

**ENGLISH TEACHERS' PERCEPTION ON TEACHER  
PROFESSIONALISM**

**Nida Husna**

[nida.husna@uinjkt.ac.id](mailto:nida.husna@uinjkt.ac.id)

**Khairunnisa Fitri**

[khairunnisafitri21@mhs.uinjkt.ac.id](mailto:khairunnisafitri21@mhs.uinjkt.ac.id)

**Wiwi Rhamadina**

[wiwirhamadina21@mhs.uinjkt.ac.id](mailto:wiwirhamadina21@mhs.uinjkt.ac.id)

**Fahriany**

[fahriany@uinjkt.ac.id](mailto:fahriany@uinjkt.ac.id)

**Didin Nuruddin Hidayat**

[didin.nuruddin@uinjkt.ac.id](mailto:didin.nuruddin@uinjkt.ac.id)

Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University of Jakarta, Indonesia

**Afifah Linda Sari**

[afifahlinda@uin-antasari.ac.id](mailto:afifahlinda@uin-antasari.ac.id)

Antasari State Islamic University of Banjarmasin, Indonesia

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**Corresponding Author:**

[didin.nuruddin@uinjkt.ac.id](mailto:didin.nuruddin@uinjkt.ac.id)

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This paper aims to investigate English teachers' perceptions of teacher professionalism. A qualitative method with a descriptive design was employed in the present stud. The researchers employed a set of adapted questionnaires on teacher professionalism (Tichenor & Tichenor 2009), consisting of five critical typologies of teacher professionalism. The questionnaire was distributed to 14 English teachers of senior high schools in Pangkal Pinang and the Blangkejeren district. They were chosen as the sample through the purposive sampling technique. Furthermore, a semi-structured interview also has been completed to support the data. The findings of this study indicated that most of the teachers agree with the characteristic of a professional teacher proposed by Sockett (1993). The study also revealed that professionalism is one of the critical aspects that teachers should possess.

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## INTRODUCTION

Education as the process of developing one's growth and skills in pursuing the beneficial knowledge for life should be given serious attention. To achieve the goals, it is essential to improve the quality of the educational process. The presence of professional educators becomes one of the ways to support the process (Kholis, 2019). Reflect on law number 14 of 2005 about teachers and lecturers. Teachers and lecturers must have academic qualifications, competencies, certificates, be physically and mentally healthy, meet other qualifications and requirements of the unit where they work, and realize national education goals (Depdiknas, 2005). Then, the core of teacher competence is classified into four; pedagogical competency, social competency, professional competency, and personal competency.

Professional competency refers to teachers' ability to comprehend learning materials broadly and deeply, allowing them to help students meet competency standards. It can be seen from the mastery of the content subject and the use of curriculum (Kuntarto et al., 2019). A professional teacher needs to convey the learning materials and develop the professional competencies to serve updated learning material and strategy for the students (Jabri, 2017). The competencies of mastering the content subject, managing teaching and learning activity, designing a strategy for learning, and evaluating indicated that teaching is an occupation with advanced education and specific training (Fahriany, 2014).

Drawing on a range of the importance of professional teachers in supporting students' development, the success of Finnish students in PISA can be one example. It has been connected to the solid pedagogical competencies of teachers (Mardjuki et al., 2017). Related to that, Chantry (2016) discussed that teachers are among the most essential investments in skills, knowledge, time, and money. (Kurniati et al., 2020) and (Khasanah & Kristiawan, 2019) explained that the teacher is an important role in education, primarily in formal education institutions. Therefore, the teacher is considered the most important role in leading students' success.

Nevertheless, the term professionalism may evoke various definitions and images depending on one's perception. In the context of the educational field, professionalism refers to the willingness of the educators to create a positive school culture, the responsibility to carry out the work, and the awareness of their development (Muhsin et al., 2020).

