CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Empowering teachers through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) at UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali represents a strategic initiative to enhance educators' professional competencies by fostering collaboration, enabling the sharing of innovative practices, and addressing diverse student needs to improve pedagogical skills and student outcomes. PLCs provide a supportive network where teachers exchange knowledge and experiences, enhancing their teaching strategies and self-efficacy, particularly in inclusive educational settings where they adapt their methods to cater to diverse learners (Laufer et al., 2021; Pujaningsih & Ambarwati, 2020). Active participation in PLCs equips teachers with effective classroom management techniques and innovative instructional methods, which are critical for raising student learning outcomes, especially in regions facing educational challenges (Eliyahu-Levi & Ganz-Meishar, 2020). The transition to online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic underscored the importance of community-building and collaboration among educators, reinforcing the need for continuous professional development through PLCs (Williams & Corwith, 2021). However, despite the significant potential of PLCs for teacher empowerment, challenges such as varying levels of engagement and resource availability can hinder their effectiveness, making it crucial to address these issues to maximize the role of PLCs in enhancing educational standards.

Research on the impact of teacher empowerment through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) on enhancing teacher competencies at UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali is of paramount importance, given the crucial role teachers play in shaping quality human resources. As highlighted by Hord (2009), PLCs encourage educators to collaborate towards shared goals, ultimately improving teaching quality and fostering professional growth. This research not only contributes to the advancement of educational knowledge but also has long-term implications for enhancing educational quality, especially in remote areas (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2023). A deeper understanding of how PLCs can strengthen teacher competencies can lay a foundation for developing more effective educational policies, particularly in preparing educators to meet global challenges (Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, Wallace, & Thomas, 2006; Fullan, 2007). Therefore, focusing on teacher empowerment through PLCs is essential to provide concrete solutions for improving the quality of education at UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali.

Empowering teachers through PLCs at UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali in Polewali Mandar Regency, West Sulawesi, represents an important step toward enhancing teaching quality and professional competence. Through PLCs, teachers engage in collaborative and reflective processes with their peers to refine teaching methods, share experiences, and develop more effective learning strategies (Vescio, Ross, & Adams, 2008). This initiative strengthens teachers' abilities in classroom management, curriculum design, and technology integration in teaching, which are especially

relevant for educators in this setting as they work to create supportive learning environments that promote student achievement and overall educational quality (DuFour, 2016; Guskey, 2002; Learning Policy Institute, 2017).

Based on observations and reports from the Provincial Education Office of West Sulawesi, several key challenges are affecting teaching effectiveness at UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali. Findings show that most teachers at the school have not yet reached the expected standards for pedagogical competence. A survey conducted by the Ministry of Education and Culture in 2023 highlighted that only 35% of teachers were considered to have adequate teaching skills, while the others need significant improvement, particularly in using innovative teaching methods that better align with students' needs (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2023). Additionally, the data reveals limited use of technology in the classroom, with only 30% of teachers effectively incorporating it into their lessons, emphasizing the need for empowering teachers through PLCs to explore and adopt diverse teaching strategies aligned with modern educational demands (DuFour, 2016; Vescio, Ross, & Adams, 2008).

This phenomenon has a direct impact on the low performance of students at UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali, particularly in national competitions. School reports indicate that only a small number of students have achieved success at the national level in recent years. The primary factor contributing to this situation is the insufficient development of students' critical thinking skills and creativity, which should be nurtured through more interactive and innovative teaching methods (Hord, 2009).

Teachers, as the primary agents of the learning process, have yet to fully facilitate students in reaching their maximum potential. Therefore, empowering teachers through the Professional Learning Community is crucial to address this issue, with the hope that improving teacher competencies will lead to an increase in student achievement at both local and national levels (Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, Wallace, & Thomas, 2006; Guskey, 2002).

Teacher empowerment through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) is ideally envisioned as an effective platform for teachers to continually develop their pedagogical skills and professional conduct. In its best practice, teachers are expected to actively collaborate, share experiences, and provide feedback on innovative teaching practices. PLCs should create a learning environment that encourages teachers to reflect and adopt more adaptive approaches tailored to students' needs (DuFour, 2016; Hord, 2009). However, the reality in the field often differs. In schools like UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali, teacher participation in PLCs is frequently formalistic, limited to routine agendas without in-depth collaboration. Many teachers need help in actively participating due to heavy administrative workloads or insufficient support from the school in providing adequate time and resources for effective PLC activities (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2023).

Furthermore, previous research on teacher empowerment through PLCs has yet to address the practical issues faced by schools. Although many studies emphasize the importance of teacher collaboration within PLCs, they often focus on theoretical

aspects and overlook the real challenges schools encounter, particularly in schools with limited resources (Vescio et al., 2008; Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, Wallace, & Thomas, 2006). Many studies have yet to thoroughly explore factors that influence the effectiveness of PLCs, such as infrastructure limitations, insufficient intensive training for teachers, and support from school management (Guskey, 2002). Therefore, further research is necessary to bridge this gap, with a focus on practical solutions that can be applied in schools with limited resources, ensuring that teacher empowerment through PLCs operates more effectively and significantly impacts the quality of learning.

If the challenges in empowering teachers through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) at UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali are not addressed promptly, there will be serious consequences for improving teacher competencies and the quality of learning. According to Guskey (2002), effective professional development requires active participation and targeted support; without appropriate intervention, teacher participation in PLCs will have little impact on their teaching skills, classroom management, or ability to innovate in their methods. This could lead to stagnation in professional development, where teaching methods remain conventional and less responsive to students' needs (Hord, 2009). As a result, student learning outcomes are likely to fall below the expected standards, negatively affecting their academic performance at both local and national levels (Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, Wallace, & Thomas, 2006). Moreover, teachers' experiences in PLCs will fail to bring meaningful

changes to their teaching practices, hindering the growth of collaboration and innovation in instructional methods (Vescio, Ross, & Adams, 2008).

To address these issues, novelty in PLC approaches must be implemented to enhance the effectiveness of teacher empowerment. One proposed innovation is the integration of technology into PLC activities, such as digital platforms for collaboration and online learning, which would allow teachers to share best practices in real-time, even in regions like UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali (DuFour, 2016). Additionally, training programs tailored to local challenges, such as infrastructure limitations, should be developed to adapt PLCs to the specific conditions and needs of schools in the area (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2023). This approach will not only improve the implementation of PLCs but also provide more relevant and effective solutions for enhancing teacher competencies in challenging environments.

Research on teacher empowerment through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) at UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali is highly significant as it plays a crucial role in addressing the challenges faced by teachers in enhancing their professional competencies. Without systematic efforts like PLCs, the optimal improvement of pedagogical skills, classroom management, and innovation in teaching methods is unlikely to be achieved (Hord, 2009; Guskey, 2002). Teachers who are not involved in PLCs tend to rely on conventional teaching methods, which may be less responsive to the evolving needs of modern education (DuFour, 2016). The consequences of this can directly impact the quality of learning received by students,

ultimately affecting their academic performance. Therefore, this research focuses on how participation in PLCs can have a direct and significant impact on improving teacher competencies, enabling them to provide more effective and relevant learning experiences for their students (Stoll et al., 2006; Vescio et al., 2008).

Furthermore, this study offers a novel approach to addressing these challenges by reevaluating empowerment strategies through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), with a focus on more effective implementation.

In addition, the study will provide a fresh perspective on how PLCs can be adapted to meet schools' contextual needs, such as adjusting the timing and methods of PLC implementation to be more flexible and effective (Hord, 2009; Ministry of Education and Culture, 2023). Hence, the results of this study will not only offer practical benefits for UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali but also hold the potential to serve as a reference for other educational institutions in developing more sustainable teacher empowerment policies and programs.

The novelty of this research lies in its data taken from the research field to assess the impact of PLCs on enhancing teacher competencies, particularly within schools with unique characteristics like UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali. According to educational experts such as DuFour (2016), PLCs are highly effective in fostering collaboration and innovation among teachers. However, many schools still need to fully maximize the potential of PLCs due to a lack of evidence-based evaluation (Stoll et al., 2006). This study brings novelty by using Likert-scale questionnaires and

interviews to systematically measure teachers' competency development—an approach rarely applied in previous studies (Vescio et al., 2008). This novel method not only addresses gaps in the literature on PLC effectiveness but also provides practical guidelines for improved implementation in the field. The findings are expected to significantly contribute to educational quality by promoting more effective, evidence-based teacher empowerment.

This study limits its scope to the empowerment of teachers through PLCs at UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali. The research focuses on how teachers' involvement in PLCs can enhance their competencies in pedagogy, professional collaboration, and the implementation of more innovative teaching methods. Specifically, the study examines the role of PLCs in strengthening teachers' skills across various aspects of teaching and classroom management, as well as how empowerment through collaborative reflection can influence their ability to meet the demands of modern education (Guskey, 2002; Ministry of Education and Culture, 2023). Thus, the scope of this research is confined to the operational mechanisms of PLCs and their impact on improving teacher professionalism within the school environment.

Furthermore, the study aims to address issues related to teacher empowerment through PLCs and their impact on enhancing teacher competence at UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali. It will explore how PLCs can be utilized as a strategic tool for the continuous development of teachers' skills and knowledge while ensuring their ability to adapt to changes in the educational landscape. In addition, the research will provide insights

into how teacher participation in PLCs can drive improvements in the quality of teaching and student learning outcomes (Stoll et al., 2006; Vescio et al., 2008). Therefore, this study is expected to offer concrete solutions to increase the effectiveness of PLCs in fostering teacher professionalism at the school.

1.2 Research Question

The primary issue in teacher empowerment through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) at UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali is how teachers' involvement in this program can significantly affect their competency enhancement. Ideally, empowerment through PLCs should enable teachers to collaborate, reflect, and innovate in their teaching methods (DuFour, 2016). However, in practice, challenges such as limitations in program implementation, insufficient active participation from teachers, and a lack of empirical evidence measuring the direct impact of PLCs on teacher competency improvement remain major obstacles (Hord, 2009; Ministry of Education and Culture, 2023). Therefore, there is a need for research that explores how teacher engagement in PLCs can foster the development of their professional abilities in the context of teaching and classroom management (Stoll et al., 2006).

Based on the problem statement, the research question presented in this study is as follows:

1.2.1 How does teachers' participation/involvement in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) influence the enhancement of teacher competencies at UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali?

1.2.2 What are teachers' experiences participating in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), and how do these experiences affect their teaching practices at UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali?

1.3 The Objective Of The Research

This study aims to examine the impact of involvement in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) on enhancing teacher competencies at UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali. This research is expected to uncover how teacher participation in PLCs can improve various aspects of their professional competencies, such as pedagogical skills, classroom management, and the application of more innovative teaching methods. The study also seeks to provide empirical evidence on the effectiveness of PLCs in creating a collaborative environment that supports the continuous development of teaching skills, thereby having a positive impact on student learning outcomes.

Additionally, this study aims to explore teachers' experiences in participating in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and how such participation influences their teaching practices at UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali. Through interviews and questionnaires the research will delve into how teachers experience collaboration, reflection, and innovation within PLCs, as well as how these experiences are applied to their daily teaching practices (Guskey, 2002; Ministry of Education and Culture, 2023). Thus, this research not only focuses on the aspect of competency enhancement but also seeks a deeper understanding of the role PLCs play in shaping more effective and adaptive teaching practices that meet student needs.

