

# THE CHALLENGES FACED BY ENGLISH TEACHERS IN DEVELOPING TEACHING PROFESSIONALISM AT SMKN 1 TEBING TINGGI

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## Abstract

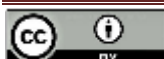
*This study examines the challenges faced by English teachers in developing their teaching professionalism at SMKN 1 Tebing Tinggi. It applies a qualitative research design using observation, interviews, and questionnaires. The findings show that teachers face several challenges such as time limitations, low student motivation, limited facilities, too high workload, lack of training opportunities, and curriculum changes. Despite these challenges, teachers make efforts through self-learning, collaboration, and reflective practice. This study contributes to understanding teachers professional development in vocational schools and suggests improving institutional support.*

**Keywords:** *Challenges, English Teachers, Developing, Teaching Professionalism*

## Introduction

In Indonesia, education is currently urgent and crucial. So far, our educational system has focused solely on developing the intellectual side of students, in order to eventually provide as many workers as possible. As Andi Saputra (2022) convey that. "Education is a systematic process aimed at developing students' potential holistically through innovative and adaptive learning". Currently, education is also faced with worrying conditions, such as teachers who are not professional, because it turns out that in Indonesia there are many teachers who teach but are not suited to their field, which makes learning not effective enough. Then there is an irrelevant curriculum and several educational programs that do not run effectively. When it comes to education, schools must also improve the quality of education within the school itself to meet national education standards. Besides being innovative, education must also be adaptive to technological developments. This means that educators and students must be able to adapt to rapid changes in information and communication technology, which have become an integral part of everyday life. Overall, this statement emphasizes that education is not merely a passive transfer of knowledge, but an active, innovative, and responsive process to technological change. The use of digital technology in learning and a continuous evaluation system are also key factors in improving educational quality, particularly at SMKN 1 Tebing Tinggi.

In terms of education, the Tebing Tinggi City government focuses on improving the quality and equal access to education through policies such as the clear implementation of



PPDB, the transformation of Leading Teachers into educational leaders, teacher redistribution, and learning innovation (multi-subject teaching), supported by funding from BOS, CSR, and DUDI, as well as the implementation of Islamic values in the curriculum. This policy includes structured new student admissions, teacher competency development, such as encouraging the transformation of PPG, empowering Leading Teachers to become school leaders, and collaborating on teacher redistribution and multi-subject teaching innovation. and utilizing various funding sources to ensure quality education.

This study focuses on identifying the challenges faced by English teachers and how they overcome the challenges. By examining the challenges faced by English teachers at SMKN 1 Tebing Tinggi, we can understand in detail what the real conditions in the field are regarding teaching and learning activities and how the teachers have handled them so far. Here the author will help to formulate the right solution and provide relevant insight for teachers, principals of the English language school at SMKN1 Tebing Tinggi, which will later have a positive impact on the school and achieve the main goal, to educate students and create effective and innovative learning.

### **Research Methodology**

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study type. A case study is a research strategy in which the researcher carefully investigates an event, activity, or process. Cases are limited by time and activity, and the researcher gathers comprehensive information using various data collection procedures within a predetermined timeframe. (Nugroho, 2020). This approach was chosen because it aims to explore meaning by understanding the context and phenomena being studied in depth phenomena that are researched in depth. A qualitative approach, in this case, is essentially a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observable behavior. Therefore, the data collected is in the form of words, sentences, or images not numbers. The participants are three English teachers at SMKN 1 Tebing Tinggi. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and questionnaires. Data analysis includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Triangulation was used to ensure validity.

### **Findings and Discussion**

The findings indicate several major challenges: time limitations, low student motivation, limited facilities, lack of training, heavy workload, and curriculum changes. Teachers also face difficulties in using technology. Based on the interview results, researchers identified several challenges faced by English teachers in developing their

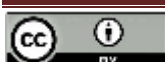


professionalism. First, time limitation, the second is low students' motivation, the first Teacher stated that many students don't like English and they are lazy, they are just addicted to gadgets "many of them are lazy and more influenced by gadgets, making it difficult to motivate them.", The third is about not be able to apply technology. The technology became a challenge for old teachers, The second Teacher said "I'm also somewhat lacking in technology, which is also a challenge, The fourth is limited facilities. The teachers said the facilities in SMKN 1 Tebing Tinggi is still so less to help the teacher develop their teaching professional which the external factor is really important to support the teacher professionalism developing, the fifth is lack of webinar opportunities. As English teachers of course they need webinar or seminar to always develop the teacher professionalism especially the way to teach the students or curriculum is always getting update but the teachers got obstacle to do the webinar, The sixth is too high workload, Teachers are often burdened with excessive workload which makes it difficult for them to develop teacher professionalism, The seventh is about curriculum changing. The teachers also consider the curriculum changing becomes a challenge for the teacher professionalism because it will always adapt with the challenge of curriculum. Teacher 1 explained "We have no choice but to follow the latest teaching methods. For example, previously we implemented the Merdeka Curriculum, and now we are transitioning to deep learning curriculum approaches. Teachers must adapt and follow any changes".

The challenges faced by teachers are influenced by both internal and external factors. Time management and workload affect teachers' ability to develop professionally. Student motivation also impacts teaching effectiveness. Institutional support plays an important role in enhancing professionalism.

