

COMPETENCY DEVELOPMENT OF TRAINERS THROUGH PROFESSIONAL PARTNERSHIP: AN ACTION RESEARCH STUDY FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Written by
MUHAMMAD IQBAL FADILLAH

(THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA)

Abstract

This paper discussed an action research study on the use of professional partnership model by eight trainers of National Institute of Public Administration (NIPA) - Indonesia. This paper aimed at exploring the impact of professional partnership on the relationship and professional development of the trainers. The method used in the study was qualitative action research. Two action research cycles were trialed over three-month period in 2017 to uncover the impact of professional development skills through professional partnership on the professional practice and working relationship of trainers. These eight trainers formed four partnerships and were involved in four workshops. In the workshops they learned and practiced a number of professional development skills. The principles of reciprocity and reflexivity underpinned this study. The data were collected from interview and observation, as well as examination of written records of the workshop. A grounded theory analysis of data identified four categories of main findings of this action research. These were: the effects of professional development skills taught and practiced during the workshops, classroom observation and the professional development of the trainers, trainers' relationship and professional partnership, and issues in the development of professional partnership of the trainers. The paper concluded that the use of professional partnership model enhanced not only the personal and professional development of the of trainers in NIPA but also their social development.

Keywords: professional partnership, action research, trainers, professional development

Introduction

In Law No. 5 of 2014 on Civil Services (ASN - Aparatur Sipil Negara), ASN competence is an important part in ASN career development, in addition to ASN qualification and performance. ASN consists of Civil servants (PNS- Pegawai Negeri Sipil) and government contractual employees (P3K – Pegawai Pemerintah dengan Perjanjian Kerja). ASN is required to develop managerial, technical and social cultural competencies through education, training (leadership, technical, and functional) and non-training (seminars, workshops, internships, coaching and so on). The importance of ASN competence development is reinforced by Government Regulation (PP -Peraturan Pemerintah) No. 11 of 2017 on Civil Servants Management (PNS) which stipulates the right of competence development at least 20 hours of learning (JP)

per year.

Trainers as one of the functional positions of PNS, have also rights to be developed in order to achieve their highest career level.

Competence development is the basis of career development and the trainers are obliged to develop their competence according to their competency standards based on the Regulation of Head of National Institute of Public Administration (Perkalan) No 5 of 2008 to become professional trainers as mandated by Law and PP above either independently or in partnership or group. The four standards of competence based on the above Perkalan are the competences of learning management, personality competence, social competence, and substantive competence.

Learning management competence is a capability that trainers must possess in planning, compiling, implementing and evaluating the learning. Competence of learning management includes ability to:

1. make Outline of Learning Program (GBPP) / Design of Learning Subject (RBPMD) and Learning Program (SAP) / Learning Plan (RP);
2. compile teaching materials;
3. apply adult learning;
4. make effective communication with participants;

5. motivate participants' learning spirit; and
6. evaluate learning.

Personality competence is a capability that must be possessed by trainers about the behavior in performing the duties of their position that can be observed and made an example for training participants. Personality competence includes ability to:

1. perform exemplary personal models; and
2. implement the code of ethics and show the work ethic as a professional trainers.

Social competence is a capability that trainers must possess in relation to its working environment. Social competence includes ability to:

1. foster relationships and cooperation with fellow trainers; and
2. establish relationships with organizers / managers of Training institutions.

Substantive competence is a skill that must be possessed by trainers in the field of science and skill in training subject that is taught. Substantive competence includes ability to:

1. master the knowledge and practice skills in accordance with the training materials taught; and
2. write scientific papers related to the scope of the specialization and / or the development of his specialty.

This competency development policy of providing 20 hours competency development has implications for the government's obligation to provide budgets for approximately 4.5 million civil servants across Indonesia. In reality, however, not all Ministries, Institutions, and Local Governments (KLDs) allocate budgets for the development of competencies, especially for certain functional officials. As a trainer of Training and Education, technical and functional training budget for the development of civil servant's competence, especially the trainees held in Technical and Functional Training Center (Pusdiklat TF) of National Institute of Public Administration (NIPA) is not only intended for 14 trainers of Pusdiklat TF, but also for all trainers from KLD national. Thus, the opportunity of Pusdiklat TF trainers to develop themselves in order to become professional and quality trainers cannot be

fulfilled just by waiting for the training of the activities undertaken by Pusdiklat TF only.