1.4 Significance Of The Research

This study offers several theoretical benefits within the context of teacher empowerment through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Firstly, it contributes to the development of literature on PLCs by providing empirical evidence on how teacher involvement in PLCs can enhance their professional competencies. By focusing on UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali, the findings of this study will enrich the theoretical understanding of how collaborative and reflective processes within PLCs can influence teachers' performance and pedagogical development (Hord, 2009). Moreover, this research will provide new perspectives in educational theory regarding the impact of empowerment through PLCs, particularly in schools striving to improve the quality of learning through sustainable professional development strategies (Stoll et al., 2006).

The second theoretical benefit of this study is the expansion of understanding regarding the effectiveness of PLCs as a model for professional development across different educational levels. By thoroughly examining aspects such as teacher collaboration, shared reflection, and the application of innovative teaching methods, this research will strengthen the theoretical foundation of how PLCs can be utilized as a tool for enhancing educational quality (Vescio et al., 2008). The findings are expected to become a valuable reference for academics, researchers, and education practitioners interested in developing teacher professionalism and improving education quality through the PLC model (Guskey, 2002).

Practically, this study will provide direct benefits to UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali by improving teacher competencies through the implementation of PLCs. By understanding the tangible impact of teacher involvement in PLCs, the school can formulate more effective policies in designing and implementing community-based professional development programs (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2023). Additionally, the results of this study can serve as a guideline for school principals and local policymakers to optimize the use of PLCs as a primary means of enhancing the quality of classroom teaching, particularly in facing the increasingly complex challenges of 21st-century education (Hord, 2009; DuFour, 2016).

Furthermore, this research has broader practical implications for the field of education. The results can serve as a model for other schools seeking to implement PLCs as a strategy for teacher competency development. By adopting the findings and recommendations of this study, educational institutions across different regions can better understand the optimal ways to facilitate teacher empowerment through collaboration and innovation. This will contribute to the overall enhancement of education quality and help create a more responsive and adaptive education system that meets the needs of students and global challenges (Guskey, 2002).

1.5 Scope Of The Research

This study has disciplinary limitations. It focuses on Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) with a particular emphasis on enhancing teacher competencies. It falls within the domain of education, specifically concerning professional

development for teachers, where the main inquiry centers on how teachers can be empowered through the mechanisms of PLCs. Consequently, the research is restricted to the aspects of teacher empowerment and competency enhancement through professional collaboration within PLCs. It does not extend to the development of competencies in areas outside the context of PLCs or other professional development mechanisms.

From a content perspective, this study specifically addresses "Teacher Empowerment through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and Its Impact on Enhancing Teacher Competencies at UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali." The primary focus of this research is to evaluate the extent to which teacher involvement in PLCs influences their competencies, particularly in pedagogical skills and professional collaboration within educational institutions (Guskey, 2002). This limitation ensures that the study does not cover other aspects of professional development that are not directly related to empowerment through PLCs, such as technology-based development or other training programs.

The third aspect limiting this research is the form of empowerment activities through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). The activities examined involve teacher engagement in collaboration, reflection, and professional discussions facilitated by PLCs at UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali. This study will exclusively analyze collaborative activities within PLCs. It will not encompass other forms of professional development activities, such as individual training or workshops that do not involve

collaboration in the context of PLCs. This provides a sharper focus on the effectiveness of PLCs in enhancing teacher competencies through sustained collaborative activities.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Previous Related Studies

Several studies have explored the effectiveness of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) in enhancing teacher competence, professional development, and institutional support. Research has examined how PLCs provide collaborative platforms for teachers to exchange best practices, reflect on their teaching strategies, and develop new instructional approaches.

2.1.1. Professional Learning Community (PLC)

A Professional Learning Community (PLC) is a collaborative approach focused on enhancing educators' competencies through the exchange of knowledge, best practices, and shared experiences among members. PLCs enable teachers to work collaboratively to improve teaching effectiveness and student outcomes. Through PLCs, educators build a culture of continuous learning where interactions among teachers serve not only as a means of exchanging information but also as a platform for reflecting on their teaching practices. In this context, PLCs function as mechanisms for identifying learning issues, discovering innovative solutions, and implementing more effective teaching practices.

Moreover, PLCs differ from traditional professional development through a more participatory and sustainable approach. In a PLC, teachers engage actively and collectively in their learning processes, aiming to enhance their skills within the context

of everyday practice (Guskey, 2002). This deep involvement provides a more personalized and relevant approach tailored to the specific needs of teachers and schools, compared to one-directional, episodic training (Vescio et al., 2008). In their development process, PLCs also encourage the use of data and research findings to strengthen implemented teaching strategies and foster a culture of sustainable innovation within the school environment (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2023).

Therefore, PLCs act as strategic tools for improving teaching and learning quality in schools. Through collaborative and ongoing learning, PLCs create a space for teachers to reflect together, share effective practices, and explore new methods for addressing instructional challenges. Additionally, PLCs foster a positive professional attitude, such as a sense of responsibility for student progress, a spirit of sharing, and a willingness to continuously learn. This entire process not only impacts individual teacher competency but also transforms the school culture toward a collective focus on improving educational quality.

2.1.2. Teacher Empowerment and Professional Development in PLC

Gonçalves et al. (2020) emphasize the importance of teacher autonomy and school management support in professional development within PLCs. Using a case study approach, this research highlights how teacher empowerment fosters professional growth. However, it does not provide quantitative evidence to support its claims.

Sancar et al. (2021) explore a sustainable professional development model within PLCs, focusing on collective reflection as a means of empowering teachers.

While the study addresses resource constraints in schools, it lacks quantitative data on teacher competency improvement.

Tannehill & MacPhail (2017) discuss how teacher empowerment contributes to professional development, particularly in resource-limited schools. Their research underscores the need for institutional support within PLCs but does not incorporate quantitative analysis.

2.1.3. The Role of PLCs in Enhancing Teacher Competence

The role of PLCs in enhancing teacher competence is significant, particularly in building sustainable pedagogical and professional expertise. PLCs enable teachers to engage in collaborative learning focused on skill and knowledge development in response to current educational demands (Stoll et al., 2006). Through discussions, reflections, and joint analyses, teachers can share best practices and innovative ideas and confront various challenges encountered in teaching. This sustained interaction provides teachers with opportunities to not only improve their technical skills but also develop critical thinking and problem-solving abilities relevant to their instructional context (Vescio et al., 2008).

Furthermore, PLCs play a crucial role in facilitating effective exchanges of knowledge and experience, which directly impacts the quality of classroom teaching and learning. The collaboration fostered in PLCs encourages teachers to provide each other with constructive feedback, enhancing each other's professional growth and ultimately leading to higher teaching competence (DuFour, 2016). Within this forum,

teachers are encouraged to embrace lifelong learning, continually seeking ways to update and refine teaching strategies and making instructional decisions based on data and research findings (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2023). In this way, PLCs promote evidence-based practice that aligns with students' needs (Guskey, 2002).

Overall, PLCs provide a strong foundation for teacher competence development by creating a supportive, collaborative learning environment. Through PLCs, teachers gain new perspectives, expand professional networks, and cultivate a dynamic learning culture open to change. This is essential in today's educational context, which demands adaptability and innovation in addressing complex learning challenges (Stoll et al., 2006). Hence, PLCs contribute not only to individual teacher competence but also to the overall improvement of education quality by reinforcing a culture of collective learning and professional partnerships that support teaching transformation (Hord, 2009).

2.1.4. Challenges in Implementing PLCs

Rahmawati & Taylor (2020) examine the challenges of implementing PLCs in Indonesian schools, particularly in relation to limited resources and institutional support. They argue that adapting PLC strategies to local contexts is crucial for improving their effectiveness.

Nugroho & Lestari (2022) investigate strategies used by teachers in rural Indonesian schools to overcome resource limitations within PLCs. Their case study

highlights the importance of innovation and collaboration among teachers to optimize professional learning despite constraints.

Overall, these studies emphasize the qualitative aspects of teacher empowerment and professional learning communities, while also acknowledging the need for further research with quantitative evidence to measure their impact on professional development.

2.2 Some Pertinent Ideas

2.2.1.Professional Learning Communities in Indonesia

Professional Learning Community (PLC) or we call it Komunitas Belajar Professional has become one of the globally recognised approaches in improving the quality of education through continuous professional development for educators (Risdiany & Herlambang, 2021). In Indonesia, the adaptation of this concept as a Professional Learning Community (PLC) reflects the urgent need for a collective approach orientated towards improving the quality of learning (Liza & Zudeta, 2023). In the local context, PLC emphasises collaboration between teachers to address unique national education challenges, such as disparities in education quality, lack of ongoing training, and socio-cultural diversity (Soepriyanti et al., 2022).

The theoretical framework of PLC in Indonesia can be built on three main pillars: professional collaboration, reflection on practice and data-driven learning (2020). The first pillar, professional collaboration, encourages teachers to work collectively in designing, implementing and evaluating learning. The second pillar,

reflection on practice, involves an introspective process to evaluate individual and group teaching effectiveness (Purwanti & Puspitasari, 2021). The third pillar, data-driven learning, emphasises the importance of using student data to design more effective learning strategies (Syukri, 2020).

The implementation of Professional Learning Communities in Indonesia requires not only cultural adjustments, but also structural and operational adaptations (Harsono & Munawaroh, 2023). In the cultural context, PLC must consider local values such as gotong royong and deliberation, which are in line with the principles of collaboration (Agung, 2018). From the structural side, policy support from the government, such as the Guru Penggerak and Merdeka Belajar programmes, is an important foundation in integrating PLC into the education ecosystem (Lase et al., 2023). Operationally, PLC can be implemented through regular activities such as group discussions, classroom observations, and needs-based workshops (Sembiring, 2018).

The main objective of the Professional Learning Community is to improve teachers' professional competence in creating meaningful learning for students (Suwandi & Permatasari, 2021). By building a collaborative culture, PLC enables teachers to share knowledge, experiences and best practices that can improve teaching quality (Risdiany & Herlambang, 2021). In addition, the Professional Learning Community also aims to develop teachers' ability to identify student needs and design targeted learning interventions (Sri Wahyuni, 2022).

The benefits of Professional Learning Communities for educators include improving professional competence, strengthening relationships between educators, and empowering teachers as learning leaders (Liza & Zudeta, 2023). Through PLC, teachers can broaden their horizons regarding innovative learning strategies that are relevant to the needs of students in the globalisation era (Bunau et al., 2022). Intensive interactions within the KBP also strengthen professional solidarity, create a supportive work environment, and reduce the isolation often experienced by teachers (Arini, 2022).

The implementation of Professional Learning Communities also contributes to improving the overall quality of education (Munawir et al., 2022). By facilitating evidence-based discussions and collective decision-making, PLCs ensure that learning practices are always relevant and data-driven (Aldyan et al., 2023). This has the potential to reduce disparities in student learning outcomes across regions, particularly in resource-limited areas (A'yun, 2019).

One of the challenges in implementing Professional Learning Communities in Indonesia is the lack of time and administrative support for teachers to fully engage in learning community activities (Rifa'i, 2021). Therefore, strategies are needed that enable the integration of PLC into teachers' work schedules without increasing their workload. Support from school principals and education supervisors is crucial in creating an ecosystem that supports professional learning communities.

