



Management of professional learning community model: A multi-site case study

Murdjoko¹, Wahyu², Muhammad Saleh³

^{1,2,3} Universitas Lambung Mangkurat, Banjarmasin, Indonesia

murdjoko07@guru.sma.belajar.id¹, wahyu@ulm.ac.id², msaleh@ulm.ac.id³

ABSTRACT

Teacher-friendly learning communities represent a strategic approach to enhancing professionalism and collaboration among educators within schools. This study aims to describe and analyze the management of a teacher-friendly learning community model in terms of three main aspects: school leadership, teacher empowerment, and school partnerships. The research was motivated by the need to create a supportive learning ecosystem that fosters continuous professional development for teachers. A qualitative approach with a multi-site study design was employed, conducted at SMAN 1 Karang Intan and SMAN 2 Martapura, Banjar Regency. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation involving principals, teachers, learning community leaders, subject group coordinators, and school staff. The findings indicate that school principals play an active managerial role in designing, facilitating, and evaluating learning community activities. Teachers responded positively to the empowerment provided, particularly through collaboration, pedagogical reflection, and improved teaching practices. Furthermore, internal and external partnerships—including collaboration with school staff, the education department, and teacher forums—contributed to the development of a learning ecosystem that supports the enhancement of teachers' professional competencies. Nevertheless, several challenges remain, such as limited time, low intensity of peer observations, and weak coordination among stakeholders.

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ABSTRAK

Komunitas belajar ramah guru merupakan pendekatan strategis dalam meningkatkan profesionalisme dan kolaborasi antar guru di lingkungan sekolah. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan dan menganalisis manajemen pengembangan model komunitas belajar ramah guru ditinjau dari aspek kepemimpinan kepala sekolah, pemberdayaan guru, dan kemitraan sekolah. Studi ini dilatarbelakangi oleh kebutuhan untuk menciptakan ekosistem belajar yang mendukung pengembangan kompetensi guru secara berkelanjutan. Pendekatan yang digunakan adalah kualitatif dengan desain studi multi situs, dilaksanakan di SMAN 1 Karang Intan dan SMAN 2 Martapura, Kabupaten Banjar. Teknik pengumpulan data meliputi wawancara mendalam, observasi, dan dokumentasi dengan melibatkan kepala sekolah, guru, ketua komunitas belajar, koordinator rumpun mata pelajaran, dan tenaga kependidikan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kepala sekolah memiliki peran manajerial yang kuat dalam merancang, memfasilitasi, dan mengevaluasi kegiatan komunitas belajar. Guru menunjukkan respons positif terhadap pemberdayaan yang dilakukan, terutama melalui kolaborasi, refleksi pedagogis, dan peningkatan praktik mengajar. Di samping itu, kemitraan internal dan eksternal, seperti kerja sama dengan tenaga kependidikan, dinas pendidikan, dan forum guru, turut memperkuat ekosistem belajar. Namun, beberapa tantangan yang dihadapi meliputi keterbatasan waktu, rendahnya intensitas observasi sejawat, serta lemahnya koordinasi antar pihak.

Kata Kunci: kemitraan sekolah; kepemimpinan kepala sekolah; komunitas belajar; pemberdayaan guru

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*Corresponding author: murdjoko07@guru.sma.belajar.id

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a central role in shaping superior and adaptive human resources, especially in facing the complexities of 21st-century global challenges. One of the key factors in improving the quality of education is school principal leadership, particularly in its role as instructional leadership. In the current context of Indonesian education, particularly following the implementation of *Kurikulum Merdeka*, school principals are expected not only to serve as administrators but also as learning facilitators and agents of change capable of fostering a collaborative and reflective learning environment. The transformation of education through *Kurikulum Merdeka* positions teachers as the primary drivers of differentiated learning, the implementation of which critically depends on a collaborative ecosystem rooted in learning communities. Professional learning communities, such as *Komunitas Belajar Ramah Guru* (KBRG), are believed to serve as an effective strategy in enhancing teacher professionalism and overall education quality. This approach can motivate teachers to elevate their professional competence and innovate their classroom teaching practices (Harlita & Ramadan, 2024).

A number of studies support the effectiveness of instructional leadership by school principals in enhancing teacher performance and learning quality. Strong instructional leadership has a significant impact on improving the quality of instruction (Hoerudin *et al.*, 2023). Further research has found that the influence of instructional leadership on teacher commitment is mediated by both self-efficacy and collective efficacy (Nawirej *et al.*, 2025). Within the context of *Kurikulum Merdeka*, instructional leadership has been demonstrated to serve as an effective mediator in enhancing teacher performance through the reinforcement of self-efficacy (Elfira *et al.*, 2024). The impact of instructional leadership on learning quality has been documented as highly substantial and statistically significant in relation to teacher professionalism, mediated through school climate and work motivation (Ahmar, 2024; Retnawati *et al.*, 2025).

