Implementation and Actualization of Human Resource Development Programs to Improve Teacher Professionalism in Junior High Schools in the Hinterland Area of Batam

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the implementation and actualization of human resource development (HRD) programs aimed at enhancing teacher professionalism in junior high schools within Batam's hinterland. The research is driven by the need to address educational disparities in remote areas, particularly concerning teacher competence. Employing a qualitative approach, data were collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis involving principals, teachers, and local education officials. The findings reveal that while HRD initiatives such as training and workshops have been introduced, their implementation faces constraints, including limited funding, inadequate access to training facilities, and minimal post-training support. The actualization of these programs remains suboptimal, with few practical applications in classroom contexts. Teachers often encounter difficulties in applying theoretical knowledge due to insufficient institutional backing. This study concludes that improving teacher professionalism in hinterland areas requires increased access to practical, context-relevant training, enhanced institutional support, and greater stakeholder involvement. The results underscore the importance of aligning HRD strategies with local conditions to foster meaningful and sustainable professional growth among educators. Implications suggest the need for policy reforms and targeted investment to optimize HRD outcomes in remote educational settings.

Keywords: human resource development, teacher professionalism, implementation, hinterland, education policy

INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental pillar in the development of human resources in any nation. In the context of Indonesia, improving the quality of education is essential to prepare future generations capable of competing in an increasingly globalized world. One of the primary factors influencing educational outcomes is teacher quality. Therefore, enhancing teacher professionalism is a crucial step toward improving educational standards, especially at the junior secondary level.

According to Binti Zakaria, Siti Noor Hayati, and Habsah Hussin [1], teacher professionalism is closely related to school performance, including student success in academic, co-curricular, and personal domains. Teacher competence is considered the most effective medium for student development in schools. Kunter, Baumert, and Köller [2] argue that teachers need pedagogical content knowledge, professional beliefs, work-related motivation, and self-regulation as dimensions of professional competence. Meanwhile, Anderson [3] emphasizes that teacher professionalism also involves commitment, self-confidence, low anxiety, and mutual respect among colleagues.

In Indonesia, especially in remote and underserved regions such as Batam's hinterland, educational quality faces multiple challenges. These include limited access to training, inadequate facilities, and minimal support from stakeholders. Sparks [4] asserts that teachers act as critical agents of change in building high-performing schools. Their capacity as change agents significantly influences the quality of teaching and learning. As Katzenmeyer and Moller [5], and Wehling [6] further suggest, empowering teachers in this role provides greater opportunities to ensure equitable access to quality education.

One strategic initiative to address these challenges is the implementation of Human Resource Development (HRD) programs. HRD encompasses training, education, career development, and performance management aimed at improving individual capabilities in the workplace [7]. Hasibuan [8] defines HRD as a systematic effort to enhance employee skills, knowledge, and capacity to contribute optimally to organizational goals. In education, HRD programs—whether implemented by the central government, local education offices, or educational institutions—are expected to improve teachers'

pedagogical knowledge, teaching skills, and professional attitudes[9], [10], [11].

Nevertheless, the implementation and actualization of HRD programs in remote areas such as Batam's hinterland often face significant barriers. Geographic isolation, budgetary limitations, and insufficient infrastructure hinder the effectiveness of such programs[12], [13], [14]. Bangun [15] argues that involving multiple stakeholders in HRD design and execution is essential to achieve comprehensive and sustainable impacts.

This study aims to analyze the extent to which HRD programs in Batam's hinterland enhance teacher professionalism. It also investigates the supporting and limiting factors in their implementation. With well-structured and sustained HRD efforts, it is expected that educational quality across Indonesia, particularly in marginalized areas, can improve—thereby supporting national human capital development in response to global challenges. Kulla, Rintala, and Suhonen [16] emphasize that HRD-based education reform plays a critical role in fostering national competitiveness. The findings of this study are intended to inform policymakers and education stakeholders on developing more effective, inclusive, and context-sensitive HRD strategies for remote education sectors.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research employed a qualitative descriptive approach to analyze the implementation and actualization of human resource development (HRD) programs aimed at improving teacher professionalism in public junior high schools located in the hinterland areas of Batam. The qualitative method was chosen because it allows the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of social phenomena by focusing on the meaning and interpretation of participants' experiences [17].