In addition, the success of PLC also depends on teachers' ability to develop leadership, communication and data analysis skills (Susanto, 2021). Therefore, ongoing training is an important element in supporting the effectiveness of PLC. Governments and educational institutions can play an active role in providing such training through local needs-based programmes (Ananto, 2020).

Overall, Professional Learning Communities are a highly relevant approach to improving the quality of education in Indonesia. By prioritising collaboration, reflection and the use of data, KBP is able to create a learning ecosystem that is orientated towards teachers' professional growth and student learning outcomes. Through consistent implementation and adequate support, PLC has the potential to be a catalyst for educational transformation in Indonesia.

Through the PLC, teachers are not only actors of education, but also lifelong learners who are constantly evolving to provide the best for students. Thus, the PLC not only addresses current educational needs, but also builds the foundation for a more competent and competitive future generation.

2.2.2. The Relationship Between Teachers' Competence Improvement with Professional Learning Community (PLC)

Through participation in a professional learning community (PLC), teachers gain a supportive space where they can collaborate and continuously develop their competencies. Within this community, teachers can share experiences, discuss classroom challenges, and exchange effective strategies for enhancing student learning.

Through these discussions and collaborations, teachers not only expand their knowledge but also gather fresh ideas that they can immediately implement in their classrooms. Research shows that PLCs help teachers become better prepared to meet the diverse needs of their students as they receive practical support and inspiration from their peers.

Moreover, PLCs encourage teachers to be more reflective about their teaching practices. By examining what works well and identifying areas for improvement, teachers become more attuned to designing strategies that meet students' needs. This reflective process makes teachers more flexible and intentional in their classroom decision-making. The sense of camaraderie in PLCs also fosters a positive professional culture, motivating teachers to continually improve the quality of their teaching. Ultimately, PLCs not only enrich individual competencies but also strengthen the collective commitment to advancing the quality of education within their schools.

2.2.3.Educational Context in UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali

Professional Learning communities are strategic platforms for educators to collaborate in improving the quality of learning and building the character of students. At UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali, the professional learning community has been realised through two main programs, namely Sipaingarang and Siasayangngi. These two communities have a main focus on developing learning and improving the character of learners at school, which is implemented through a structured and sustainable approach(Ahmal et al., 2020).

Professional Learning community activities at UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali are carried out offline every Tuesday in the Tuesday Sharing programme. This programme provides an opportunity for educators to share knowledge, experiences and best practices relevant to the learning process in the classroom. In addition, offline activities are also held once a month, providing more space for educators to explore various materials that support the development of professionalism and teaching quality.

The active participation of educators in this community shows high enthusiasm for the benefits obtained. The materials presented in the community activities are designed to be relevant to the real needs in the classroom, so as to have a direct impact on improving the quality of learning. Through this forum, educators can reflect on their teaching practices, obtain constructive feedback and explore new innovations in learning.

In addition to improving the quality of learning, the learning community at UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali also plays an important role in the character building of students. The Sipaingarang and Siasayangngi programmes are designed to build positive values such as responsibility, discipline and integrity. Through in-depth discussions on character education strategies, educators can design more effective and contextualised approaches to develop learners' potential.

Overall, the existence of Professional learning communities at UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali is one of the strategic steps in realising higher quality education oriented towards character development. With intensive collaboration, educators not only

enrich their professional competence, but also contribute to building a generation of high achievers and superior character. Continued support for the activities of this community is expected to continue to strengthen its existence as a driving force for educational transformation at UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali.

UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali has tremendous potential in the field of education, especially through the contribution of qualified educators. A total of 16 teachers in this school have joined as Master Teachers, demonstrating their dedication to improving the quality of learning and moving the education ecosystem in a more innovative direction. These Guru Penggerak play a strategic role in inspiring the education community, both locally and nationally, through offline and online activities. Their existence is one of the main pillars in the development of teacher professionalism in the school.

In addition to the Guru Penggerak, there are 6 Guru Penggerak assistants who support the teachers' competency development journey at UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali. These assistants play an important role in providing direction, supervision, and motivation for the Driver Teachers so that they can carry out their duties optimally. The mentoring is not only administrative in nature, but also touches on aspects of personal and professional development, thus creating a strong synergy in the school environment.

The presence of the visionary head of UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali is a major supporting factor in the creation of an innovative education ecosystem. The principal

was recognised as an Innovative Principal nominee representing West Sulawesi Province at the national level. This achievement is a clear proof of his dedication in leading and bringing the school to a more advanced direction. One of the innovations raised by the principal is related to ‘Alur Marka’ in the school's professional learning community. This innovation is a milestone in creating an effective collaborative pathway for teacher competency development.

The ‘Alur Marka’ initiated by the head of UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali has not only become a guide for the professional learning community at the school, but also an inspiration for other schools in the West Sulawesi region. This innovation emphasises the importance of collaboration, reflection and continuous development as an integral part of improving the quality of education. Through this approach, teachers not only learn individually but also share best practices that have a positive impact on the quality of learning in the classroom.

The commitment of all educators and leaders at UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali shows a strong spirit of togetherness in creating quality education. The support of the innovative principal, backed by the teacher mobilisers and their assistants, creates an environment conducive to the growth of teacher professionalism. This not only has a positive impact on the school internally but also contributes significantly to improving the quality of education at the regional and national levels.

2.2.4. Theories Supporting PLC Development

The development of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) is grounded in various theories that support collaborative learning and the enhancement of educators' professional competencies. One influential theory is Social Constructivism, proposed by Vygotsky, which emphasizes the importance of social interaction in learning. In the PLC context, this theory explains how knowledge is collectively constructed through discussions, collaboration, and mutual reflection among teachers (Vygotsky, 1978). By sharing experiences and knowledge, PLC members can deepen their understanding of teaching practices and develop improved pedagogical skills. This theory also encourages teachers to work in a supportive environment for collaboration and critical reflection, where every teacher contributes to collective learning (DuFour, 2016).

In addition, Wenger's theory of Communities of Practice (CoP) is highly relevant to PLC development. This theory highlights the concept of a community comprising individuals with shared interests or professions who learn through active participation in meaningful, relevant activities (Wenger, 1998). Within the PLC context, CoP emphasizes the importance of ongoing interaction, where teachers are not only consumers of knowledge but also active producers, creating and modifying teaching practices according to their local needs and context. Wenger asserts that learning occurs when community members actively share practices, ideas, and

solutions to challenges they encounter, leading to continuous competency development and professional transformation (Hord, 2009).

Furthermore, Schön's Reflective Practice theory provides a conceptual framework for teachers in PLCs to develop reflective capacity regarding their teaching practices. This theory stresses that continuous reflection on teaching actions, whether through joint community discussions or self-evaluation, is essential to understanding and improving professional practices (Schön, 1983). In a PLC context, teachers are encouraged to critically reflect on their teaching experiences, analyze what works well and what needs improvement, and seek new ways to achieve better learning outcomes. Thus, this theory reinforces the notion that teacher professional development occurs not only through theoretical learning but also through a continuous cycle of reflection and improvement in instructional practices.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

2.3.1. Input: The Role of Professional Learning Communities in Teacher Empowerment

At the input stage, establishing Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) is essential for empowering teachers and enhancing their competencies at UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali. PLCs foster a collaborative learning environment where teachers actively share practices, exchange insights, and engage in reflective discussions to improve their professional skills (DuFour, 2016; Hord, 2009). This model of professional development emphasizes teamwork in instructional planning, classroom management, and the adoption of innovative teaching practices. Drawing on Vygotsky's Social

Constructivism and Wenger's Communities of Practice (CoP), PLCs create a space where teachers co-construct knowledge, learn from each other's experiences, and continually refine their teaching methods (Vygotsky, 1978; Wenger, 1998). By engaging in this collaborative process, a learning culture is formed that supports sustained professional development, aligning with national educational goals for professional growth within Indonesian schools (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2023; Stoll et al., 2006).

2.3.2. Process: Collaborative and Reflective Practices within PLCs

At the heart of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) lies the practice of collaboration and reflection, where teachers participate in structured activities designed to enhance skills and provide mutual support. Through group discussions, classroom observations, feedback sessions, and joint lesson planning, teachers cultivate a learning environment that encourages growth for both individuals and the collective group. This process aligns with Schön's Reflective Practice theory (1983), which underscores the value of ongoing reflection in refining instructional methods. By engaging in reflection, teachers gain insights into their teaching practices, allowing them to adapt and improve classroom effectiveness. Within PLCs, teachers share strategies, confront challenges, and collaboratively develop solutions, which not only aids skill development but also fosters a continuous improvement culture driven by constructive feedback and shared experiences.

Research by Vescio, Ross, and Adams (2008) and Avalos (2011) further illustrates how collaborative reflection in PLCs helps teachers adjust their instructional strategies in response to the evolving needs of their students. This reflective approach enables educators to become more adaptive and innovative as they learn from one another and apply new techniques within their classrooms. As teachers reflect on their practices in a group setting, they foster a culture of openness and adaptability, which is essential for creating responsive and effective learning experiences. Thus, PLCs act as a supportive framework for teachers to not only improve individual skills but also contribute to the collective advancement of instructional quality, ensuring that student learning remains at the forefront of professional development.

2.3.3. Output: Transformative Impact on Teacher Competence, School Culture, and Student Achievement

Implementing PLC-based practices at UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali is projected to drive meaningful improvements in teacher competencies, particularly in instructional skills, classroom management, and teamwork. Teachers who actively participate in these communities are likely to gain confidence in experimenting with innovative teaching methods and responding to the needs of today's educational landscape. Studies, including those by Vangrieken et al. (2017), indicate that a collaborative environment within PLCs can boost teacher motivation and professional development, demonstrating the powerful impact of community-focused professional growth. By engaging in consistent collaborative and reflective practices, teachers enhance their

instructional effectiveness, becoming more responsive and adaptable to diverse classroom needs.

On a broader level, the PLC model is expected to positively shape the school culture at UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali, instilling values of continuous improvement and lifelong learning. As Stoll et al. (2006) emphasize, PLCs serve as a foundation for sustainable professional growth by cultivating an atmosphere that supports collaboration and reflective practice. This shift in school culture is likely to have direct benefits for students, as more skilled and engaged teachers can elevate overall learning outcomes. By fostering a supportive and innovative environment, the school aims to improve both teaching quality and student performance, creating a cohesive educational setting that prioritizes growth and adaptability.