However, the effectiveness of learning communities such as KBRG continues to face various structural and cultural challenges. Studies indicate that peer observation is frequently hindered by feelings of insecurity, additional workload burdens, and resistance to changes in established routines (Agustina *et al.*, 2020). Both novice and experienced teachers recognize the reflective potential of peer observation, yet its implementation is frequently constrained by personal factors and systemic support deficiencies (Lestari & Dewi, 2022). From a supervisory perspective, resource constraints and teachers' divergent perceptions of educational values hinder the consistency of school principals' supervision (Misrianto *et al.*, 2024). Furthermore, the implementation of *Kurikulum Merdeka* faces several challenges, including uneven comprehension among educators, limited training opportunities, and inadequate infrastructure (Saputra *et al.*, 2024). These challenges underscore the necessity for more structured, collaborative, and sustainable learning community management.

Theoretically, an effective professional learning community management model should encompass dimensions of transformational school leadership, teacher empowerment, and strategic partnerships. Transformational leadership has proven effective in enhancing educational quality by emphasizing inspiration, motivation, and personal development (Nabila *et al.*, 2025). On the other hand, partnerships between school principals and

teachers, parents, and the community have been empirically shown to enhance both teacher resource development and school infrastructure improvement (Mayasari *et al.*, 2025). Teacher empowerment strategies combined with inspirational leadership have been empirically shown to enhance both teacher motivation and performance in supporting instructional transformation (Zulfahmi, 2025). Based on these findings, this study contributes novel scholarly insights through its KBRG-based learning community management approach, which emphasizes the contextual synergy between school leadership, teacher empowerment, and educational partnerships.

This study contributes to examining how learning community development practices can address the challenges of *Kurikulum Merdeka* by analyzing the managerial, cultural, and structural aspects that influence them. The core issue examined in this study fundamentally concerns the limited effectiveness of professional learning communities in secondary education institutions, particularly regarding leadership, empowerment, and stakeholder collaboration aspects. This study specifically examines the implementation of KBRG development management by school principals, the impact of teacher empowerment formats on professional transformation, and the establishment of internal and external partnership models to ensure program sustainability. Based on the aforementioned discussion, this study aims to thoroughly analyze and describe in depth the school principal's management practices in developing teacher-friendly learning communities, the forms of teacher empowerment and their perceptions within these learning communities, as well as the partnership models established as integral components of strengthening instructional quality in secondary education institution.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Learning Communities as a Strategy for Teacher Professional Development

Learning communities represent a professional development strategy that positions teachers as learning subjects through collegial interaction, reflection, and sustained collaboration aimed at enhancing instructional quality. The implementation of teacher learning communities has demonstrated significant effectiveness in improving pedagogical competence through collaboration, critical reflection, and evidence-based practice, thereby enabling teachers to become more effective in planning, implementing, and evaluating instruction (Prasetyani & Ati, 2024). Within the national context, the learning community approach has been formally adopted as part of teacher quality improvement strategies through collaborative programs such as MGMP, peer supervision, and instructional reflection forums. Empirical research confirms that MGMP as a professional learning community plays vital roles, such as facilitating collaborative networks among educators, strengthening both professional and pedagogical competencies, and enhancing the design and implementation of instructional practices (Septiand *et al.*, 2025).

Learning communities demonstrate significant potential to enhance collaboration, foster reflective practice, and provide contextualized, sustainable professional learning for teachers (Faridah *et al.*, 2025). The professionalism of elementary school teachers improves significantly through emotional and cognitive approaches developed within an inclusive, collaborative, and contextual learning community (Abdan *et al.*, 2024). The policy

reinforcement by the *Jendral Direktorat* of GTK (2023) through its learning community guidelines establishes this approach as a central strategy for building teacher capacity tailored to school-specific needs and contexts. In implementation, effective learning communities create opportunities for teachers to exchange best practices, develop adaptive instructional materials, and engage in collaborative assessment as part of evidence-based instructional decision making.

The Role of School Principal Leadership in Learning Community Implementation

The school principal holds a strategic position in designing, directing, and ensuring the successful implementation of a learning community within the school. Effective leadership in this context not only facilitates technical execution but also fosters a collaborative culture and drives learning transformation (Dimara *et al.*, 2025). The school principal serves as an agent of change by implementing transformational leadership that fosters collaboration, reflection, and innovation. As a result, the established learning community enhances teacher professionalism and improves the quality of instruction (Umar & Seodjono, 2025). The role of the school principal extends beyond mere managerial duties, serving instead as the pivotal force in transforming collaborative culture and sustainable learning through professional learning communities. Research reveals that the principal's visionary leadership acts as the primary driver in enhancing educational quality, particularly in establishing a collaborative and reflective learning management system (Nor & Suriansyah, 2024).