1. **Research Setting and Participants**

The study was conducted in several public junior high schools situated in the hinterland regions of Batam, including remote and geographically isolated areas. These locations were selected purposively due to their limited access to educational resources and professional development programs. Participants in this study consisted of:
   a. School principals, who play a crucial role in policy implementation and school management;
   b. Teachers, who are the direct beneficiaries and implementers of the HRD programs;
   c. Officials from the local education department, who are responsible for program planning, execution, and evaluation.[18]

All participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure relevance and depth of information. This non-probability sampling technique was deliberately chosen to identify individuals who possessed specific characteristics or experiences relevant to the focus of the research[19]. By selecting participants based on their roles, expertise, or direct involvement in the implementation and actualization of human resource development programs in the hinterland area, the study aimed to gather rich, detailed, and meaningful data. This method allowed the researcher to focus on key informants—such as school principals, teachers, and education administrators—whose insights were crucial for understanding both the challenges and successes of the program. Consequently, purposive sampling contributed to the depth, contextual accuracy, and analytical strength of the study's findings[20], [21].

2. **Data Collection Techniques**

Data were collected through three main techniques:
   a. Semi-structured interviews: Conducted with school principals, teachers, and education department officials to explore their perceptions, experiences, and challenges related to HRD program implementation.
   b. Non-participant observations: Focused on teacher activities during instructional sessions, professional development meetings, and school-based training programs.
   c. Document analysis: Included reviewing school planning documents, training modules, attendance lists, and policy documents related to teacher development.

This triangulation of data collection techniques was employed to ensure the credibility and validity of the findings. By utilizing multiple sources and methods—namely observation, interviews, and documentation—the research was able to cross-verify data from different angles, thereby reducing potential biases and enhancing the depth and accuracy of the analysis. Observation allowed the researcher to capture actual behavior and contextual interactions in real time, interviews provided insights into participants' perspectives and experiences, and documentation offered concrete evidence to support or contrast with the other data. Through this comprehensive approach, the study strengthened its methodological rigor, ensuring that the conclusions drawn were grounded in reliable and corroborated data[22], [23], [24].

3. **Data Analysis**

The data were analyzed using a thematic analysis approach, which involved several key steps:
   a. Data familiarization: Reading and rereading transcripts and notes to gain an overall understanding.
   b. Coding: Assigning codes to key ideas and recurring patterns in the data.
   c. Theme development: Grouping related codes into broader categories that reflect the central aspects of the phenomenon under investigation.
   d. Interpretation: Interrelating themes to develop a comprehensive understanding of how HRD programs are implemented and actualized, as well as identifying the supporting and inhibiting factors [25], [26].

To ensure trustworthiness, the researchers applied several rigorous strategies, including member checking, peer debriefing, and thick description in the reporting of findings. Member checking involved returning the data or interpretations to the participants to confirm their accuracy and resonance with the participants' intended meaning, thus enhancing credibility. Peer debriefing was conducted by involving academic peers who critically reviewed and questioned the data analysis process, helping to uncover biases, refine interpretations, and improve analytical clarity. Meanwhile, thick description was employed to provide rich, detailed contextual accounts of the research setting and participants' experiences, enabling readers to make informed judgments about the transferability of the findings to other contexts. Collectively, these strategies strengthened the overall integrity, transparency, and reliability of the qualitative research process[27], [28].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings and analysis of the study on the implementation and actualization of human resource development (HRD) programs in improving teacher professionalism in public junior high schools located in the hinterland areas of Batam.

1. The Role of Human Resource Development (HRD) Programs in Enhancing Teacher Professionalism

Human Resource Development (HRD) is a strategic and systematic process aimed at improving individual competencies, behaviors, and organizational performance. In educational contexts, HRD is not merely about enhancing skills, but fostering a culture of continuous professional learning and adaptation [29], [30]. This aligns with Garavan's model, which conceptualizes HRD as a set of planned activities designed to improve learning and performance at the individual, group, and organizational levels [31].

In the findings of this study, HRD programs such as pedagogical training, workshops, and career coaching were observed to positively influence the self-confidence and instructional capacities of teachers. However, professional development must be understood as a lifelong, contextual, and socially embedded process [32]. Teachers need ongoing support systems—including mentoring, peer collaboration, and reflective practice—to translate training content into meaningful classroom changes.