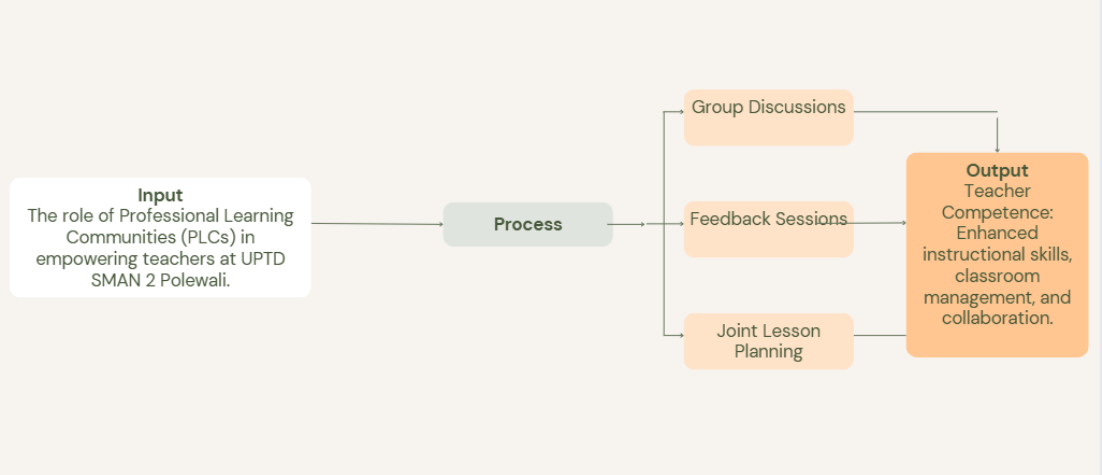


Chart II-1. Conceptual Framework

The following is a research flow in the form of a chart that illustrates the sequence of concepts based on the input, process, and output points:

1. Input: This paper focuses on the role of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) in

empowering teachers at UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali and highlights the importance of creating a collaborative environment where teachers can share knowledge, exchange insights, and engage in reflective discussions to enhance their professional skills.

2. Process: Outlines the key activities within PLCs aimed at fostering teacher competence, including collaborative group discussions for exchanging strategies and mutual support, classroom observations to gain insights and provide feedback, structured feedback sessions for constructive input on teaching practices, and joint lesson planning to enhance instructional methods and classroom effectiveness.

3. Output: PLC-based practices are expected to transform teacher competence by boosting instructional skills, enhancing classroom management, and fostering collaboration. These practices cultivate a school culture focused on continuous improvement and lifelong learning while also positively impacting student achievement through increased motivation, improved learning outcomes, and a more supportive educational environment.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study employs a mixed method approach. Regarding the first research question, "How does involvement in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) influence teacher competency improvement at UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali?", the most appropriate research design is a quantitative approach, which can be assessed through questionnaires, Likert scales (Gay et al., 2012).

On the other hand, to address the second research question, "How do teachers' experiences of participating in PLCs affect their teaching practices at UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali?" A qualitative approach method is the most suitable choice. This research design aims to explore and describe teachers' personal experiences and perspectives regarding their participation in PLCs (Merriam, 2009). A case study allows for in-depth information gathering through semi-structured interviews, helping reveal how teachers perceive their roles in PLCs, the challenges they encounter, and how these experiences influence their teaching practices (Yin, 2018). Qualitative data analysis will be conducted using a thematic approach, where key themes related to PLC participation experiences and impacts are identified and interpreted (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

3.2 Setting and Subjects of the Research

This research was conducted at UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali, a high school located in Polewali Mandar Regency, West Sulawesi. This school was selected as the research

site because it has implemented a Professional Learning Community (PLC) among teachers as part of its efforts to enhance teaching quality and develop professional competencies, aligning with best practices for effective professional development. UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali provides a relevant and representative context for examining the influence of PLC involvement on teacher competency improvement. PLCs are known to foster collaboration, reflective practice, and innovation in teaching.

Data collection in the field is conducted in December. This timeframe was selected to enable optimal data gathering, as active learning activities typically occur during this period, providing comprehensive opportunities for interviews, and questionnaire completion by teachers (Creswell, 2014). By choosing this period, the study aims to capture a realistic snapshot of teacher participation in PLCs, which is essential for gathering accurate data on their engagement and its effects on teaching practices. This carefully planned timing is expected to facilitate an effective data collection process and ensure that the research results accurately reflect the actual conditions of teacher involvement in PLCs and their impact on teaching practices.

3.3 Research Variables and Their Operational Definitions

This study involves two variables. To provide a clear understanding of the key aspects studied in this research, the following variables and their operational definitions are outlined:

3.3.1 Teacher Involvement in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) at UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali: This refers to activities in which teachers at UPTD SMAN 2

Polewali engage in structured PLC practices, including group discussions, classroom observations, constructive feedback sessions, and collaborative lesson planning, with the goal of improving professional skills and supporting peer growth.

3.3.2 Improvement in Teacher Competence and School Culture at UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali refers to positive developments in teachers' instructional skills, classroom management techniques, and collaborative abilities, as observed through self-assessments and peer evaluations, along with an enhanced school culture that values continuous improvement and collaborative learning.

3.4 Population and Sample

The population in this study consists of all teachers at UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali who are involved in Professional Learning Community (PLC) activities. These teachers are considered a relevant population, as their involvement in PLCs is directly related to the study's objective of examining the impact of participation in such communities on teacher competency enhancement (DuFour, 2016; Hord, 2009). Additionally, this population possesses characteristics that allow the researcher to explore how their PLC involvement contributes to their teaching practices and professional development (Stoll et al., 2006).

To select a sample from this population, this study employs purposive sampling. This technique was chosen because it allows the researcher to specify criteria relevant

to the research focus, such as the teachers' active participation in PLC activities and their experience in implementing collaborative-based learning (Creswell, 2014). Purposive sampling is particularly effective in qualitative research when the aim is to select participants who are most likely to provide in-depth, meaningful data (Merriam, 2009). By using this approach, the researcher can ensure that the selected sample possesses the appropriate knowledge and experience necessary to provide insightful data on PLC involvement and teaching competency improvement. This sampling strategy supports the study's goal of obtaining data that accurately represents the impact of PLCs on teacher competency at UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali (Patton, 2002).

3.5 Instrument of the Research

The instruments used in this study are as follows:

3.5.1 Questionnaire

It is aimed to assess teachers' participations in PLC activities. Each item on the questionnaire reflects indicators related to participation in PLC activities, such as collaboration with colleagues, reflection on teaching practices, and the implementation of new teaching methods (Creswell, 2014; Gay et al., 2012). Data obtained from this questionnaire will provide a quantitative overview of how strongly PLC involvement correlates with improvements in teacher competency, allowing for measurable insights into the relationship between these variables (Field, 2013). The questionnaire consists of 10 statements measured on a Likert scale with the options of Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. This questionnaire is based on the theories

proposed by Rosenberg and Hovland (1960), as well as Broadbent (1958), and evaluates 2 main dimensions: Enhancement of Teachers' Professional Competence and Interaction and Collaboration in Professional learning Communities.

3.5.2 Interview sheet

This interview was designed to explore teachers' personal experiences, perceptions, and insights regarding their involvement in PLCs (Patton, 2002). It consists of 10 questions that focuses in teachers' experiences in PLC, perceived benefit in PLC, challenges faced in PLC and the impact of PLC for teachers.

3.6 Technique of Collecting Data

The data collection techniques consist of:

3.6.1. Questionnaire

A questionnaire is provided with a Likert scale to measure the level of teacher involvement in PLCs and their teaching competencies. Each item on the questionnaire reflects indicators related to participation in PLC activities, such as collaboration with colleagues, reflection on teaching practices, and the implementation of new teaching methods (Creswell, 2014; Gay et al., 2012). Data obtained from this questionnaire will provide a quantitative overview of how strongly PLC involvement correlates with improvements in teacher competency, allowing for measurable insights into the relationship between these variables (Field, 2013).

3.6.2. Interview

These interviews are designed to explore teachers' personal experiences, perceptions, and insights regarding their involvement in PLCs (Patton, 2002). Through semi-structured interviews, the researcher can use open-ended guiding questions that allow teachers to share stories about their experiences, challenges faced, perceived benefits, and how PLC participation has influenced their teaching practices (Yin, 2018).

The interview process was carefully planned, including choosing a time and location convenient for respondents. Interviews was recorded (with respondents' consent) to ensure that data can be thoroughly analyzed (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Additionally, conducting individual interviews offers respondents the freedom to express their thoughts without peer influence, leading to richer and more nuanced data on how PLC involvement impacts their teaching practices (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

3.7 Technique of Data Analysis

The appropriate data analysis technique is descriptive analysis to address the first research question, "How does involvement in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) influence teacher competency improvement at UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali?"

On the other hand, to answer the second research question, "How do teachers' experiences in participating in PLCs affect their teaching practices at UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali?" Thematic analysis is the appropriate method for qualitative data analysis. The thematic analysis process involves several stages, including data transcription,

interpreting and constructing narratives that connect these themes to the research context (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Merriam, 2009).

To interpret the qualitative analysis results more deeply, it is essential to reflect critically on the context of teachers' experiences and how PLCs influence their teaching perceptions and behaviors. Contextual factors that may affect participation experiences, such as school culture, peer support, and other external influences, should be considered (Yin, 2018). The results of this thematic analysis will offer a comprehensive understanding of teachers' experiences in PLCs and their impact on teaching.

Finally, integrating the results of quantitative and qualitative analyses can provide a holistic view of how PLC involvement influences teacher competencies and teaching practices at UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali. This integration also aids in drawing richer conclusions and recommending practical implications for enhancing educational quality through PLCs.

CHAPTER IV

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Finding

This chapter presents the research results and discussion related to the effect of teachers‘ participation in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) on improving teachers’ competence at UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali. In the results section, the discussion will focus on two main aspects, namely how teachers‘ involvement in PLCs contributes to improving their professional competence, as well as teachers’ experiences while participating in PLCs and its impact on their teaching practices in the classroom. The analysis of the results will draw on the empirical data that has been collected to provide an in-depth understanding of the dynamics and effectiveness of PLCs in supporting teachers' professional development. This discussion is expected to comprehensively explain the role of PLCs in fostering teaching innovation, collaboration between teachers, and overall improvement of education quality in school settings.

4.1. 1 Demographic Distribution of Respondents

This section presents the demographic distribution of respondents by gender and years of teaching experience. Understanding these characteristics is important to provide context for this study, as factors such as gender differences and teaching experience may influence the level of teachers' involvement in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and the development of their competencies. By knowing this

distribution, the study can provide a more comprehensive picture of the profile of teachers involved in PLCs at UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali.

In addition, information regarding teachers' years of teaching can provide insight into how work experience affects their participation in PLCs. Teachers with longer experience may have different perspectives compared to those who are just starting their careers, especially in terms of implementing learning strategies and adapting to educational innovations. Therefore, analysing these two aspects-gender and teaching experience-will help in understanding how teachers' demographic background contributes to the effectiveness of PLCs in improving their professional competence.

4.1.2 Gender Distribution

Based on the research conducted on 50 teacher respondents at UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali, as outlined in the research methodology, the following table presents the distribution of respondents based on their gender.

Table IV-1
Gender Distribution

Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	19	38,0	38,0	38,0
	Female	31	62,0	62,0	100,0
	Total	50	100,0	100,0	

According to the gender distribution table, out of a total of 50 respondents, 19 (38%) are male, while 31 (62%) are female. This indicates that the majority of respondents in this study are female. This percentage reflects the dominant participation of female teachers in the study, which may suggest that, in the given context, female teachers are more actively involved in professional activities such as Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) compared to their male counterparts.

The predominance of female respondents also provides insight into the teaching workforce dynamics in the research environment, where the teaching profession is likely to be more female-dominated. This factor may influence various aspects of the study, such as teaching styles, engagement levels in instructional innovation, and interaction patterns within PLCs. Therefore, this gender distribution is an important factor that offers additional perspectives in analyzing the research findings related to the effectiveness of PLCs in enhancing teacher competence.