Baggini (2005) explained that the professional teacher achieving the highest standard should overcome any difficulties and show the skills related to their profession. It involves teachers' willingness to seek learning opportunities and teachers' knowledge and respect for their professional work (Nolan & Molla, 2019). Furthermore, in discussing professionalism, Pajak (2001) states that a professional does not consider their profession a job but rather sees it as a call to care for children. He pointed out that professional teachers should have three main categories: attitude, behavior, and communication to develop a stronger sense of professionalism. However, this category seems to have a broader understanding than stated behavior and attitude.

Salehizadeh (2020) conducted a study that employed 281 English teachers to investigate teachers' perception of professionalism based on the components proposed by Richards (2010), namely competence and performance in language teaching. The competence involves practical knowledge, content knowledge, and proficiency factors, and performance includes teacher training, community membership, and learner-centeredness. The findings revealed that most teachers approve of Richard's perspective, at least in the theoretical term. Moreover, Edstam (2013) investigated the perception of professionalism among Elementary School ESL teachers showing that the teachers view themselves in a unique position in educational, political, and sociocultural perspectives. Since they were surrounded by the swirling issues that distract the educational system and their country, they regard themselves as having a mission to save an educational soul.

In addition, based on the researchers' preliminary interviews with the English teachers in Pangkalpinang and Blangkejeren districts, the researchers found that some of the teachers said they understood professionalism and could explain the

characteristics of professional teachers. They said that professional teachers could be seen from their good behavior and willingness to teach sincerely. However, some others revealed that teachers could be called professionals only when they already have the certification. The perspective on professionalism may differ from one to another. It is essential to study teachers' perception of professionalism as one of the criteria needed to be met to fulfill professional service practice standards.

The previous studies, such as the first, by Fahriani et al. (2020), explored the teachers' perception of their professionalism in teaching English conducted for English teachers to know their perception of professional development in teaching English. The second is from Demirkol and Polat (2019), teaching as professionalism through teachers' perspective, which aims to evaluate teacher professionalism within the frameworks of teacher's opinion. Then the third is the study by Kholis (2019), teacher professionalism in Indonesia, Malaysia, and New Zealand, which aims to explore the issues of professionalism in different countries and know government roles in improving teachers' professional development programs in Indonesia.

The three previous studies identified the issues related to professionalism and professional development. In contrast, this present study only focuses on knowing English teachers' perspectives on teacher professionalism in secondary high school and does not focus on the issues related to teacher professionalism. Furthermore, no study has been conducted on English teachers regarding their perception of teachers' professionalism in the Pangkalpinang and Blangkejeren contexts. It means that this topic is still underexplored there. Hopefully, this study will contribute to the next researcher on the same topic, especially in Pangkalpinang and Blangkejeren.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### *Teacher Professionalism*

Being a professional is not simply an intellectual exercise but rather relates to the commitment to being something impressing and transformative in work (Bowman, 2013).

Hoyle (1975) described *professionalism* as “those strategies and rhetoric employed by members of an occupation in seeking to improve status, salary and conditions” (p.315). (Hoyle & Wallace, 2007) then stated that professionalism is related to improving the quality of service instead of the upgrading of status. In addition, professionalism is a standard of behaviour and practice related to a profession requiring high education, training, and skills maintained by cooperation among professional members (Evetts, 2013). It can be seen that there is an evolution in defining teacher professionalism from enhancing the status to the development of all aspects improving teacher quality, such as knowledge and competence. In other words, professionalism refers to everything that teachers need to know and comprehend to give a service standard.

As the most influential and decisive component of educational success, teachers have responsibility for the learning process (Fauzan & Bahrissalim, 2017). It is also suggested that the teachers have academic qualifications and act ethically based on the code of conduct (Kasa et al., 2020). The term professionalism is used to explain the commitment to an individual’s continuous development in personality and professionalism, keeping up with the changes, having specialized knowledge in subject matter (Coniam et al., 2017), and demonstrating competencies related to the occupation.