The development of teacher professionalism requires the simultaneous development of pedagogical competence, subject matter expertise, technological proficiency, and classroom management skills. Kristiawan and Rahmat argue that these domains must be addressed integratively, rather than through fragmented short-term training programs. Therefore, for HRD initiatives to produce lasting impact, they must be sustained, aligned with school goals, and sensitive to teachers' individual learning trajectories[33].

2. Constraints in Implementing HRD Programs in Hinterland Areas

The unique context of hinterland schools presents both logistical and structural barriers to professional development. Physical isolation, insufficient infrastructure, and limited internet connectivity constrain teachers' ability to access centralized training. These limitations affirm the contextual model of teacher learning, which emphasizes that professional learning opportunities must be accessible, relevant, and situated within teachers' own work environments [34].

The lack of financial resources compounds these challenges, limiting the range and depth of training initiatives. Many schools are unable to fund tailored development programs, relying heavily on government-provided or donor-supported initiatives that may not fully align with their contextual needs. This reflects the limitations identified in top-down HRD policy models, which often overlook the complexity and diversity of school contexts [35].

Murtafiah [36] highlights that in the era of "Merdeka Belajar" (Freedom to Learn), the emphasis should be on empowering schools to design autonomous, locally responsive development programs. However, the data in this study suggest that such autonomy is often constrained by systemic and structural issues—pointing to a gap between policy ideals and implementation realities.

3. Actualization of HRD Programs at the Ground Level

The actualization phase is where the success of HRD programs is tested. Despite teachers attending numerous trainings, this study found that the translation of theoretical knowledge into classroom practice remains a significant challenge. This phenomenon reflects what Fullan calls the "implementation dip"—the temporary decline in performance as individuals struggle to integrate new practices [37].

Many teachers reported a lack of post-training support, insufficient time for experimentation, and contextual mismatch between training content and classroom realities. These challenges reveal the need for practical, adaptive, and contextually grounded professional development. Drawing from Kolb's experiential learning theory, it is critical that teacher training programs incorporate reflective, active, and problem-solving components that are directly tied to their classroom experiences [38].

Additionally, the absence of structured follow-up mechanisms—such as mentoring, coaching, and collaborative learning communities—limits the extent to which training becomes part of teachers' professional identities. Thus, professional development must go beyond skill acquisition to foster professional agency, wherein teachers are empowered to critically reflect on their practices, make informed decisions, and adapt flexibly to changing classroom conditions [39].

4. Recommendations for HRD Program Improvement

Based on the findings, four core recommendations emerge, grounded in HRD and adult learning theories:

a. **Accessibility through Technology-Enabled Learning:** According to Knowles' theory of andragogy, adults learn best when learning is self-directed, relevant, and practical. Online and hybrid learning platforms can enhance accessibility for remote teachers, offering flexibility and personalized learning paths [40].

b. **Sustained Mentoring and Reflective Practice:** Effective HRD is not an event but a process. Vygotsky's sociocultural theory underscores the role of social interaction and scaffolding in professional learning. Embedding mentoring and collaborative learning structures will enable teachers to co-construct knowledge and refine their practice [41].

c. **Contextualization of Training Content:** Programs should be designed through participatory needs assessments, ensuring alignment with the local educational ecology. This requires HRD planners to adopt a bottom-up approach, facilitating teacher involvement in setting goals and evaluating impact [39].

d. **Increased and Targeted Funding:** Drawing from the resource-based view (RBV) in HRD, investing in teacher capacity is a strategic imperative for improving organizational performance. HRD investments should prioritize strategic competencies that enable schools to adapt, innovate, and lead educational change [42].

These recommendations are consistent with the view of Mathis and Jackson [43], who assert that HRD must align with both individual growth and institutional strategy, emphasizing capability development as a vehicle for long-term transformation.