4.1.3 Distribution of Teaching Experience

Age is a crucial variable that determines an individual's productivity in the workplace, including in the teaching profession. Teachers within the productive age range tend to have better performance in the teaching and learning process and actively participate in various professional activities.

To understand the age distribution of the respondents in this study, their characteristics based on age groups are presented in the table below. The following table illustrates the distribution of respondents according to age groups among teachers at UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali.

Table IV-2
Distribution of Teaching Experience

Work Tenure

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less than 10 years	19	38,0	38,0	38,0
	More than 10 years	18	36,0	36,0	74,0
	More than 20 years	13	26,0	26,0	100,0
	Total	50	100,0	100,0	

Based on the table of respondents' teaching experience distribution, it is evident that out of a total of 50 respondents, 19 teachers (38%) have less than 10 years of teaching experience. Meanwhile, 18 teachers (36%) have more than 10 years of experience, and 13 teachers (26%) have been teaching for more than 20 years. This distribution indicates a balance between relatively new teachers with less than 10 years of experience and those with longer teaching experience.

With an almost equal proportion, this data suggests that the study includes various levels of teaching experience, which contributes to diverse perspectives on teachers' engagement in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Teachers with longer experience may adopt more conventional teaching approaches, whereas newer teachers tend to be more open to innovation and technology integration in the

learning process. Therefore, this variation in teaching experience provides broader insights into the effectiveness of PLCs in enhancing teaching quality in schools.

To provide an initial overview of the data collected in this study, through questionnaires and interviews, descriptive analyses were conducted using SPSS software for questionnaire data and thematic analysis for interview data. This analysis aims to identify the basic characteristics of each variable, such as mean, median, and standard deviation. The results of these analyses help to provide an in-depth understanding of the data distribution and respondents' perceptions of the dimensions measured, particularly in relation to participation in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs).

Table IV-3 Descriptive Statistic

Descriptive Statistics (Mean, Median, Std. Deviation)

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Median
X1	4.82	0.438	4.82
X2	4.8	0.404	4.8
X3	4.84	0.37	4.84
X4	4.8	0.404	4.8
X5	4.88	0.328	4.88
X6	4.8	0.404	4.8
X7	4.82	0.438	4.82
X8	4.8	0.404	4.8
X9	4.84	0.37	4.84
X10	4.84	0.37	4.84

Based on the results of the descriptive analysis presented in the table, the mean of all variables ranged from 4.8 to 4.88. This indicates that participation or experience

in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) was generally rated very positively by the respondents. This high mean indicates that the majority of teachers felt that the activities in PLCs provided significant benefits to their professional development.

In addition, the median value for each variable is identical to the mean, indicating that the data distribution is highly symmetrical. The absence of extreme values or significant data deviations indicates that respondents' perceptions of the various aspects measured tend to be consistent. This data provides confidence that the results of the analysis represent respondents' perceptions as a whole without the influence of outlier data.

The low standard deviation, which ranges from 0.328 to 0.438, further strengthens these findings. The low standard deviation indicates that the variability or spread of respondents' answers is relatively small, which means that the majority of respondents gave almost uniform answers. In other words, the perceived benefits of PLCs are perceived equally by all respondents, without any significant differences in perception.

Variable X5, which most likely relates to ‘encouragement for self-competence development,’ has the highest mean (4.88) and lowest standard deviation (0.328). This shows that this dimension is the aspect most valued by the respondents with high consensus. Respondents felt that PLCs were not only a platform for sharing, but also provided strong motivation to continue developing themselves professionally.

High data homogeneity is evident from the uniformity of mean, median, and standard deviation values across variables. This indicates that the PLCs programme succeeded in creating a consistently positive experience for all teachers involved. This uniformity reflects the effectiveness of PLCs in meeting teachers' professional needs without any notable differences between them.

However, there are some aspects that are slightly lower than the other dimensions, such as variables X2 and X4 which have an average of 4.8. Although this score is still very good, these variables could be the focus for further improvement. Improvement efforts could focus on enriching activities that support the improvement of teaching skills or evaluation of teaching methods, so that the benefits of PLCs can be optimized.

Overall, this data shows that Professional Learning Communities have had a significant impact on teachers' professional development. The high averages and consistency of the data reflect the success of the programs in providing relevant and meaningful experiences for teachers. By maintaining the elements that are already working well and improving the areas that have little room for improvement, PLCs can continue to be a key driver in improving the quality of education in schools.

4.1.4 Enhancement of Teachers' Professional Competence Dimension

As a first step in answering the research question regarding the effect of teachers‘ participation in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) on improving teachers’ competencies at UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali, this study focuses on teachers' experiences

and views regarding their involvement in PLCs. This research examines how active participation in collaborative activities such as sharing best practices, joint reflection, and professional development can be a means to support individual and collective quality improvement.

Data were collected using instruments designed to measure various aspects of teachers' involvement in PLCs, including the impact of these activities on their understanding, skills and overall competence development. With this approach, the research sought to objectively describe the contribution of PLCs in creating a learning environment that supports teachers' professional development.

Furthermore, the results obtained from this study will provide a clearer picture of the relationship between participation in PLCs and improvements in teacher competence, which is expected to serve as a foothold for further development in the field of education.

Improving teacher competence is one of the important aspects in supporting the success of the learning process in schools. Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) become one of the effective means for teachers to collaborate, share experiences and improve their skills on an ongoing basis. This study aims to find out the extent to which participation in PLCs impacts on teachers' professional development, focusing on various dimensions such as understanding of teaching practices, skills, new insights, evaluation, and self-development.

The results of this study will present teachers' responses regarding their experiences while participating in PLCs. The data analysed using a Likert scale provides a clear picture of the contribution of PLCs in promoting teachers' professionalism at UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali. The findings are expected to serve as a reference in evaluating and improving the impleme

Table IV- 4 Enhancement of Teachers' Professional Competence Dimension of PLCs in the future.

No.	Statement	Strongly disagree (rated 1) to strongly agree (rated 5) and the percentage					Average
		1	2	3	4	5	
1.	My participation in Professional Learning Communities helps me understand better teaching practices.	0 (0,0%)	0 (0,0%)	1 (2%)	7 (14%)	42 (84%)	4.82
2.	I feel that the activities in Professional Learning Communities help me improve my teaching skills.	0 (0,0%)	0 (0,0%)	0 (0,0%)	10 (20%)	40 (80%)	4.80
3.	Through Professional Learning Communities, I gain new insights that are useful for enhancing my professional competencies.	0 (0,0%)	0 (0,0%)	0 (0,0%)	8 (16%)	42 (84%)	4.88
4.	Professional Learning Communities provide opportunities for me to evaluate and improve my teaching methods.	0 (0,0%)	0 (0,0%)	0 (0,0%)	10 (20%)	40 (80%)	4.80

5.	My experience in Professional Learning Communities encourages me to be more involved in self-competency development.	0 (0,0%)	0 (0,0%)	0 (0,0%)	6 (12%)	44 (88%)	4.88
	Total	0 (0,0%)	0 (0,0%)	1 (0,4%)	41 (16.4%)	208 (83.2%)	4.84

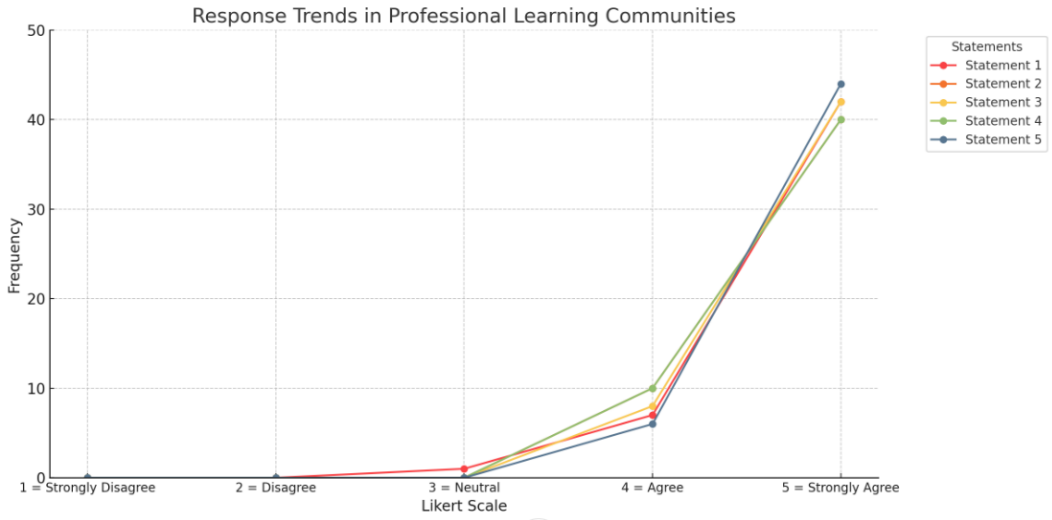


Chart IV- 1 Line Graph of Enhancement of Teachers' Professional Competence Dimension

The findings from Table IV.4 : Enhancement of Teachers' Professional Competence Dimension and the corresponding chart IV.1: Line Graph of Response Trends in Professional Learning Communities highlight the significant positive influence of participation in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) on teacher competency at UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali. The data and graph consistently show that

most responses fall into the Agree and Strongly Agree categories, indicating a strong perception among teachers that PLCs effectively contribute to their professional development. The visual trend in the graph supports the table data by illustrating a clear upward trajectory toward positive responses.

The table shows particularly high average scores for Statement 3 and Statement 5, both reaching an average of 4.88. These statements reflect teachers' acknowledgment that PLCs offer valuable new insights and motivate them toward continuous self-competency development. This trend is visually emphasized in the graph, where the lines for Statements 3 and 5 peak higher compared to others. This suggests that PLCs are not only beneficial for immediate teaching practices but also serve as platforms for long-term professional growth and self-reflection.

The graph also reveals that Statements 1, 2, and 4 exhibit similarly strong trends, with average scores ranging from 4.80 to 4.82. These statements reflect teachers' perceptions of PLCs helping them understand better teaching practices, improve their teaching skills, and evaluate their instructional methods. The steep rise of all lines from Neutral to Strongly Agree underscores how PLCs foster a collaborative space where teachers feel supported in improving their instructional strategies. This consistency across statements highlights the comprehensive benefits of PLC participation.

Moreover, the absence of responses in the Strongly Disagree and Disagree categories both in the table and the graph demonstrates unanimous positive feedback

from participants. This indicates a strong consensus among teachers regarding the effectiveness of PLCs in enhancing their professional competencies. The graph visually reinforces this by showing no activity on the lower end of the Likert scale, highlighting the positive reception of PLC initiatives.

In conclusion, both the quantitative data and the visual representation strongly suggest that involvement in PLCs significantly enhances teacher competencies at UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali. The upward trends in the graph and high average scores across all statements reflect the effectiveness of PLCs in providing opportunities for professional growth, encouraging reflective practice, and motivating continuous development. Strengthening PLC initiatives could further enhance teaching quality and positively impact student learning outcomes.

4.1.5 Interaction and Collaboration in Professional learning Communities Dimension

In education, interaction is one of the important elements that shape the competence and quality of an educator. Not only from classroom activities, but also from collaboration and peer learning, these experiences can have a significant impact on a teacher's self-development. One of the platforms that support this process is Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). To understand more, this study explores teachers' experiences while participating in PLCs, including perceived benefits, new insights gained, and opportunities for reflection and development of teaching methods. The following are the results of the research related to the experiential dimension of PLCs.

