

Portraying Teachers' Academic Writing Ability as the First Step to Sustainable Teachers' Professionalism Development

MIA NURKANTI¹⁾, MIMI HALIMAH²⁾, NIA NURDIANI³⁾

1,2,3)Biology Education Study Program of Universitas Pasundan

Jalan Tamansari No. 6-8, 40116, Bandung

e-mail: mee.nkanti@yahoo.com1), mimi_iding@yahoo.com2), niapriati@yahoo.com3)

Abstract

This study is the first stage of a longitudinal study on teacher professional development, particularly in writing scientific papers. From the researchers' experience as trainers in teacher development program, it was found that most teachers found it difficult to write scientific writings. Hence, this study was attempted to investigate series of observations was done to analyze teachers' difficulties in making academic writing, with questionnaires as the data collection instrument. Conducted in 2014, 44 respondents—7 male and 37 female teachers from Bandung and Cimahi—were given questionnaires and 42 respondents submitted the questionnaires back. From the questionnaires it was found that teachers' knowledge in writing academic writing was 20.7%, teachers' attitude towards academic writing was 15.5%, teachers' motivation in making academic writing was 15.5%, teachers' motivation in joining academic writing training was 56%, and teachers' skill in writing academic paper was 7.8%. From the data, the researchers tried to collect further data on teachers' relatively low knowledge, attitude and skills in academic writings in order to make training model to improve those aspects. The data served as the basis for conducting further research employing research and development (R & D) methods on making a teacher training model focusing in academic writing for teachers in Bandung and Cimahi that have already been in colom for six years as an attempt to sustainably develop teachers' professional competence.

Keywords: teachers, training, academic writing, professional, R & D

INTRODUCTION

1. Background of the study

It is indisputable that education is essential to improve human resource in Indonesia to be better, more civilized, and able to compete both nationally and internationally. Most importantly, the ultimate goal of education is to educate all people in the country, as stipulated in the country's Constitution 1945. The effort to bring about the goal achievement is the responsibility of all elements of the society, particularly teachers and academicians. Teachers have an important role in determining the nation's education quality and thus the effort to improve the nation's education should start from them. Hence, the presence of professional

teachers is of the essence.

One aspect of a professional teacher is teacher competences. Teacher competences are the set of abilities that a teacher must be able to perform in doing his job; they comprises of observable activities, behaviors and performances. *Permendiknas* No. 16, 2007 stipulates teacher competences: pedagogical, personal, social, and professional competences.

Various activities have been conducted by the government in assisting teachers to improve their professionalism. Two of them are teacher certification program and national education standards policies. The legal foundations of the policies are regulation no. 20-2003 on National Education System; no 14-2005 on teacher and lecturer, 19-2005 on National Education Standard; National Education Minister Regulation No. 16-2007 on Teacher Academic Qualification and Competences; Government Regulation no 74-2008 on Teachers; and National Minister Regulation No. 10-2009 on Certification for Teachers.

Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is a program which is aimed at addressing teachers' needs to achieve or to improve their teaching competences. The achievement on the competences has an implication on the acquiring of credit points for promotion in their career. CPD addresses three aspects: self-development, scientific publication and innovative works.

Of the three aspects, scientific publication was the main concern of the researchers. The assessments on the teachers' ability in writing research proposals conducted in Teacher Education and Training Program (PLPG) from 2007-2012 show that the participants' ability in that area is still low. The data is supported by the researchers' interview on the participants, which reveals that their difficulties in writing scientific papers are due to their lack of understanding on the procedures of writing scientific papers. The lack of experiences in writing scientific papers also contributes to their relatively low ability in writing. In addition, the participants did not know what they had to do with the papers that they have made. The researchers' also found that teachers' writings on academic journals, both accredited and non-accredited ones, are scarce while teachers' writings on their blogs are still considered poor.

2. The aims of the study

The study was conducted to meet the following aims:

1. Theoretically, the result of the study is expected to contribute to pedagogy development to serve as a basis on stipulating educational policies in order to improve the country's education quality.
2. Practically, the study is expected to give input and information generally for Pasundan Education Foundation and particularly for the government, in this case The Ministry of National Education in improving teachers' competences.
3. It is also expected to serve as considerations for Pasundan Education Foundation in conducting its education programs to support the government's educational programs.
4. The study is also the realization of higher education institution's *Tridharma* components, which comprise of education, research, and social service activities.