The findings of this study align with and extend previous research on human resource development (HRD) strategies and their practical implications in educational contexts. Upton and Egan [44] proposed a multilevel approach to HRD theory-building, emphasizing the need to consider individual, organizational, and contextual levels in designing effective HRD interventions. This research supports that perspective by revealing that the successful implementation of teacher professional development in the hinterland areas of Batam must address not only individual teacher competencies but also organizational support systems and contextual challenges, such as geographical isolation and limited access to training. Similarly, Lee and Kim [45] highlighted the ethical and purpose-driven nature of HRD, arguing that HRD should aim not only at increasing performance but also at fostering individual dignity and organizational justice[46], [47], [48], [49], [50], [51]. The current study resonates with this ethical orientation by recommending sustained post-training mentorship and localized, context-sensitive development programs that empower teachers as change agents and acknowledge their professional needs and limitations. Therefore, this study not only confirms but also enriches prior theoretical insights by demonstrating how HRD can be ethically and practically enacted in under-resourced educational environments.
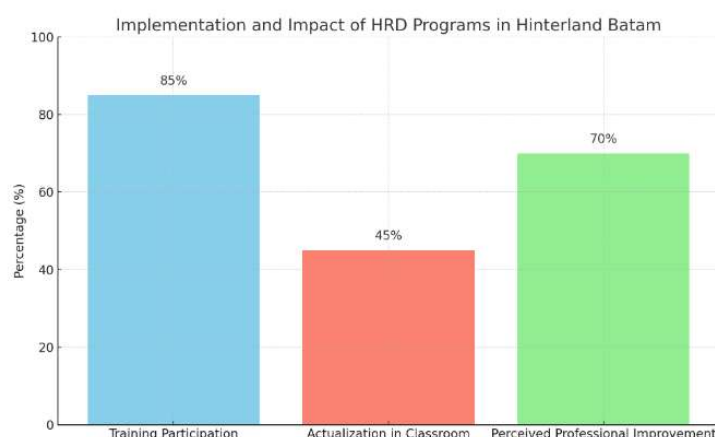
Figure 1. Teacher Participation, Actualization, and Perceived Professional Growth in HRD Programs at Hinterland Batam Public Junior High Schools

Figure 1 illustrates the key findings of the study regarding the implementation of human resource development (HRD) programs in public junior high schools in the hinterland area of Batam. The bar chart displays three primary indicators:

a. Teacher Participation in Training (85%): A significant proportion of teachers have participated in HRD training programs, indicating a strong institutional commitment to professional development.

b. Actualization in Classroom Practice (45%): Despite high participation rates, the application of training content in real classroom settings remains relatively low. This gap suggests challenges in post-training support, such as limited mentoring or contextual mismatch of training material.

c. Perceived Professional Growth (70%): A majority of teachers reported improved confidence and competence in teaching, even if not all could fully apply new knowledge in practice. This reflects a

positive perception of the program's impact on their professional identity.

This figure supports the study's conclusion that while training programs are widely attended and positively received, further efforts are needed to enhance practical implementation and follow-up support for sustained professional growth.

As a researcher, I observe that the human resource development (HRD) programs implemented in the hinterland areas of Batam hold significant potential for enhancing teacher professionalism, despite facing structural and geographical challenges. The high level of teacher participation in training programs reflects a strong enthusiasm for improving competencies; however, the actual application in classrooms remains limited due to a lack of post-training support and resource constraints. Therefore, a more contextualized and sustainable program design is needed, including post-training evaluation, the empowerment of learning communities, and support from policymakers to ensure that these programs truly impact teaching practices. A collaborative commitment between the government, educational institutions, and teachers is essential in building an effective HRD ecosystem that is responsive to local conditions.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that human resource development (HRD) programs significantly contribute to enhancing teacher professionalism, especially in underdeveloped areas. Programs such as pedagogical training, competency development, and continuous professional development have proven effective in improving teachers' professional abilities—cognitively, affectively, and psychomotorically. However, the success of these programs greatly depends on the quality of implementation, the sustainability of the initiatives, and the relevance of the content to the local context.

The findings also highlight several obstacles to the actualization of HRD programs, including limited infrastructure, the lack of post-training mentoring, and insufficient policy support that addresses the specific needs of teachers in frontier, outermost, and underdeveloped (3T) regions. These issues demonstrate that improving teacher professionalism cannot rely solely on episodic training interventions, but requires a holistic, contextual, and continuous approach.

Therefore, it is necessary to design HRD strategies that are more participatory and based on the actual needs of teachers, with an emphasis on contextual learning, professional mentoring, and the integration of distance learning technologies. Furthermore, HRD interventions should not only focus on improving individual competencies but also on strengthening institutional capacity so that schools can provide a learning environment that supports systematic and sustainable professional transformation for teachers.

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