Table IV- 5. The Result of Interaction and Collaboration in Professional Learning Communities Dimension

No.	Statement	Strongly disagree (rated 1) to strongly agree (rated 5) and the percentage					Avarage
		1	2	3	4	5	
6.	I feel supported by my colleagues in Professional Learning Communities to try new teaching techniques	0 (0,0%)	0 (0,0%)	0 (0,0%)	10 (20%)	40 (80%)	4.80
7.	Professional Learning Communities provide opportunities for me to reflect on my own teaching practices	0 (0,0%)	0 (0,0%)	1 (2%)	7 (14%)	42 (84%)	4.82
8.	My participation in Professional Learning Communities has changed the way I plan lessons	0 (0,0%)	0 (0,0%)	0 (0,0%)	10 (20%)	40 (80%)	4.80
9.	I gain new ideas for classroom use through discussions in Professional Learning Communities.	0 (0,0%)	0 (0,0%)	0 (0,0%)	8 (16%)	42 (84%)	4.84

10.	My experience in Professional Learning Communities has made me more confident in implementing more effective learning practices	0 (0,0%)	0 (0,0%)	0 (0,0%)	8 (16%)	42 (84%)	4.84
	Total	0 (0,0%)	0 (0,0%)	1 (0,2%)	43 (17,2)	206 (82,4)	

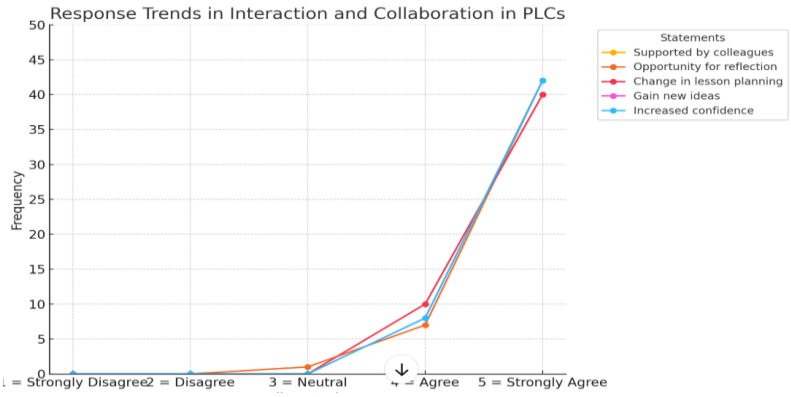


Chart IV- 2. Line Graph of interaction and collaboration in Professional Learning Communities Dimension

Based on the data in Table IV.3 and the line graph (Figure IV.3) regarding the Interaction and Collaboration dimension of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), it can be seen that the majority of respondents gave very positive responses to their experiences. This is reflected in the high mean scores, which ranged from 4.80 to 4.84 across all statements. These figures indicate that teachers consistently perceived

significant benefits from their involvement in PLCs, especially in the aspects of interaction and collaboration.

On peer support (Statement 6), with a mean score of 4.80, teachers indicated that they felt supported to try new teaching techniques. This support is an important factor in improving competence as it provides courage and motivation to experiment and adopt innovative teaching approaches. A supportive work environment allows teachers to continue to develop themselves and enrich their teaching methods.

Furthermore, in the statement emphasizing opportunities for reflection on teaching practice (Statement 7) with a mean score of 4.82, it is seen that PLCs provide a space for teachers to evaluate and improve the teaching methods they have implemented. This reflection process is essential in professional development, as it allows teachers to identify strengths and weaknesses in the teaching process and seek concrete improvement solutions through discussion and feedback from peers.

In addition, statements relating to changes in the way lessons are planned (Statement 8), gaining new ideas (Statement 9), and increased confidence in implementing effective learning practices (Statement 10) showed mean scores between 4.80 and 4.84. This indicates that involvement in PLCs not only plays a role in improving the collaborative aspect, but also contributes to increased teacher innovation and confidence in devising more effective learning strategies that are responsive to students' needs.

In conclusion, involvement in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) at UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali is proven to have a significant positive impact on improving teacher competence. Through interaction, collaboration, and opportunities for reflection and sharing of ideas, PLCs help teachers develop teaching skills, formulate better lesson plans, and increase confidence in learning practices. Thus, the results of this study confirm that participation in PLCs is an effective strategy to support teachers' overall competence development.

4.1.6 Analysis of Findings and Implications of Professional Learning Communities (PLC)

Based on the results of a study that examined the dimensions of improving teachers‘ professional competence and the dimensions of interaction and collaboration in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) at UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali, it was found that teachers’ participation in PLCs had a significant positive impact on their competence development. Data obtained through Likert scale-based instruments showed that most teachers responded in the ‘Agree’ and ‘Strongly Agree’ categories, with mean scores ranging from 4.80 to 4.88. This indicates that active engagement in PLCs has helped teachers improve their understanding, skills and innovations in teaching practices.

On the dimension of improving professional competence, teachers reported that participation in PLCs increased their understanding of better teaching practices, improved their teaching skills, and encouraged them to continue developing their

competence. In particular, statements regarding the acquisition of new insights and encouragement for self-development achieved a mean score of 4.88. This finding suggests that PLCs not only act as a discussion space, but also as a platform for the discovery of new ideas and deep learning, which directly contributes to the improvement of teaching quality.

Meanwhile, on the interaction and collaboration dimension, the results show that teachers feel highly supported by their peers in PLCs. With mean scores ranging from 4.80 to 4.84, teachers revealed that the collaborative working environment allows them to reflect on their teaching practices, plan lessons innovatively and get fresh ideas through discussions. The line graph presented corroborates these findings, as it visually shows a clear upward trend in the ‘Agree’ and ‘Strongly Agree’ categories, with no negative responses.

Analyses of the quantitative data and visual representations in the graphs indicate that engagement in PLCs consistently contributes positively to improving teacher competence. The absence of responses in the ‘Strongly Disagree’ or ‘Disagree’ categories indicates a strong consensus among teachers that PLCs are effective in creating a learning environment that supports professional development. This finding confirms that PLCs serve as strategic platforms for collaboration, reflection, and innovation that support teaching improvement.

In conclusion, teachers' active participation in Professional Learning Communities at UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali is proven to significantly improve their professional competence. Through interaction, collaboration, and opportunities for shared reflection, PLCs assist teachers in honing skills, developing more effective lesson plans, and increasing confidence in applying innovative learning techniques. Therefore, strengthening and expanding the PLCs initiative is highly recommended as an effective strategy to support teachers' professional development and improve the quality of education in schools.

4.1.6.1 The Role of PLCs in Improving Self-Competence

One of the main findings in this study is the role of PLCs in encouraging the improvement of teachers' self-competence. The data shows that variables related to self-competence development received the highest score, with an average of 4.88. The majority of teachers feel that PLCs provide encouragement for them to continue learning and developing their abilities independently. This shows that PLCs not only provide external support, but also foster internal motivation for teachers to continuously improve their teaching quality. In addition, the PLC environment allows for experiential learning and immediate feedback from peers. In this context, teachers not only gain new theories but can also directly implement more innovative learning strategies based on the discussions and reflections that occur within the community. This finding reinforces the idea that PLCs can be part of a continuous professional development strategy that relies not only on formal training, but also on experience and direct interaction between teachers.

4.1.6.2 Homogeneity of Teachers' Perceptions of the Benefits of PLCs

Further analysis shows that teachers' perceptions of the benefits of PLCs tend to be homogeneous, with a low standard deviation, ranging from 0.328 to 0.438. This indicates that most teachers have similar experiences in feeling the positive impact of their involvement in PLCs. This uniformity suggests that the effectiveness of PLCs does not depend on the background of individual teachers, but rather on the collaboration mechanisms implemented in the community. In other words, both novice and experienced teachers benefit equally from their participation in PLCs.

The consistency of these findings also provides evidence that PLCs can be widely applied in a variety of educational contexts, without any significant barriers to their effectiveness. Therefore, educational institutions should consider making PLCs part of their teacher professional development policies, as they have been shown to provide uniform benefits to all participants.

Overall, the results of this study show that PLCs play a strategic role in improving teachers' professional competence. From the participation dimension, teachers felt that their involvement in this community helped them in understanding more effective teaching strategies as well as improving their teaching skills. Meanwhile, in the experiential dimension, teachers reported that they gained tangible benefits from reflection on learning methods, increased confidence, as well as collegial support in developing more innovative strategies.

4.1.7 Teachers' Experiences and the Impact of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) on Teaching Practices

To answer the second research question: ‘What are teachers‘ experiences participating in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), and how do these experiences affect their teaching practices at UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali?’, this study used thematic analysis to dig deeper into teachers' perspectives on their involvement in PLCs. The analysis focused on four main themes: experiences, challenges faced, perceived benefits, and how PLC participation has influenced their teaching practices. With this approach, this study aims to understand how involvement in PLCs is not only a means of sharing knowledge, but also has a transformative impact on teachers' competencies and teaching methods.

4.1.7.1 Teachers' Experiences in Professional Learning Communities (PLC)

The interview data analysed in this study provides a picture of how teachers experience PLCs, the barriers they face, as well as the benefits they gain from being involved in the community. In addition, the analysis also explored how their experiences in PLCs contributed to changes in classroom practices. By identifying patterns that emerged from the interviews, this research seeks to provide greater insight into the effectiveness of PLCs as a professional development strategy for teachers at UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali.

Participation in Professional Learning Communities (PLC) provides diverse and meaningful experiences for teachers. In this interview, five teachers whose names are anonymous shared their experiences, namely (M.M.), (R.A.), (N.R.), (A.B.), and (H.W.). Each of them had experiences in engaging in PLC, ranging from sharing teaching practices, discussing, to collaborating on learning projects.

Table IV- 6 Teachers' Experiences in Professional Learning Communities (PLC)

No.	Respondents	Activity/Participation in PLCs	Additional Information
1	MM	Actively participated in PLC activities, both online and offline; also acted as a resource person in my own school and in other institutions.	Demonstrates dual role as participant and presenter of information, which supports holistic development.
2	RA	Participated in various discussion forums and workshops on PLCs.	This active participation provides an opportunity to directly apply new ideas in teaching practice.
3	NR	Actively participates in PLC community discussions, opening up space to discuss challenges faced in the classroom.	PLC became a platform to express obstacles and find solutions together through joint reflection.
4	AB	Collaborate with peers on various teaching projects.	This collaboration encourages the exchange of ideas and the development of more innovative teaching methods.
5	HW	Sharing teaching strategies and experiences in PLC forums.	PLCs serve as a platform for self-development and innovation, which supports the improvement of teaching quality.

M.M. shared his experience that he actively participates in PLC activities, both online and offline. In addition, he often acts as a resource person on various occasions, both in his own school and in other institutions.

"I am very active in participating in professional learning communities, both as a participant and as a resource person. These activities help me enrich my insights and teaching skills,' he said.

R.A. added that her involvement in PLC has led her to participate in various discussion forums and workshops.

"I feel that by joining PLC, I can continue to learn and share experiences with fellow teachers. Each meeting provides new insights that can be directly applied in the classroom,' she added.

Meanwhile, N.R. is more of an active participant in her community discussions. She revealed that PLC provides a space for teachers to openly discuss various challenges in teaching.