However, several studies suggested that professionalism in teaching is not limited to the mastery of content and theories of teaching and learning. Instead, teachers need to develop relationship skills to gain students’ trust. The content that students learn may easily be forgotten, but teachers’ character may remain in their memories. In this regard, (Pahrudin et al., 2016) discussed that knowledge could be conveyed through a strong relationship between teachers and students. A teacher with good communication skills and values may create a conducive environment. As supported by Stronge (2018) that entirely, teachers not only master the content and theory but also need to possess effective human characteristic and relationship skills. In assumption, professional teachers are aware of finding opportunities for

professional development to improve the quality of their knowledge and relationship skills.

### *Characteristics of Teacher Professionalism*

Becoming a professional teacher means having characteristics that distinguish them from others (Mitchell, 2022). A professional teacher requires acceptance and responsibility for students' well-being rather than just completing the basic task. Sockett (1993) identified five critical typologies of teacher professionalism: characters, commitment to change and continuous improvement, knowledge of the subject, pedagogical knowledge and responsibility, and working relationships outside the classroom. First is character involving the flexible, well-dedicated, resilient, patient, being a role model, caring, nurturing, confident, and ethical.

Second, commitment to change refers to the willingness of the teacher to strive for continuous improvement and to evaluate their actions involving following ongoing education projects, reading the journals, attending the conferences, living the long-life learner, understanding the current trends in educational fields, and keeping up to date (Tichenor & Tichenor, 2005). Third, knowledge of the subject and pedagogical knowledge means the teachers can motivate the students to learn, use proper English, use suitable teaching strategies, implement the curriculum effectively, and be innovative. The last characteristic is working relationships outside the classroom, which implies that teachers must be aware of their responsibility to collaborate with the staff, faculty, administrators, parents, and community members. In conclusion, the teachers not only have the responsibility for their actions inside the classroom but also outside the classroom.

In addition, Lunenberg et al. (2014) also proposed the characteristics of professional teachers: first, they are motored by values, guided by principles, desires, and goals greater than themselves. Second, they need analysts. Third, they see the job as a calling of the soul. Fourth, they accept the change as a norm contributing to growth and learners. Fifth, they are the creator of the learning environment. Sixth, they are a catalyst for the progress of the development. Seventh,

they support collaboration and teamwork. Eight, they are the creator of learning ownership. Ninth, they are responsible to children, parents, and the community in providing appropriate and quality service in teaching. Tenth, they put professional responsibility above personal gain.

## **METHOD**

### *Research Design*

This study used qualitative research with a descriptive analysis design to analyze English teachers' perspectives on teacher-professionalism. According to Creswell, a qualitative study is an investigation into a social or human problem centered on building a comprehensive, holistic picture using words, relaying specific viewpoints of informants, and taking place in a natural setting (2018). Furthermore, according to Loeb et al. (2017), descriptive analysis is a fundamental component of this process. Through descriptive analysis, the researchers analyze teachers' perceptions by identifying research questions and generating hypotheses based on what has been done without influencing it in any way.

### *Place and Time*

This research was conducted for 14 English teachers at senior high schools in the Pangkalpinang and Blangkejeren districts. The sample was determined using purposive sampling by considering participants' backgrounds as English teachers providing information on their professionalism and reasonable distance from the researchers.

### *Research Instruments*

The researchers used two kinds of instruments to collect the data, a close-ended questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. The questionnaire of professionalism was adapted from (M. Tichenor & Tichenor, 2009), which consists of the professional teachers' dimension proposed by Sockett (1993). The dimension consists of character (10 items), commitment to change (11 items), subject and pedagogical knowledge (13 items), and beyond the classroom (11 items). After collecting the first data, the researcher then invited the participants randomly to be

interviewed regarding their perception of teacher professionalism in teaching English. There were five questions. The interview was held online since it is regarded as the best way to take in this pandemic Covid-19.