The principal's participatory and transformative leadership in shaping a quality culture at school through strategic impact interventions positively influences the implementation and development of professional learning communities as well as the enhancement of teacher competencies (Nashar *et al.*, 2024; Riyannie & Suriansyah, 2024). The principal's leadership plays a critical role in internalizing *Merdeka Belajar* values within professional learning communities by providing teachers with space to experiment, reflect, and independently develop instructional innovations (Saputra *et al.*, 2023). This leadership model provides flexibility and moral encouragement for teachers to actively engage in ongoing professional development processes.

Teacher Empowerment and Instructional Quality

Teacher empowerment constitutes a crucial dimension in the implementation of learning communities, as it encompasses active engagement, professional awareness, and capacity building in instructional management. Within the educational context, this is demonstrated through teachers' participation in learning communities as platforms for developing competencies, sharing knowledge, and implementing practice-based instructional innovation. Recent research demonstrates that teacher participation in learning communities transcends supplemental activity status, constituting instead an integral component of professional capacity development that is both reflective and contextually grounded. This participatory model enables educators to engage in professional dialogue, exchange evidence-based practices, critically evaluate learning outcomes, and collaboratively design more responsive instructional strategies tailored to student needs (Sanusi, *et al.*, 2025).

Teachers who actively participate in professional learning communities such as lesson study and real-action sharing gain a platform for mutual learning, are motivated to enhance their self-efficacy, and benefit from a collaborative learning environment, all of which significantly improve their pedagogical competencies (Arifin & Hanif, 2024). A concrete illustration of teacher empowerment through technological literacy and the utilization of the Internet of Things (IoT) has demonstrated enhanced effectiveness in problem-based teaching practices within *pesantren* environments (Yuridka *et al.*, 2025). Teacher empowerment within professional learning communities extends beyond mere participation opportunities, actively strengthening professional awareness and innovative capacity through meaningful collaborative practices.

Teacher Partnerships in Developing Teacher-Friendly Learning Communities

Professional learning communities cannot rely solely on internal school relationships, but also require external support from factors such as the *Dinas Pendidikan* (Education Office), *Pengawas Sekolah* (School Supervisors), training institutions, and teacher professional networks. When the *Dinas Pendidikan* and *Pengawas Sekolah* actively provide supervision, teacher quality improves significantly (Sulistiyorini, 2018). The ideal educational partnership model is symbiotic in nature, where all parties benefit from the collaboration. In this context, forums such as *Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran* (MGMP), *Musyawarah Kerja Kepala Sekolah* (MKKS), and alumni networks of teacher education programs serve as potential collective resources for strengthening the sustainability and effectiveness of professional learning communities.

MGMP has proven to be a collaborative and symbiotic professional forum where teachers can exchange ideas, develop solutions, and collectively build a shared repository of experience and knowledge relevant to their practical contexts (Soraya & Supadi, 2022). Although the organizational structure of MGMP remains weak, when external support in the form of regulations and facilitation is provided, teacher participation increases significantly and impacts the effectiveness of professional development (Siregar & Amir, 2025). A recent systematic review also indicates that nine out of ten studies conclude MGMP contributes significantly to enhancing teacher professionalism through collaboration and collective capacity development (Harahap, *et al.*, 2024). The integration of external actors into the professional learning community model provides a stronger structural and cultural foundation for promoting sustainable teacher professional development.

METHODS

This research employs a qualitative approach with a multi-site study design to gain an in-depth understanding of the management practices in developing *Komunitas Belajar Ramah Guru* (KBRG) across two secondary education institutions, SMAN 1 Karang Intan and SMAN 2 Martapura in Banjar Regency. The methodology was selected for its capacity to comprehensively capture the social realities and dynamics of school leadership within distinct yet complementary contextual frameworks.

Research Location and Subjects

The research was conducted at two senior high schools designated as pilot schools for KBRG implementation. These two schools were selected purposively based on their fulfillment of the following criteria: active development of learning community practices, responsive school leadership toward educational innovation, and a well-documented, active organizational structure for their learning communities. The research subjects comprised school principals, teachers, learning community leaders, subject cluster coordinators, and educational staff directly involved in learning community activities. The sampling technique employed was purposive sampling using a criterion-based selection approach, specifically targeting participants who met the criteria of active engagement in the KBRG implementation process.

Data Collection Techniques

The data collection techniques in this research included in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation. Interviews were conducted comprehensively using a familial approach to ensure informants felt comfortable and open. The informants consisted of school principals, vice principals, learning community leaders, teachers, and educational staff. Interview questions were structured according to the research focus to explore information about school principals' strategies in developing teacher competencies through the *Komunitas Belajar Ramah Guru* (KBRG). Observations were conducted both participatively and structured. Participative observation enabled researchers to engage directly in the learning community activities at schools, while structured observation employed predetermined guidelines to systematically monitor activity implementation. Documentation served as supporting data to reinforce interview and observation findings. The collected documents included activity schedules, learning community reports, meeting minutes, and relevant school administrative records pertaining to the research focus.