In addition, the variation of competence and quality of existing trainers in NIPA, especially in Pusdiklat TF is possibly shown by the educational background, competence, and performance of the trainers in Pusdiklat TF. There are trainers who have high educational background, competence and performance qualifications. There are also trainers who have

high education qualifications, but the competence and performance are less than others in Pusdiklat TF. Conversely, there is also a low-level education, but their performance and competence can support the implementation of Pusdiklat TF tasks and functions.

In relation to the problem of developing the competence of trainers in Pusdiklat TF, there are several alternative solutions in the development of trainers in order to increase the quality of trainers. The alternatives of competence development can be done through training, such as TOT – Training of Trainers, through non-training, such as Coaching, Mentoring, Supervision or Partnership. From some of these alternatives, professional partnership is chosen as an alternative model of competence development that is more neutral and prioritizes alignment between the one trainer with other trainers. So, the alternative model of competency development through professional partnership is more suitable for improving the competence and quality of the trainers in Pusdiklat TF.

There are many studies related to professional partnership in Education and Training (Conderman, 2011; Gajda and Koliba, 2008; Glover and Harris, 2016; Greene and Tichenor 1999; Lord Nelson, Summers, and Turnbull, 2004; Milbrandt, 2006; Salm and Mullholland, 2015; Summers, et al., 2005). The researchers explored the professional partnerships between principals (Gajda and Koliba, 2008), between teachers and principals (Glover and Harris, 2016) between consultant / researcher and teacher (Conderman, 2011), between parents and teachers (Lord Nelson, Summers, and Turnbull, 2004; Summers, et al., 2005), and

between mentors and teachers (Salm and Mulholland, 2015). Although there is research on professional partnerships between teachers (Greene and Tichenor, 1999), there is no research on professional partnerships through action research.

Methodology

The methodology used was descriptive qualitative method that described the perception and experience of the research subjects who were the trainers involved in this professional partnership from August 14 to October 10, 2017. The research subject of eight trainers of Pusdiklat TF formed four partnerships. The eight trainers were given treatment by involving them in four workshops that applied the process of action research activities. In this action research, there were the process of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988). In the four workshops, the eight trainers were introduced some professional development skills that could be applied and directly related to their daily work as trainers at Pusdiklat TF. These skills included active listening skills, classroom observation, reflective and context interviewing skills, evaluative feedback skills, and action research skills. These skills were given with the aim that the eight trainers could explore their potentials by way of introspection, a reflection on every activity they did and also partners did.

Data obtained from the four workshops and other activities in the form of documents reflection of the workshops, observations, meetings, interviews and other documents were collected. Then, these data were analyzed by using data analysis method which is called grounded theory (Sodiq, and Muttaqin, 2003; Straus and Corbin, 1994).

Results and Discussion

The result of action research on professional partnership of trainers is described in three ways, namely categories, themes and propositions. The result of this study was that there are four categories:

Effect of facilitation skills provided and

practiced during the workshop

Class observations and professional development of trainers

Trainers relationship and professional partnership trainers, and

Issues in the development of professional partnership trainers.

The first category, the influence of facilitation skills provided and practiced during the workshop, showed that the workshops undertaken could enhance the development of professional partnerships with an emphasis on improving perceptions, comprehension and feelings of the trainers towards their experience on the influence of facilitation skills for their professional development.

This category generated a theme that trainers appreciated the efforts of researcher in facilitating workshops for professional development of trainers. Partners believed that this action research encouraged them to work together, reflect on each other, and provide opportunities to enhance their professional development.

There are two propositions for this theme: firstly, facilitation skills helped partners to improve individual development, professional development as well as social development of trainers. Second, the partners believed that workshop helped them find new ways of the trainers in collaboration with reflection, active listening, interviewing, and action research.