#### *Data Analysis Procedures*

The data of this study is analyzed by analysis steps proposed by Cresswell (2012). The researchers collected the data from the questionnaire and interview session and coded it based on the participant's responses. After labelling the data, the researchers employed the themes to describe teachers' perceptions of professionalism. The frequency of teachers' responses is also presented in the table. Both of the data were then interpreted and discussed descriptively.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

#### *The Description of the Result of the Questionnaire*

The questionnaire on teacher professionalism was distributed to 14 English teachers. This questionnaire consisted of four parts based on the category of teacher professionalism proposed by Sockett (1993). The first part is about the teacher's character, the second is about commitment to change, the third is about subject and pedagogical knowledge, and the last is about the teacher beyond the classroom. The participants' responses to the questionnaire are explained in the following tables.

**Table 4.1**

#### **Character**

| <b>Items</b>   | <b>Strongly Agree</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Neutral</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Strongly Disagree</b> |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| should dress in a neat manner showing confidence     | 79%                   | 21%          | 0              | 0               | 0                        |
| and a positive attitude in teaching on a daily basis | 71%                   | 29%          | 0              | 0               | 0                        |
| respect students and their ideas                     | 86%                   | 14%          | 0              | 0               | 0                        |
| behave ethically in and out of school                | 71%                   | 21%          | 8%             | 0               | 0                        |

| Items   | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| regard the education of students as the primary duty                | 79%            | 21%   | 0       | 0        | 0                 |
| demonstrate personal accountability for the quality of own teaching | 79%            | 21%   | 0       | 0        | 0                 |
| display flexibility when working with students and/or teachers      | 71%            | 21%   | 8%      | 0        | 0                 |
| look forward to coming to school each day                           | 86%            | 14%   | 0       | 0        | 0                 |
| exhibit creativity when working with students                       | 86%            | 14%   | 0       | 0        | 0                 |
| see self as a life-long learner                                     | 79%            | 14%   | 7%      | 0        | 0                 |

Part A was the teachers' perception questionnaire of their character. Part A consists of 10 item questions. The first item asked about teachers' appearance, and the answer was strongly agreed (79%) and agree (21%). It shows that teachers strongly agree that teachers should dress neatly. The second item asked about teachers' confidence in teaching, and the participant's answers were strongly agreed (71%) and agree (29%). Teachers strongly agree to demonstrate confidence in teaching and a positive approach. From the third item's answer, the participants also strongly agree that teachers respect students and their ideas in the teaching-learning process.

Furthermore, the participants firmly believe that instructors' primary responsibility is to educate students (79%), demonstrate personal accountability for the quality of teachers' teaching (79%), be inventive when working with students (86%), see self as a life-long learner (86%). Besides, there were also neutral answers for items number four asked behavior of teachers (8%), number seven asked about flexibility in working (7%), and number ten about teachers' views regarding long-

life learning (7%). Nonetheless, most of their answer strongly agree that character influences teacher professionalism in the teaching-learning process.

**Table 4.2**  
**Commitment to change**

| <b>Items</b>   | <b>Strongly Agree</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Neutral</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Strongly Disagree</b> |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| choose teaching strategies based on educational best practices and current research findings | 64%                   | 29%          | 7%             | 0               | 0                        |
| dedicate self to teaching as a life-long career  | 57%                   | 36%          | 7%             | 0               | 0                        |
| give talks at seminars, workshops, and/or conferences  | 64%                   | 29%          | 7%             | 0               | 0                        |
| actively seek professional development opportunities   | 43%                   | 36%          | 21%            | 0               | 0                        |
| experiment with innovative teaching practices  | 43%                   | 36%          | 21%            | 0               | 0                        |
| initiate new classroom programs to improve students learning                                 | 57%                   | 29%          | 0              | 0               | 0                        |
| following current social and political trends affecting education                            | 50%                   | 50%          | 0              | 0               | 0                        |
| keep up to date in own field by reading journals and/or attending conferences and workshops  | 50%                   | 50%          | 0              | 0               | 0                        |
| observe other teachers improve own teaching regularly  | 50%                   | 43%          | 7%             | 0               | 0                        |
| keep an open mind to new ideas and change  | 43%                   | 50%          | 7%             | 0               | 0                        |
| conduct teacher research or action research to improve own practice                          | 57%                   | 43%          | 0              | 0               | 0                        |

Part B consisted of 11 items of questionnaires about participants' commitment to change, which is necessary for the teaching-learning context. The first item above shows that there strongly agreed (64%), agreed (29%), and neutral (7%) to choosing teaching methods based on current best practices in education and research findings. Then, the participants also value strongly agree (57%), agree (36%), and neutral (7%) commit to dedicate their selves to teaching as a long-life career.

