developing a portfolio, teachers can reflect on their teaching practices, monitor their progress over time, and identify areas that need improvement. Furthermore, periodic performance evaluations are also important for providing constructive feedback to teachers. These evaluations can be conducted by school principals or educational supervisors periodically, such as every semester or once a year. The evaluation involves assessing teachers' performance based on predetermined criteria, such as the quality of lesson planning and implementation, classroom management skills, interactions with students, and contributions to student development (Majid & Bariah, 2021). The results of these evaluations can be used as a basis for providing feedback to teachers, identifying development needs, and planning appropriate improvement actions.

It is important to ensure that the feedback given to teachers is constructive and supportive. Feedback should be specific, clear, and guide teachers toward concrete improvement steps. Teachers need to be given space for reflection and discussion regarding the feedback provided so that they can understand areas that need improvement and plan appropriate development steps. Continuous support and guidance from school principals or educational supervisors are also essential in assisting teachers in their ongoing professional development. By developing a comprehensive assessment system and providing constructive feedback to teachers, it is expected that teachers can have a better understanding of their performance, identify areas for improvement, and plan appropriate development steps. This will contribute to an overall improvement in teacher competency, which in turn will support the achievement of optimal primary education goals. By implementing these strategies and initiatives, it is expected that teacher competency at the primary education level can be significantly enhanced. Improved teacher competency will have a positive impact on the overall quality of primary education, help achieve better educational goals, and provide a better future for students.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Improving teacher competency is essential in supporting the achievement of primary education goals. Through interviews with six teachers and a literature review, it was found that factors influencing teacher competency include a deep understanding of the subject matter, the use of innovative teaching methods, good classroom management skills, and professional development. A deep understanding of the subject matter is crucial for teachers to provide a better understanding to students. Teachers with a strong grasp of the subject matter can explain concepts clearly, provide relevant examples, and respond accurately to student questions. The use of innovative teaching methods also contributes to enhancing teacher competency. Creative and interactive teaching methods create engaging and effective learning experiences for students. Group discussions, collaborative projects, and the use of educational technology are examples of innovative teaching strategies that can be employed. Good classroom management skills are also important factors in
improving teacher competency. Effective classroom management enables teachers to create a conducive, disciplined, and harmonious learning environment. This ability helps create optimal conditions for effective learning. Additionally, professional development plays a crucial role in enhancing teacher competency. Teachers who continuously develop themselves through training, seminars, and collaborative activities with peers can update their knowledge and skills, as well as adopt the latest practices in education. To enhance teacher competency at the primary education level, several strategies and initiatives can be implemented. These include organizing continuous professional development programs, encouraging collaboration among teachers, implementing effective supervision and mentoring systems, optimizing the use of supportive resources, and developing a comprehensive assessment system. In the effort to improve the quality of primary education and achieve optimal educational goals, the government, educational institutions, and relevant stakeholders need to give serious attention to enhancing teacher competency. By improving teacher competency, it is expected that primary education can provide a better future for the next generation.

REFERENCES