From the data obtained, the eight trainers stated that the skills they gained in the workshop could increase the critical awareness of the learning process. In addition, the skills in this workshop made their desire to change and grow for better trainers. They were also motivated to develop their work as teachers or trainers. The research results showed that by giving the eight trainers the opportunity to learn and practice about the skills mentioned above could improve their personal development and professionalism. The result of this study was in accordance with Zuber-Skerritt (1992) who examined the influence of action research implementation on lecturers in higher education in Australia.

In addition, the facilitation skills provided in

this action research helped the eight trainers to improve their competence. By joining the four workshops, they became aware and understood that learning was obtained not only through reflection on what was or had been done but also through what others did (critical reflection). These results supported the results of Robertson's (1995: 1997) study which stated that critical reflection could improve the professionalism of some principals in New Zealand.

The results of this study also showed that through the workshop not only self-development and professionalism to eight trainers increased but also relationships with employees and other trainers increased. This is consistent with the result of Bell and Gilbert (1996) research which stated that learning through employee development programs could improve the personal, professional and social development of teachers in New Zealand.

The second category, class observation and professional development of trainers, showed their perceptions, feelings and beliefs related to experience in classroom observation. The theme was that trainers believed that classroom observation was an effective way of enhancing their professional development.

This theme produced two propositions: first, there were many differences related to previous observational experiences. The second proposition was that trainers believed that classroom observation was an effective way of enhancing their professional development by mirroring or self-reflection while observing partners' practice.

From the data analysis, the eight trainers stated that observation of the activities performed by their partners was an effective way to improve their professionalism. They feel that self-interest, self-understanding and critical reflection of their own activities and their partner activities were enhanced by observation. This was experienced by both parties that was good not only for the observer but also for the observed trainers. The result of this study was in accordance with some research results on peer coaching (Kovic, 1996; Wood and Killian, 1998; Wood and McQuarrie, 1999). The result

of the research was that observation was an effective and economical learning activity for both parties; observing partners and observed partners.

Based on the results above, it is suggested that trainers could observe the activities of their partners by preparing careful observation through careful planning so that the quality of observation implementation could be relied upon and the effect of competence as well as the performance of the trainers also increased. Time arrangement of observation also needed to be considered and discussed to each of the trainers in order to be taken bigger benefit.

The third category, trainers' relationship and professional partnership trainers, showed the impact of professional partnerships on relationships between trainers. The theme of this category was that professional partnerships helped improve the relationship of the trainers. There were three propositions: the first proposition was that partnerships were to improve the relationship between partners and enhanced their professional development. The second proposition was that partnerships enhanced the relationship between one partner with another partner. The third proposition was that partnerships were to improve the relationship between partners with other trainers. These three propositions were conducted through meeting activities as well as sharing ideas or suggestions in meetings in the trainers' room.

The results of this study showed that the eight trainers wanted this partnership activities continued and they also wanted to partner with trainers or other employees. This means that the application of this professional partnership model could improve not only their professionalism but also the relationship between the trainees and employees in Pusdiklat TF because the frequency and quality of interaction between them increased. The results of this study were in conformity with what Smylie (1988) stated that the ongoing interaction with peers would enhance mutual understanding between the two and also improved the effectiveness of their activities

and the quality of the partnerships they ran.

Robertson (1995) also stated that increased interaction between principals could improve their professionalism. Based on the results of the above research suggested that Pusdiklat TF needs to increase the quantity and quality of meetings between trainers and employees who later expected to improve not only trainers professional development but also improve the quality of relationship between trainers and employees in Pusdiklat TF.

There are several important issues that emerged in this research in order to develop professional partnership. The first issue was that the eight trainers were aware that they needed to improve their competence and performance as future challenges became more competitive and the demands of the world were increasingly challenging. They suggested that trainers and workshop development programs were an effective activity to improve the competence and performance of trainers and employees. It was also stated by Joyce and Shower (1983) that the employee development program was an effective process of activities in improving the knowledge and skills of trainers and employees.