To develop their skills to become professional teachers, the participants strongly agree to commit to being active teachers, and it can be seen from the table. The participants strongly agree to conduct an experiment innovatively, improve their own practices by engaging in teacher research, observe other teachers, receive new ideas and change, join and make a presentation on webinar or workshop, and enhance students learning by making new classroom programs. On the other side, the answer strongly agrees (50%) and agrees (50%) to keep up to date on current social and political developments influencing education by reading journals, attending conferences, or participating in workshops.

**Table 4.3**  
**Subject and Pedagogical Knowledge**

| Items  | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|--|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| teach in developmentally appropriate ways                        | 79%            | 7%    | 14%     | 0        | 0                 |
| recognize how academic subjects are related to other disciplines | 64%            | 7%    | 29%     | 0        | 0                 |
| understand the developmental needs of children                   | 64%            | 7%    | 29%     | 0        | 0                 |
| make classroom decisions based on the needs of students          | 64%            | 15%   | 21%     | 0        | 0                 |
| know and apply human development and learning theories           | 57%            | 14%   | 29%     | 0        | 0                 |

|  |     |     |     |   |   |
|--|-----|-----|-----|---|---|
| avoid making students feel embarrassed or ashamed                                | 50% | 21% | 29% | 0 | 0 |
| make self-reflection and analyze own teaching                                    | 64% | 0   | 36% | 0 | 0 |
| regularly evaluate own choices and actions in the classroom                      | 43% | 14% | 43% | 0 | 0 |
| possess a high degree of content knowledge in the respective certification areas | 50% | 21% | 29% | 0 | 0 |
| create fair learning opportunities for all students                              | 64% | 7%  | 29% | 0 | 0 |
| having a high degree of pedagogical knowledge                                    | 42% | 29% | 29% | 0 | 0 |
| consider all aspects of students   | 64% | 7%  | 29% | 0 | 0 |
| create positive learning environment for students                                | 79% | 7%  | 14% | 0 | 0 |

Part C consisted of 13 questions. It asked about the teachers' perceptions of subject and pedagogical. The answers were strongly agreed (79%), agree (7%), and neutral (14%) for questions number one and thirteen. It shows that teachers should use teaching methods which appropriate developmentally and create a positive learning environment for the learners. Furthermore, the participants also strongly agree (64%) that teachers need to comprehend how academic subjects are related to other disciplines and children's developmental needs and consider all aspects for students, especially in providing fair opportunities. In addition, 50% strongly agreed, 21% agree, and 29% were neutral, especially for questionnaires items that the teacher should hold a good level of material knowledge in their respective certification areas and avoid making pupils feel embarrassed or ashamed. Then, the eleventh item's answers were strongly agreed (42%), agree (29%), and neutral (29%). It shows that the participants strongly agree teachers should have a good level of pedagogical knowledge. It is in line with the fifth item's answers were strongly agreed (57%) that teachers should understand and apply ideas of human

development and learning. Moreover, the participants also strongly agreed (43%), agreed (14%), and neutral (43%) for the eight-item. It shows that teachers need to evaluate their own choices and actions in the classroom while the teaching and learning process is running.