"In the PLC discussion sessions, I can express the obstacles I face in the classroom and get a lot of input from my fellow teachers. This really helped me in understanding the various approaches that can be applied, 'she said.

Not only as a place to share experiences, PLC also strengthens collaboration between teachers in developing learning methods. A.B. said that since joining PLC, she has become accustomed to working with colleagues on various teaching projects. H.W. feels the same benefit.

"I often share teaching strategies that I have tried in class, and other colleagues also share their experiences. From there, I get a lot of new ideas that I hadn't thought of before, 'she says.

For her, PLC is not just a sharing forum, but also a platform to continue developing herself and finding new innovations in teaching.

From these various experiences, it is clear that PLCs provide opportunities for teachers to support each other in their duties as educators. Whether through discussions, sharing experiences, or collaborating on teaching projects, PLCs create an environment conducive to greater self-exploration and development.

4.1.7.2 Perceived Benefits of PLCs

Participation in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) provides various benefits for teachers, both in terms of improving teaching skills, creativity, and strengthening professional motivation.

Table IV- 7 Perceived Benefits of PLCs

Benefit Aspect	Description of Benefits	Impact on Teachers
Improved Teaching Insight	Teachers gain new insights into more effective learning methods and strategies through collaboration with peers.	Enrich understanding of pedagogical approaches, making learning more interesting and enjoyable.
Enhanced Creativity	Teachers are more creative in designing and delivering teaching materials, and can explore more interactive teaching methods.	Improve the ability to design learning models that suit the needs of students.

Strengthening Professionalism	Teachers obtain feedback from peers to improve teaching practice and reflection in evaluating the methods used.	Assist teachers in identifying areas for improvement and refining learning strategies.
Increased Motivation and ConfidenceIncreased	Teachers are more motivated to continue learning and developing their professional potential, and are more confident in trying new strategies in the classroom.	Encourage a culture of continuous learning and increase courage in implementing learning innovations.

One of the main benefits perceived by the respondents was an increased insight into more effective learning methods and strategies. M.M. stated that collaboration within the learning community has enriched her understanding of various pedagogical approaches, which in turn makes the learning process more interesting and enjoyable for students. This suggests that interaction between teachers in PLCs can serve as a means of exchanging ideas that enable them to develop more innovative teaching strategies. By sharing experiences with each other, teachers can find solutions to various learning challenges in the classroom as well as gain inspiration from the best practices implemented by their peers.

In addition to enriching insights, PLC also plays an important role in increasing teacher creativity in designing and delivering teaching materials. R.S. emphasised that her involvement in PLC has opened up opportunities for her to get to know various teaching methods that are more interactive and interesting.

This shows that professional learning communities not only help teachers improve their theoretical understanding, but also provide room for exploration to develop learning models that are more contextualised and in line with students' needs. In the ever-evolving world of education, adaptation skills to new learning methods are crucial, especially in accommodating diverse learning styles in the classroom. Therefore, PLC can be an effective platform for teachers to experiment with new learning techniques, which can increase student engagement in the learning process.

Also in pedagogical aspects, participation in PLCs also contributes to strengthening teachers' professionalism through feedback and reflection mechanisms. HW stated that the input from colleagues in the learning community greatly helped her in adjusting and improving her teaching practice. This shows that the discussions that occur in this community not only serve as a forum for sharing experiences, but also as a means of reflection that allows teachers to evaluate the effectiveness of the methods they use in the classroom. With constructive feedback, teachers can identify areas for improvement and develop more effective strategies to improve student learning outcomes. In addition, shared reflection in PLCs can also encourage teachers to be more open to criticism and input from peers, which in turn enriches their insights and improves the quality of their teaching.

Furthermore, the perceived benefits of PLC also include increased motivation and confidence in developing professional potential. R.S. added that her involvement

in PLCs has encouraged her to continue learning new things, especially in the field of educational technology and learning innovations. This shows that learning communities can play a role in building a culture of continuous learning among teachers, where they feel encouraged to continue developing their competencies. In addition, A.B. revealed that participating in PLCs has increased her confidence in exploring new methods and trying more innovative approaches in the classroom. This confirms that learning communities not only provide benefits in the technical aspects of learning, but also have a positive psychological impact on teachers. With increased confidence, teachers tend to be bolder in implementing new strategies that are more effective in supporting the achievement of student learning goals.

Overall, the benefits derived from participation in PLCs reflect the role of this community as an important instrument in teachers' professional development. From improving teaching skills, creativity in designing lessons, feedback mechanisms that support reflection, to strengthening motivation and self-confidence, PLCs have proven to have far-reaching positive impacts on educators. Therefore, efforts to maintain and strengthen the existence of this community are crucial for its sustainable benefits. Educational institutions need to continue to encourage teachers' involvement in PLCs, by ensuring adequate support and creating an environment that allows for optimal collaboration and innovation.

4.1.7.3 Challenges Faced in PLC

While Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) provide many benefits for teachers, there are challenges to their involvement. Based on the interviews with the five interviewees, the three main challenges that often arise are time constraints, high workloads, and sustained motivation. These challenges not only impact teachers' engagement in the learning community, but also affect their effectiveness in developing learning skills and innovations.

Table IV - 8 Challenges Faced in PLCs

No.	Challenge	Description	Recommendation
1	Time management	Teachers have difficulty dividing their time between PLC activities, teaching duties, and family responsibilities.	Setting a more flexible schedule and supporting policies from the school to accommodate teacher participation.
2	High Workload	Excessive workload, such as administrative reports and teaching preparation, makes it difficult to allocate time for PLC activities.	Reduce non-essential administrative tasks and improve efficiency in administrative tasks.
3	Ongoing Motivation and Facility Support	Maintaining enthusiasm and consistency of participation in PLCs that take place on a regular basis is challenging, especially without adequate facility and technology support.	Providing incentives and encouragement from school leaders, as well as improving facilities and access to technology to support PLC activities.

One of the main barriers is time constraints. M.M. stated that dividing time between PLC activities, teaching duties and family responsibilities is a big challenge. R.A. added that administrative duties and other school obligations often make it difficult for teachers to take part in all community activities.

In addition, N.R emphasised that high workloads, such as administrative reports and teaching preparation, make it difficult to allocate dedicated time for the learning community. Without a supportive policy in place, teachers' involvement in PLCs can be an additional burden that is difficult to accommodate in their work schedules.

In addition to time and workload constraints, maintaining consistent motivation is also a challenge for teachers participating in PLCs. H.W. revealed that since the learning community in her school takes place every week, the main challenge is how to maintain the enthusiasm to continue actively participating. Without adequate support systems, such as encouragement from school leaders or incentives for active participants, teachers' involvement in PLCs may decline over time. A.B. also highlighted the lack of facilities and technology support as factors that make it difficult for teachers to optimally engage in the learning community.

Overall, the challenges faced by teachers in PLCs point to the need for a more strategic approach in managing these communities to remain effective and inclusive for all members. Educational institutions can reduce these barriers by ensuring flexibility in scheduling activities, reducing non-essential administrative burdens, and creating an environment that supports ongoing collaboration. In this way, PLCs can continue to be a productive platform for teachers' professional development without adding excessive burden to their daily lives.

4.1.7.4 The effect of Participation in PLC on Teaching Practice

Participation in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) has a positive impact on improving teacher professionalism, especially in the aspects of collaboration, innovation, and classroom management. The hierarchical diagram below illustrates how involvement in PLCs can strengthen professional relationships between teachers, encourage innovation in learning, as well as assist in more effective classroom management. Each of these aspects is interconnected and contributes to improving the quality of teaching in schools.



Chart IV - 3 The impact of Participation in PLC on Teaching Practice

This hierarchical diagram shows that PLCs function as centres for teachers' professional development, influencing three main aspects of their teaching practice: collaboration, innovation and classroom management.

Collaboration in PLCs allows teachers to build closer professional relationships, work in teams and share best practices with peers. M.M. and R.S. emphasised that through regular discussions and cooperation in learning communities, teachers become more cohesive and support each other in improving learning effectiveness.

In addition, PLCs also encourage innovation in learning strategies. N.R. stated that her involvement in the learning community made her more willing to experiment with new methods that better suit students' needs. Through interactions with fellow teachers, many PLC participants began to implement technology in their teaching, such as the use of digital media and project-based learning. Shared reflection in this community also helps teachers to continuously evaluate and improve their teaching practices.

In terms of classroom management, PLCs help teachers to create a more conducive learning environment and increase student engagement. H.W. said that through the learning community, she gained various effective strategies in organising the classroom and dealing with student management challenges. Sharing experiences with other teachers allows them to find solutions to deal with various situations in the classroom, thus creating a more interactive and enjoyable learning atmosphere.

Thus, this hierarchical diagram shows that involvement in PLCs not only improves teachers' individual skills, but also creates a more collaborative and innovation-oriented learning culture. To ensure the sustainability of these benefits,

schools need to provide greater support in the form of facilities, special time allocation, as well as encouragement from school leaders to make teachers more active in the learning community.

4.1.7.5 Required Support and Advice for PLCs

The sustainability and effectiveness of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) is highly dependent on institutional support, both from school leaders, provision of facilities, and policies that allow teachers to participate optimally. One of the main factors influencing the success of PLCs is the role of the principal in motivating and incentivising teachers to stay involved. M.M., H.W., and A.B. emphasised that encouragement from school leaders plays a major role in maintaining teachers' enthusiasm to be active in this community. In addition, recognition of teachers' contributions in PLCs, such as certification or awards, can be an effective measure to increase participation. As expressed by H.W., ‘Support from the principal really helps us in allocating time and resources to participate in PLCs to the fullest.’

In addition to moral and policy support, the provision of adequate facilities is also an important aspect in supporting PLCs. Limited technology tools and internet access are often the main obstacles in running learning community activities, especially in digital-based sessions. Respondents highlighted that schools need to provide devices such as laptops, projectors, as well as stable internet connections to support the sustainability of PLCs. R.A. and N.R. emphasised that inadequate facilities can hinder The effectiveness of this community, especially in online discussions activities.

In addition, the provision of a special, comfortable space and the allocation of special time in teachers' work schedules are also needed so that teachers can focus more on participating in PLCs without sacrificing their teaching duties.

Another important support is the quality of materials and presenters presented in each PLC session. M.M., R.S., and N.R. agreed that the presence of competent presenters who are able to deliver the material in an interesting way will increase the effectiveness of learning sessions in this community. In addition, practice-based training that is relevant to teachers' needs can provide greater benefits than sessions that are only theoretical. Schools need to ensure that each PLC session is designed interactively, providing space for teachers to share their experiences and creating an environment that supports innovation in teaching. With strong support from these various aspects, PLCs can continue to grow as a platform for teacher professionalism and contribute to improving the quality of learning in schools.

4.2 DISCUSSION

4.2.1 Interpretation of Findings

Participation in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) has become one of the strategic approaches in improving teacher professionalism, especially in the context of teaching skills development and professional collaboration (Martínez et al., 2021). The findings of this study show that teachers' participation in PLCs has a significant positive impact on their professional development (Hassan et al., 2018). The most prominent aspects include improved pedagogical understanding, teaching skills,

reflection on learning practices, and motivation to continue developing. The data shows that the majority of respondents gave very high ratings to the benefits of PLCs, with average Likert scores ranging from 4.8 to 4.88. The low standard deviation, ranging from 0.328 to 0.438, indicates the consistency of positive perceptions among teachers. This reflects that the PLCs succeeded in creating a uniformly relevant and beneficial experience for all participants, without any significant differences based on individual backgrounds (Komariah et al., 2019).