The fourth category, issues in the development of professional partnership trainers, showed the problems and obstacles that arose in the implementation of partnership. The theme of this category was the trainers believed that there were problems and also obstacles in developing professional partnership of trainers. From the theme there were three propositions. The first proposition was that trainers saw the need for professional development programs through workshops on a regular and ongoing basis. The second proposition was that time and scheduling were factors affecting professional partnership of trainers. And the third proportion was busyness was a factor that influenced the success of professional partnership of trainers. From the results of these studies, then the issue that arose was a matter of time. In this study the eight trainers somewhat difficult to meet because they had a busy life. Therefore, there was a need for commitment among them in conducting partnership, especially in observing

the teaching and learning process. The need for a long time to build a partnership was also experienced by Allsop (1994) which stated that to build trust (trust trusts) between employees or trainers in a partnership took a long time. Clutterbuck and Wynne (1994) also had the same problem of time. According to them time was one of the factors that hindered the success of the partnership (peer coaching).

Therefore, to solve the problem, it was suggested that Pusdiklat TF provided certain fixed time for trainers/employees' competency development program or workshop activity. In addition, the trainers or employees involved in the program were allowed and / or discharged from office work so they could concentrate fully on the program.

Conclusion

From the results of this study, it could be concluded that through this action research that examined the influence of the application of professional partnership of eight trainers to the development of professionalism, trainers not only learnt about new skills of self-development but also got the opportunity to practice it in daily work. They also learnt a lot from practical experience in this action research so as to enhance their critical thinking and understanding of their work which indirectly enhanced personal development of the trainers. In addition, in this action research of eight trainers given the opportunity to reflect the activities or professional work themselves and their partners. This reflection in action activity could enhance their professional development and in accordance with what was found by Robertson (1995; 1997), Schon (1983), and Smyth (1986). In this study the eight trainers were also given the opportunity to cooperate, exchange ideas and experiences about the skills they got in the four workshops that they followed. This collaborative learning approach not only rose their concerns for the development of their professionalism as well as their partners but also the working relationships between the trainers and other employees. This means that

the implementation of professional partnership through action research on the eight trainers not only could improve their personal and professional development but also improve their social development. These results were in accordance with the standards of competence based on Perkaln No. 5 of 2008 that was the competence of learning management, personal competence, social competence, and substantive competence.

In addition, the research results also showed that the time factor determined the success of professional partnerships of trainers. In relation to this and the benefits of this professional partnerships of trainers, scheduling of teaching and training activities needed to be developed early in the year so that trainers could manage their professional partnership activities well.

From the results of this study, the recommendations to improve the development of trainers competencies in Pusdiklat TF are as follows:

1. Support the efforts of trainers to conduct partnership and research activities. This means that the leaders and trainers in Pusdiklat TF need to have commitment and support to the efforts undertaken by trainers to improve their professionalism, such as research activities and partnerships.
2. Pusdiklat TF needs to encourage and provide trainers with opportunities to form partnerships among them as the establishment of this partnership can enhance interaction between partners as well as with other employees. This increase in frequency will reduce the relationship gap between trainers in Pusdiklat TF. With the implementation of these two recommendations, it is expected that not only trainers will be able to develop their competence and improve their performance but also Pusdiklat TF as a whole.
3. Head of Pusdiklat TF need to make arrangement of schedule of

assignment arranged together with trainers at the beginning of the year so that professional partnership goes well