**Table 4.4**  
**Beyond the Classroom**

| <b>Items</b>  | <b>Strongly Agree</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Neutral</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Strongly Disagree</b> |
|---|-----------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| being a positive role model for students and teachers                           | 64%                   | 15%          | 21%            | 0               | 0                        |
| function as public advocate for the field of education                          | 64%                   | 10%          | 29%            | 0               | 0                        |
| actively participate on school-wide committees and/or in school decision-making | 64%                   | 10%          | 29%            | 0               | 0                        |
| share teaching ideas and strategies with colleagues                             | 71%                   | 8%           | 21%            | 0               | 0                        |
| establish friendly and cooperative relationships with parents                   | 57%                   | 14%          | 29%            | 0               | 0                        |
| collaborate with coworkers in the interests of students                         | 64%                   | 15%          | 21%            | 0               | 0                        |
| show respect for colleagues and administrators                                  | 57%                   | 14%          | 29%            | 0               | 0                        |
| aid in the creation of a pleasant working atmosphere in the school              | 50%                   | 14%          | 36%            | 0               | 0                        |
| mentor or willing to guide new and experienced teachers                         | 50%                   | 14%          | 36%            | 0               | 0                        |
| participate in professional organizations for educators                         | 43%                   | 50%          | 7%             | 0               | 0                        |
| participate in curriculum development   | 64%                   | 15%          | 21%            | 0               | 0                        |

Part D consisted of eleven items of questionnaires about the teacher's and students' activities beyond the classroom. First, the participants strongly agreed (71%), agreed (8%), and neutral (21%) that teachers should be encouraged to share their teaching practices and ideas with colleagues. For instance, they were actively involved in professional organizations for educators (questionnaire item part D, number 10). In addition, the participants were strongly agreed (64%) that teachers actively participate in school decision-making with colleagues as well as school-wide committees and play a beneficial role for students and teachers, such as working as a public advocate for the field of education in curriculum development (questionnaire part D, number 1,2,3,6,11).

Moreover, the current participants agreed (14%) teacher professionalism helps build a positive working environment with colleagues and parents by showing respect for colleagues and administrators within the school, being willing to mentor starting and seasoned teachers, and establishing cordial and cooperative connections with parents (questionnaire part D number 5,7,8,9).

From all of those answers, it can be concluded that the four parts: A, B, C, and D, have important roles in teachers' professionalism, especially in the English teachers' context. Teachers are role models for their students. Everything that the teacher does cannot be separated from the attention of students, which can affect the teaching-learning practices. Therefore, a teacher needs to have good character to impact themselves, students, and the learning environment positively.

To create good learning needs a teacher competent in their field. It is critical for students' academic and non-academic advancement, and instructors' skill in the learning process is one of the primary foundations of improving teacher quality. A teacher must grasp numerous approaches, strategies, methods, and learning techniques to educate creatively and always seek to improve the quality of teachers to accomplish a good teaching and learning process for the students. In addition, besides teachers must establish good relationships with students, teachers must also establish good relationships and communication with some colleagues such as teachers, staff, and parents. This is intended to have a positive impact, especially in

terms of sharing ideas about the educational context and creating a better learning environment for students.

### *The Description of Interview Transcription*

This section discusses the interview transcription from four English teachers related to their professionalism in teaching English. The interview was done in 20 to 30 minutes for each teacher. The researcher took the role of the interviewer, and the four teachers consisted of T1A, T2L, T3S, and T3E, the interviewees.

There are six questions in the interview section: (1) What is your last education? (2) “Why do you choose to become a teacher?” (3) “What does professionalism mean to you?” (4) “How do you practice professionalism in teaching and learning activities?” (5) “Do you think that you can be recognized as a professional teacher?” (6) “What distinguishes you from other teachers?”. The first and second questions aim to find out teachers’ educational background information and the reason behind their choice to be a teacher.

The third, fourth, and fifth questions aim to explore their understanding of professionalism and its implementation in teaching activities. The last question aims to explore their opinion of themselves as a teacher.

### *Teachers educational background*

All of the interviewees answered that they graduated from an educational department majoring in English Education from different universities. After graduating from the university, they choose to become teachers because it has been their goal since they first chose to go to the educational department. Moreover, one of the teachers said that she feels proud of being a teacher since it is the noblest profession. Being a teacher, she thinks that she has a vital role in helping the nation create a better future generation through education. Thus, she wants to dedicate herself to this purpose.