Furthermore, teachers' active participation in PLCs provides a space that supports the collaborative development of their skills (Fred et al., 2019). Activities such as group discussions, joint reflection, and sharing best practices facilitate the exchange of ideas and experiences that enrich teachers' understanding of teaching strategies. Wenger (1998) in his concept of communities of practice emphasises that effective professional learning occurs through social interactions where community members share knowledge and practices (Wenger on Learning in Communities of Practice, 2024). This is relevant to the findings of this study, where teachers felt that their involvement in PLCs not only helped them understand better pedagogical approaches, but also provided inspiration to implement innovations in learning (Schaap & Bruijn, 2017). In other words, PLCs create a collaborative learning ecosystem that encourages teachers to continuously learn from their peers (Jones & Dexter, 2014).

Not only that, PLCs also proved to make a great contribution in creating a collaborative and reflective work culture in the school environment (Dickson, 2023). Teachers reported that through PLC activities, they were able to build closer professional relationships with fellow teachers, enhance cooperation in lesson planning, and create a sense of mutual support among community members. DuFour et al. (2016) in their study also found that PLCs play an important role in creating a supportive and continuous improvement-oriented work environment (Voelkel & Chrispeels, 2017). This suggests that PLCs not only positively impact individual competencies, but also strengthen professional relationships and create a reflective culture that supports collective development. Thus, participation in PLCs is not only beneficial to teachers' professional development but also to the overall improvement of learning quality in schools (Hairon et al., 2015).

4.2.2 Comparison with Previous Research

The results of this study are in line with a number of previous studies showing that Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) play an important role in improving teacher professionalism through structured collaboration and reflection activities. Participation in PLCs was shown to provide teachers with opportunities to share best practices, discuss challenges in teaching, and develop innovative approaches that better suit students' needs.

For example, research by Vescio et al. (2008) found that PLCs not only assisted teachers in improving pedagogical competence, but also strengthened their confidence in implementing new learning methods. Similarly, this finding shows that PLCs become an effective space for the exchange of ideas that are beneficial for individual as well as collective development, which ultimately impacts on the quality of learning provided to students.

However, this finding is also unique compared to some other studies that highlighted various challenges in PLC implementation, such as lack of active participation from community members or limited technical support from the institution (Zhao & Zheng, 2021). This study instead shows high consistency in the perceived benefits of PLCs among teachers, which is reflected in the low standard deviation of the survey data(Nguyen et al., 2023). This indicates that in UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali, strong institutional support, such as the provision of technology facilities and supportive time sharing, plays an important role in promoting the effectiveness of PLCs(Komariah et al., 2019). With a well-organised system in place, teachers can participate more actively and benefit uniformly from these activities(Hairon et al., 2015). Therefore, the successful implementation of PLC in UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali can be a relevant good practice example to be applied in other school contexts.

4.2.3 Theoretical Implications

The findings support Wenger's (Wenger, 2023) theory of collaborative learning and communities of practice, in which effective professional learning

occurs through social interaction and shared experiences within communities of common purpose. These results extend the applicability of the theory to the Indonesian education context, particularly in creating a learning environment centred on teachers' professional development (Averina & Kuswandono, 2023). In addition, the findings also confirm the importance of the concept of reflection in Dewey's educational theory, where teachers are expected to continuously evaluate and improve their learning practices through active participation in PLCs (Setiawan et al., 2024).

4.2.4 Practical Implications

Practically, these findings highlight the importance of strengthening the implementation of PLCs in schools as a strategy for teachers' professional development (Ericsson & Byström, 2024). Institutional support, such as the provision of technology facilities, training of competent presenters, and allocating dedicated time for PLC activities, needs to be improved to ensure the sustainability of its benefits (PLC Locator, 2023). In addition, the practice of collaboration and reflection carried out in PLCs can be a model for other schools to improve teacher competence, especially in facing the challenges of 21st century learning that demands constant innovation and adaptation (Hallam et al., 2015).

4.2.5 Research Limitations

This study has several limitations, including the use of descriptive methods that provide an overview but lack depth in explaining the causal relationship between participation in PLCs and improving teacher competence (Broersma & Singer, 2020).

In addition, the data collected covered only one school, so the results may not be fully representative of the wider educational context. Another limitation is the potential for social bias, where respondents may have provided positive answers to fulfil the researcher's expectations.

4.2.6 Suggestions for Future Research

Future research is suggested to expand the scope by involving more schools and regions to get a more representative picture (Vriesema & Gehlbach, 2021). In addition, the use of quantitative methods with experimental or mixed methods designs may help identify the causal relationship between participation in PLCs and improved teacher competence (Voelkel & Chrispeels, 2017). Further studies could also explore factors that influence the success of PLCs, such as the role of school leadership, the level of individual engagement, and the variety of PLC activities, to provide more specific recommendations for improving the effectiveness of these communities.

4.2.7 Theoretical Benefits

Theoretically, this study reinforces the concept of collaborative learning and communities of practice proposed by Wenger (1998), where social interaction and experience sharing are the basis for developing professional competence (Manninen, 2024). The findings provide empirical evidence that PLCs not only support the development of individual pedagogical skills, but also create a reflective and collaborative culture that strengthens the sustainability of teachers' professional development (Fred et al., 2019).

In addition, the results of this study broaden the understanding of PLC implementation in the Indonesian educational context, by demonstrating that the success of PLCs relies heavily on consistent institutional support (Napitupulu & Wibawanta, 2022). As such, this research can serve as a foundation for developing a more comprehensive theoretical model of community-based professional development in the education system (Pandian et al., 2022).

BAB V
CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Conclusions

This chapter presents conclusions and suggestions based on the results of the study entitled Empowering Educators through Professional Learning Communities: Assessing the Transformative Impact on Teacher Competence in UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali. The conclusion focuses on how teachers' involvement in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) significantly contributed to the improvement of their professional competence, including pedagogical understanding, teaching skills, and reflection on learning practices. The research also uncovers teachers' experiences of participating in PLCs and their impact on teaching practices, suggesting that PLCs are an important means of fostering collaboration, innovation and continuous development in educational settings. The suggestions section provides recommendations to optimise the effectiveness of PLCs through stronger institutional support, improved facilities, and strengthened policies that encourage active teacher participation. The discussion in this chapter is expected to serve as a reference for the development of more effective educational strategies in supporting teacher professionalism and improving the quality of learning in schools.

Based on the results of this study, teachers' participation in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) at UPTD SMAN 2 Polewali proved to have a significant influence on improving their professional competence. Teachers who are

actively involved in PLCs gain various benefits, ranging from increased understanding of pedagogical practices, strengthening teaching skills, to opportunities to reflect on the effectiveness of the learning methods they use. The results show that teachers' involvement in PLCs not only improves their theoretical understanding of learning strategies, but also has an impact on the implementation of more innovative and effective methods in the classroom. Teachers who are active in this community are more likely to experiment with new approaches to teaching, adopt best practices from peers, and be more confident in managing the classroom and adapting teaching to students' needs.

In addition, teachers' experience in PLCs also positively impacts the culture of collaboration and professionalism within the school environment. The research findings show that involvement in PLCs helps teachers build closer professional relationships with colleagues, improve communication and cooperation in lesson planning, and create a more supportive working atmosphere. Teachers who frequently discuss and share good practices in PLCs feel more supported in their teaching process, which ultimately results in increased motivation and job satisfaction. PLCs are not only a space for individual skill development, but also a platform for teachers to engage in collective reflection, share experiences and get constructive feedback from their peers. Thus, PLCs act as a catalyst in creating a dynamic, innovative and sustainable learning ecosystem.

However, this study has some limitations that need to be considered in the interpretation of the results. One of the main limitations is the limited scope of the sample, which only focuses on one school, so the findings cannot be generalised to a wider educational context. In addition, the study was conducted over a relatively short period of time, so it may not fully capture long-term changes in the competencies of teachers who participated in PLCs. External factors such as school policies, level of support from leaders, and access to resources and technology may also influence the effectiveness of PLCs, but have not been explored in depth in this study. Therefore, further research with a wider scope and longitudinal approach is needed to understand the impact of PLCs more thoroughly.

As a recommendation, educational institutions need to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of PLCs by providing stronger support in terms of policies, resources, as well as incentives for actively participating teachers. Providing technology facilities, developing community-based training programmes, and allocating specific time in teachers' work schedules can help improve the effectiveness of this programme. In addition, further research could explore PLC implementation models that are more flexible and adaptive to different school contexts and evaluate the factors that contribute to the success of professional learning communities in improving the overall quality of education. With a more systematic and evidence-based approach, PLCs can continue to be developed as a key strategy in supporting teacher professional development and improving the quality of learning in schools.

5.2 Suggestions

As part of the results of this study, several suggestions are made for various parties involved in education. These suggestions are expected to serve as a reference in optimising the implementation of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and supporting teachers' continuous professional development. By paying attention to the recommendations, each party can contribute to improving the overall quality of education.

Firstly, teachers are advised to participate more actively in PLC activities as a means of developing professional competence. Consistent engagement in discussion, reflection and collaboration with peers can help teachers enrich their insights, adopt innovative teaching methods and improve the effectiveness of classroom learning practices. Teachers are also encouraged to utilise feedback from the community for reflection in improving their teaching strategies. Teachers' individual commitment to continuous learning and development through PLCs will have a significant impact on the quality of student learning.

Secondly, for curriculum developers, the results of this study provide implications that the curriculum needs to be designed in such a way as to support the strengthening of collaboration and pedagogical reflection. The curriculum should include elements that facilitate collaboration between teachers, such as PLC-based workshops or training relevant to learning practices. In addition, the curriculum should also provide space for

critical reflection that allows teachers to periodically evaluate and improve their teaching strategies. Thus, the curriculum is not only a teaching tool, but also a means to support teacher professionalism.

Thirdly, for educational institutions, it is necessary to strengthen institutional support to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of PLCs. This support can be in the form of providing facilities, such as access to technology, discussion rooms, and special time allocations for teachers for PLC activities. In addition, supportive policies, such as providing incentives for teachers who actively participate and special training for PLC facilitators, are also important to implement. By ensuring adequate support, education agencies can create a conducive environment for collaboration and innovation among teachers, which will ultimately improve the quality of learning in schools.

Finally, it is hoped that future researchers can expand the scope by involving more educational institutions and various socio-cultural contexts, so that the research findings can be more generalised and relevant. Longitudinal research is also recommended to examine the long-term impact of teacher involvement in PLCs on improving competence and learning quality.

With a more comprehensive approach, future research is expected to provide in-depth insights into the successes and challenges in optimising PLCs as a teacher professional development strategy. In addition, future research should also focus on

English language teachers to examine the specific impact of their participation in PLCs on English language learning.

This approach will provide a more complete picture of how collaborative activities and interactions in PLCs can improve teaching practices, particularly in the context of English language learning. It is hoped that the findings can inform the development of more effective and contextualised professional development strategies for English language teachers.

Thus, this study not only contributes to the development of PLC theory and practice in general, but also opens up opportunities for further research that can tailor professional development strategies to the specific needs of educators, including in the field of English language teaching.

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