3. Research methods

The study employed Research and Development (R & D) method involving teachers of junior and senior high school teachers in Bandung and Cimahi. The stages in the study were those proposed by Dick and Carey, which were adapted from Gall et al. (2003). The stages were 1) conducting needs assessment to determine the aims of the study, 2) conducting need analysis on teachers' requirements in meeting CPD requirements, 3) identifying teachers' attitudes, interests, motivations, and skills, 4) designing assessment instruments, 5) developing training strategies, developing and selecting training media, 7) designing evaluation instrument, 8) validating training instruments and models, 9) testing the model in limited participants, 10) reflecting on the results of the test, 11) implementing training model, and 12) reflecting on all stages of the study.

The training was conducted three times, as shown in the following table:

Meeting	Hari/tanggal	Pemateri	Materi	Tempat
1	May 8, 2015	Prof. Dr. H Bambang Heru, P.M.S.	Academic writing theories	Aula FKIP Unpas, Tamansari
		Dr. Aan Listiana, M.Pd.	Academic writing practice	Aula FKIP Unpas, Tamansari
2	May 28, 2015	Prof. Dr. Hj. Poppy Yaniawati, M.Pd.	Evaluation on participants' writings	Unpas Postgraduate Building Jl. Sumatera no. 41 Bandung
3	June 3, 2015	Tim peneliti	Revising participants' writings	Aula FKIP Unpas, Tamansari

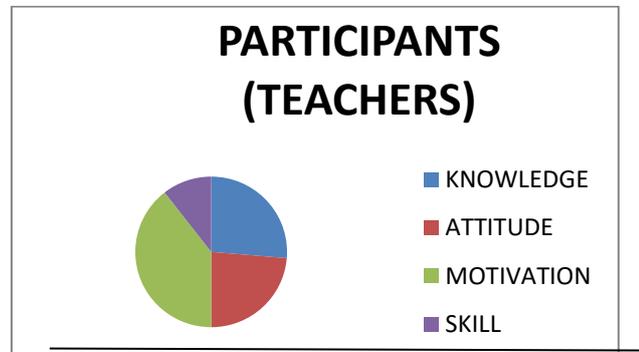
The instruments which were used in this study were questionnaires and product assessment form.

4. Findings

In 2015, the researchers collected data through writing scientific paper training. The followings are the data from the preliminary study conducted in 2014.

1. The number of participants was 44 with 42 participants returned the questionnaires.
2. The participants were 7 male and 37 female teachers of various subjects from Bandung and Cimahi.
3. The questionnaires results are presented as follows:
 - 3.1. The participants' knowledge in making scientific paper was 20.7%.
 - 3.2. The participants' attitude towards writing scientific papers was 15,5%.
 - 3.3. The participants' motivation on writing and joining scientific paper writing was 56%.
 - 3.4. The participants' skill in writing scientific paper was 7,8%.

Figure 1. The participants' preliminary data on writing scientific paper.



The factors that cause the participants' difficulties in writing scientific papers are low motivation in searching resources for references, lack of time, difficulties in deciding research topic, statements of problems, choosing research method, aims of the study, making introduction, and no access to internet. Meanwhile, for some teachers who have written scientific papers, they faced difficulties in publishing them in national or international journals. These reasons were also identified in the interviews with the participants.

From the reasons for not writing scientific papers above, it can be inferred that the teachers' main barrier to write scientific papers is mental block within themselves. Their perception toward writing scientific papers tends to be negative. It is line with Zhu (2001) who suggested that negative perception towards argumentative writing mostly hinders someone to be able to make good papers. Hence, it is important consideration for any teacher or trainer to create good perception among their students about scientific papers.

The next obstacle in writing scientific papers is technical aspects. It is obvious then when someone does not know how to do something, he would think that it is difficult to do. The issue of lack of writing skills is strongly related to perceptions, as mentioned above, and opportunities to improve writing skills. Considering the ability to write scientific paper is essential in a teacher's professional development, it is necessary to provide sufficient trainings as many as possible for teachers to help them develop their writing skills.

It is in line with the participants' interests in taking writing trainings or workshops. The participants know that it is important for them both for expanding their insight and promoting their career. In addition, generally the teachers have never written learning module or dictate and, thus, they feel training on writing scientific paper is necessary. Hence, writing training that is relevant to the effort to continuously improve the teachers' professionalism is that of scientific paper writing.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

From this study, it was found that the participants, despite the difficulties that they face, felt that writing scientific paper is important for expanding their horizon and improving their professionalism. In order to be effective and efficient, there has to be synergy between training committee and participants. Hence, further research on difficulties that teachers face in writing scientific paper is needed. Additionally, there is a need to obtain extensive data; that is gathered from teachers not only from Bandung and Cimahi, but also from other cities and regencies in West Java province.

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