Reference

- Allsop, T. 1994. *Collaboration and transition in initial training*. London: Kogan Page
- Bell, B., and Gilbert, B., 1996. *Teacher development: A Model from Science education*. London: The Falmer Press
- Butler, L, dan Leach, N. 2011, *Action Learning for Change: A Practical Guide for Managers*, Gloucestershire: Management Book 2000
- Clutterbuck, D. and Wynne, B. 1994. *Mentoring and Coaching*. In Mumford (Ed.). *Handbook of management development* (4th edition). (pp.156-169), Vermont: Glower.
- Conderman, Greg. 2011. "Middle School Co-Teaching: Effective Practices and Student Reflections." *Middle School Journal* 42, no. 4 (03, 2011): 24-31.
- Gajda, Rebecca and Christopher J. Koliba. 2008, "Evaluating and Improving the Quality of Teacher Collaboration: A Field-Tested Framework for Secondary School Leaders." *National Association of Secondary School Principals. NASSP Bulletin* 92, no. 2 (06, 2008): 133-153.
- Glover, Crystal P. and Chinyere Harris. 2016, "Professional Dyads and Culturally Relevant Literacy through the Eyes of a Beginning Teacher Leader." *Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin* 83, no. 1 (Fall, 2016): 25-35.
- Öner, Ayşe Tuğba and Robert M. Capraro. "Is STEM Academy Designation Synonymous with Higher Student Achievement?" *Eğitim Ve Bilim* 41, no. 185 (2016).
- Greene, Paula K. and Mercedes S. Tichenor. 1999, "Partnerships on a Collaborative Continuum." *Contemporary Education* 70, no. 4 (Summer, 1999): 13.
- Joyce, B. and Shower, B., 1983. *Power in staff development through research and training*. Alexandria: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
- Kemmis, S., dan McTaggart, R. 1988. *The Action Research Planner* (3rd Edition) Geelong: Deakin University.
- Kovic, S., 1991. Peer coaching to facilitate inclusion: A job-embedded -staff development model. *Journal of Staff Development*. 17(1), 28-31.
- Milbrandt, Melody K. "A Collaborative Model for Art Education Teacher Preparation." *Arts Education Policy Review* 107, no. 5 (May, 2006): 13-21.
- Lord Nelson, Louise, G., Jean Ann Summers, and Ann P. Turnbull. 2004, "Boundaries in Family-Professional Relationships: Implications for Special Education." *Remedial and Special Education* 25, no. 3 (May, 2004): 153-165.

- Milbrandt, Melody K. 2006, "A Collaborative Model for Art Education Teacher Preparation." *Arts Education Policy Review* 107, no. 5 (May, 2006): 13-21.
- Robertson, J., 1997. A Programme of Professional Partnership for Leadership Development, *Waikato Journal of Education*, 3: 137 – 152
- Robertson, J., 1995, *Principals' Partnership: An Action Research Study on The Professional Development of The New Zealand School Leaders*, Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, The University of Waikato
- Salm, Twyla and Val Mulholland. 2015 "Building a Sustainable Structure to Support the Adaptive Mentorship Model in Teacher Education." *International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching in Education* 4, no. 1 (2015): 53-68.
- Schon, D., 1983. *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action*: New York: basic Books.
- Smylie, M., 1988. The enhancement of emotion of staff development: Organizational psychological antecedences to individual teacher change, *American Educational Research journal*, 25(1), 1-30.
- Smyth, J., 1986. *Reflection in action*. Victoria: Deakin University Press.
- Sodiq, M., dan Muttaqin, I., 2003, *Dasar-dasar Penelitian Kualitatif: tata langkah dan Teknik-teknik Teoritasi data.*: Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.
- Straus, A., dan Corbin, J., 1990. *Basic of qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques*, California: Sage Publication, Inc.
- Summers, Jean Ann, Lesa Hoffman, Janet Marquis, Ann Turnbull, and Denise Poston. 2005 "Relationship between Parent Satisfaction regarding Partnerships with Professionals and Age of Child." *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education* 25, no. 1 (Spring, 2005): 48-58.
- Wood, F., dan Killian, J., E., 1998. Job-embedded Learning makes different in School Improvement. *Journal of Staff Development*, 19(1), 52-54.
- Wood, F., dan McQuarrie, F., 1999. On the Job-Learning., *Journal of Staff Development*, 20 (3), 10-13.
- Zubber-Skirritt, O., 1992. *Action Research in Higher education: Examples and Reflections*. Philadelphia: Open University Press

Laws and Regulation

- Undang-Undang No 5 tahun 2014 tentang Aparatur Sipil Negara
- Peraturan Pemerintah No 11 tahun 2017 tentang Manajemen Pegawai Negeri Sipil
- Peraturan Kepala LAN No 5 tahun 2008 tentang Standar Kompetensi Widyaiswara