*Teachers’ understanding and implementation of professionalism in teaching activity.*

The participants defined professionalism as knowing the obligation based on the role, teaching sincerely, knowing responsible in and out of the classroom, taking responsibility for the students and teachers themselves by keeping on learning new knowledge, building a good relationship with students, mastering the subject, discipline, behave and speaking politely, and obeying the rules. Furthermore, the interviewees stated that they implemented professionalism by attending the class on time, understanding the content, and applying teaching principles in the classroom. Their implementation of professionalism in the classroom is closely similar to their understanding of professionalism. However, one of them stated that:

*“Arranging the lesson plan before the class is a must for the teacher, and sometimes, some teachers consider it trivial and are not responsible for what has been written. So, in my opinion, a professional teacher writes and prepares the lesson plan and is fully responsible for teaching and learning activities”.*

Therefore, preparing the lesson plan before going to the classroom cannot be considered a professional teacher if they do not take responsibility for teaching the students.

#### *Teachers' perception of themselves*

For the question related to teachers' perception of themselves whether they have already become professional teachers or not, the interviewee answered there are still many weaknesses in their teaching process to be called a professional teacher.

The interviewee revealed that she could not understand her students' fundamental needs, such as their weakness in particular English skills. Moreover, it is sometimes hard for teachers to handle all the students in the current learning system because it is carried out in face-to-face and online learning. The teacher felt tired of handling such lazy and unmotivated students, which affected her teaching. However, the interviewee stated that there is no difference between professionalism in teaching through online learning and face-to-face learning. The teachers should constantly look energetic, encouraging students to be enthusiastic about learning. In

addition, the interviewee also explained that sometimes she does not prepare suitable tools and media for learning, so she does not regard herself as a professional teacher yet. However, an interviewee assumed that he could be called a professional teacher since he applies teaching principles in the classroom setting and can differentiate between professional work and personal life.

Regarding teachers' perception of themselves compared to other teachers, all interviewees answered that they have differences from others. The differences are found in the discipline, learning media and tools, and self-development. The interviewee said that she always comes to school on time and does the teacher's daily picket based on the schedule. They regarded it as another responsibility that should be completed besides teaching in the classroom. By utilizing media and suitable tools in learning, the interviewee said that she used to make the content of learning creatively. She recorded the explanation and placed the task at the end of the video so that students needed to pay attention while watching the video. She stated that it is more effective than the usual technique, such as asking the students to complete LKS. It will influence the students to be oriented to the mark only and not to understand the teacher's explanation. Furthermore, for self-development, one of the interviewees revealed that she had joined the professional development program to enhance her knowledge and competence. In addition, she also won a teachers' competition for mastering the subject at the regency level and got the award for an inspirational teacher from her school.

From the interview with English teachers, it can be seen that all of the teachers graduated from the faculty of education majoring in English education. They choose to become a teacher because it relates to their education. So, it is the form of implementing the sciences they got from their last education.

The interviewees have already known and understood the general concept of professionalism, particularly in teaching, concerning the term of professionalism. Their explanation of professionalism involves teachers' characters, responsibility inside and outside the classroom, teachers' knowledge of the subject, and teachers' responsibility for themselves. In line with their understanding of teacher

professionalism, the interviewee has implemented chiefly it in their teaching activity. It can be said that they do not only understand the concept but also practice it. While the teachers have practiced teacher professionalism in their teaching activity, most of them still regarded themselves as not professional teachers due to their negligence related to the preparation of teaching media and tools and their ignorance of some demotivated students. However, they are still learning by maintaining the discipline, exploring creative ways to teach, and joining professional development programs to enhance their competence as a teacher. This condition implies that the teachers can evaluate themselves regarding their professionalism by realizing their weaknesses and overcoming them.

## **DISCUSSION**

Since the teachers who interact daily with the students become the foundation of an educated society, it is important to understand and comprehend the meaning of becoming a professional teacher. The development of 21st-century education capable of educating children relies on the development of highly qualified and committed teaching (Utami & Hasanah, 2020). It implies that school needs the teachers to understand students' needs and how they learn to make decisions based on that knowledge.