Based on the interview results, the researcher also identified how the English teachers make efforts to develop the teaching professionalism. Despite the various challenges identified, research findings also reveal that English teachers at SMKN 1 Tebing Tinggi continuously strive to improve the teacher professional competence. One key effort is participating in professional development activities such as workshops, webinars, and training programs. Although time constraints sometimes prevent teachers from regularly attending these activities, they still strive to participate whenever possible.

Another effort is self-directed learning. Some teachers improve the knowledge by reading books, accessing online learning platforms, or participating in self-directed training programs. Teachers also engage in collaborative learning through MGMP meetings. These meetings provide opportunities for teachers to exchange ideas, discuss teaching strategies, and



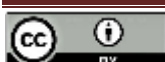
support each other in overcoming teaching-related challenges. Furthermore, teachers practice self-reflection by soliciting feedback from students after the learning process. These efforts demonstrate that teachers are actively striving to improve their professionalism despite facing various challenges in their teaching environment.

Overall, findings from observations, interviews, and questionnaires indicate consistent results regarding the challenges teachers face in developing their professionalism. Key challenges include time constraints, low student motivation, limited facilities, technological challenges, heavy administrative workloads, and curriculum changes. At the same time, the study also revealed that teachers continuously strive to improve their professional competence through training participation, self-directed learning, collaboration with colleagues, and reflective teaching practices. These findings indicate that teacher professional development is influenced by both internal and external factors. Internal factors include teachers' motivation and willingness to improve, while external factors include institutional support, facilities, policies, and student characteristics.

### **Conclusion and Suggestion**

In conclusion, English teachers face multiple challenges in developing professionalism. Conclusion is the last part of a research which it has the complete answer from the problem of research as According to John W. Creswell (2018) “The conclusion is the final part of research report that summarizes the main findings and interprets the data s answers to the research questions” First, this study found that English teachers have made efforts to implement professional teaching practices in the classroom. This is evident in the teachers' efforts to manage the classroom effectively, begin lessons with greetings and introductions, and create a positive learning atmosphere. Teachers also strive to convey material clearly and interact with students throughout the learning process. These practices reflect teachers' awareness of the importance of professionalism in teaching.

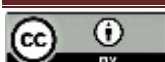
Second, the findings indicate that teachers face several challenges in developing their teaching professionalism. One major challenge is limited time for professional development. Teachers have numerous responsibilities, such as preparing lesson plans, teaching, assessing students, and completing administrative tasks. These responsibilities often limit teachers' opportunities to participate in professional development activities such as seminars, workshops, and training programs, Challenges in Adapting to Technology, High Administrative Workload, the findings also indicate that frequent curriculum changes create challenges for teachers.



And another challenge identified in this study is the low learning motivation of some students. During classroom observations, some students appeared less focused on the learning process and sometimes showed a lack of interest in the lesson. This situation requires teachers to make extra efforts to motivate students and create engaging learning activities. Maintaining students' attention and encouraging active participation can be challenging, especially when students have varying levels of interest and ability in learning English. This study also found Limited Learning Facilities and Resources can impact teachers' ability to develop more innovative teaching strategies. Teachers often rely on textbooks and basic teaching materials due to limited access to additional learning resources or instructional media. Teachers recognized the importance of continuous professional development and expressed a willingness to improve their teaching skills through training, collaboration with colleagues, and self-directed learning. This demonstrates a strong commitment to improving their teaching professionalism to support student learning outcomes.

In conclusion, the development of teaching professionalism among English language teachers requires ongoing support from schools, institutions, and the teachers themselves. By addressing these challenges, English teachers and teachers in general can enhance their professional competence and provide more effective learning experiences for students.

From the research's opinion Suggestion is the solution and manifests which it can be help to solve the problem in the research, as according to Patricia Leavy (2022) “ Suggestion in qualitative inquiry often manifests in the interpretive lens of the research, influencing how data is gathered and understood” Based on the result of this research, there are several suggestions presented for the English teachers and teachers in general for the school dan the future researcher : English teachers are encouraged to continuously improve their professional competencies by actively participating in professional development activities such as workshops, seminars, and training programs. Teachers can also develop their teaching skills through self-study, how to teach more innovative and creative, teachers can read educational literature, and exploring innovative teaching strategies. Furthermore, teachers are encouraged to use a variety of teaching methods, learning media to increase students' motivation and engagement in learning English. Even though teachers already professional in teaching, teachers still need to develop the teaching professionalism and increasing the competencies even though they have limited time, teachers need to be aware and have personal initiative to develop their professionalism so that English teachers and teachers in general create the learning creative and innovative, because it is indeed teachers' obligation to continue develop the knowledge and technology. The teachers also need to motivate themselves to upgrade.



Schools are expected to support teachers in their professional development by providing opportunities for professional development activities. School management can facilitate training programs, seminars, and teacher collaboration activities focused on improving teaching competencies. Schools should also provide facilities, such as learning materials, technology, in focus and learning media, to help teachers implement more effective and innovative teaching methods also it's a way to develop teachers' professionalism and increasing learning quality. And regarding to limited time, this is still can be solve by educational policy, and the way to solve the limited time, the school should provide and set the training, seminars time during working hours. So that the teachers no longer have obstacle of lack of time to be participate in developing their teaching professionalism. So the school needs to represent the teachers' schedule so that they have time to develop their professionalism.. Also for Future researcher are encouraged to conduct further studies on teacher professionalism using different research methods or involving a larger number of participants. Future researcher could also provide deeper insights into how teachers can improve their professional competence in the field of education, such as the role of technology in teaching, teacher collaboration, or the impact of professional development programs on teaching quality.

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