In this study, teachers' view on their professionalism is varied. It can be noted that the total response from four teachers revealed that they understand that professionalism in teaching is important to be practiced. Besides the understanding, the teachers also stated they had implemented several aspects of professionalism inside and outside the classroom, although there are still shortcomings. This case indicates that the teachers still need professional development programs to enhance competence and knowledge as they are critical parameters of successful instruction in the classroom (Özden, 2002 as cited in Demirkol & Polat, 2019).

Based on participants' responses related to their educational background, they already completed one of the qualifications to become teachers, namely academic qualification. It is stated in the government regulation of the republic Indonesia

number 74, the year 2008, about the teacher. "Teacher Academic Qualification is obtained through higher education S-1 program or D-IV program at a university that conducts educational staff education programs and/or non-educational education programs" (Government Regulation, 2008)

Regarding participants' responses to the teacher professionalism questionnaire, most teachers agree with the characteristic of professional teachers proposed by Sockett (1993). It can be seen from the result of the questionnaire that agrees or strongly agrees statements are more than the neutral statement. The first characteristic is character, involving teachers' patience, creativity in work, politeness, well-organized, and flexibility. The participants realized that helping students improve their educational quality is their primary duty.

Caring for students and building a good relationship could create a supportive learning environment (Burden, 2020). When students feel that teachers care about them, they will follow classroom instructions and activities. Concerning that, Seferoğlu (2012, as cited in Yeşilçınar & Çakır, 2018) and Mincu, 2015) explained teachers are regarded as an important role in improving educational quality and implementing educational reform.

Nevertheless, some teachers have not realized their continuous development, particularly professional development. This condition is explained by Day (2017) that teachers' self-efficacy and willingness to engage in change might be recognized as conditions that influence their development and learning. In this modern era, competent and qualified teachers are needed. This condition implies that teachers must continue developing competence, one of which is professional competence, by joining a professional development program (Nugroho, 2018). It becomes essential to follow the principle of lifelong learning as quality teachers (MoNE, 2014, as cited in (Yeşilçınar & Çakır, 2018). Therefore, it is important to support their development and motivate them to achieve educational goals.

The third characteristic is pedagogical knowledge involving teachers' teaching practice in the classroom, teacher self-evaluation, and teacher's

relationship with students. The fourth characteristic is the responsibility beyond the classroom, which involves teachers' relationships with parents, administrators, and other teachers.

The teachers mostly build a good relationship with colleagues by sharing appropriate teaching methods. Meanwhile, some of them realize their obligation besides teaching. The characteristic that often appears in teachers' responses to define professionalism is character. Implying that character is an important part of being a professional teacher. In this regard, the study findings from (Tichenor & Tichenor, 2009) show a similar case. Many of the teachers discussed character more than other aspects.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This study has discussed English teachers' perception of teacher professionalism. The findings indicate that many teachers understood professionalism fundamentally. Nevertheless, the implementation in reality did not match their *professionalism* definition, and there is still a shortcoming.

Furthermore, the teachers also comprehended improvement quality, but they have not found the opportunities and improved it optimally. Thus, it is important to communicate the concept of professionalism to more teachers to see whether they already understand and use appropriate professionalism in teaching-learning. Regarding the findings of this study, character, the commitment of teachers to change or develop their skills, teachers' abilities to teach by using appropriate methods, and teachers' activities beyond the classroom, for instance, joining some educational organizations, have an important role in teachers' professionalism.

It is in line with the participants' answers from the interview section. They stated that professionalism means motivating the students to learn, becoming an intelligent teacher by creating any improvements, being creative using various methods suitable for students learning, and being involved in the professional development program to master the subject matter.

In addition, there is a limitation of this study that the researchers ignore the teachers teaching period so that the data might be varied. It becomes a problem when the researcher wants to generalize the result of this study. However, it can be used as a comparison for future research. Moreover, the present study suggested that future researchers conduct an observation to gain a more accurate and rich description of teachers' perceptions.

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