Research Procedure

This study commenced with an exploratory phase to examine the context and characteristics of each site. Subsequently, the researcher mapped the structure of the learning communities and identified key actors at both schools. Following this, data collection was conducted over a three-month period, with visit frequency adjusted according to the learning communities' activity schedules. The researcher actively participated in observation processes and interactions with participants to gain authentic understanding of the implemented managerial practices. The obtained data were then condensed through an open coding process, categorized according to emerging main themes, and analyzed thematically. Data analysis was conducted cyclically following the interactive model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which consists of three main stages: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Throughout this process, the researcher continuously cross-validated findings from interviews, observations, and documentation to ensure the reliability of data interpretation.

Data Validity Verification

In qualitative research, data validity is crucial to ensure the credibility of findings. Therefore, the researcher employed several techniques to verify data validity, including prolonged observation, enhanced diligence, triangulation, and peer discussion. Prolonged observation was conducted to verify the accuracy of the collected data. The researcher returned to the field to verify information and strengthen relationships with informants. This established rapport enabled informants to become more forthcoming, yielding more profound and reliable data. Enhanced diligence was achieved through meticulous and repeated observation of the research subjects. The researcher cross-referenced observational findings with relevant literature and supplementary data to produce accurate and consistent data descriptions.

Triangulation was implemented in three forms: source triangulation, time triangulation, and methodological triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing data from various informants. Time triangulation was performed by collecting data at different time intervals to examine information consistency. Meanwhile, methodological triangulation was conducted by employing various techniques, such as interviews, observations, and document analysis, to verify data validity from the same sources. Additionally, the researcher engaged in peer discussions to obtain feedback and alternative perspectives. These discussions served to clarify findings, strengthen data interpretation, and mitigate excessive subjectivity in the analysis.

Preliminary Analysis and Findings

The cross-site analysis process involved a systematic comparison of school principals' managerial patterns, teacher empowerment approaches, and partnership dynamics across both schools. Utilizing cross-case analysis techniques, the study identified both convergent and divergent strategies employed by school leaders in developing KBRG. This methodological approach facilitated the emergence of substantive propositions suitable for development into a conceptual model that advances community-based educational management practices.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

School Principal Leadership in Developing Teacher-Friendly Learning Communities

Based on interview results and observations, it was found that school principal leadership has proven to be the primary driver in establishing teacher-friendly learning communities. At SMAN 1 Karang Intan and SMAN 2 Martapura, the principals demonstrated facilitative and participatory roles. They were directly involved in the entire process, from planning and facilitating activities to evaluating the implementation of the learning communities. The approach employed was adaptive in nature, reflecting responsiveness to teachers' actual needs while fostering open dialogue spaces. At SMAN 1 Karang Intan, the principal implemented an inquiry cycle approach comprising reflection, planning, implementation through lesson study, and collaborative evaluation. Meanwhile, SMAN 2 Martapura placed greater emphasis on subject-area coordination with a focus on individual teacher practice without peer observation. This indicates that while sharing the same overarching vision, the

implementation of the learning community model was significantly influenced by each principal's distinct leadership style.

These findings align with recent studies emphasizing the critical role of school leadership in supporting learning communities. By fostering trust, empowering teachers, and encouraging collaboration among educators, principals create a conducive climate for teacher engagement in developing and implementing educational quality improvement programs (Paulina & Patimah, 2023). The success of school principals in leading and managing various quality improvement programs lies in their ability to engage all relevant stakeholders, including teachers, students, parents, and school committees (Ekawardani *et al.*, 2024). These findings reinforce that vibrant learning communities cannot emerge without leadership capable of discerning teachers' needs, fostering a reflective culture, and establishing collaboration as a core professional development value.

Teacher Empowerment in Learning Communities and Professional Transformation

Interviews and observations revealed that teacher empowerment through learning communities serves as a driving force in enhancing professional competence and work ethic. Teachers reported greater involvement in instructional decision-making processes, increased openness to peer feedback, and demonstrated collaborative engagement in developing teaching materials. Well-facilitated learning communities provide space for reflection, discussion, and exploration of innovative teaching strategies. The community leader and subject-area coordinators play pivotal roles in establishing communication channels and driving structured community activities. Teachers demonstrate increased confidence and creativity in developing contextually appropriate teaching approaches. These findings align with current research demonstrating that teacher participation in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) positively impacts both pedagogical competence and professional self-efficacy.

The cross-national study conducted that same year revealed that PLCs contribute not only to teacher job satisfaction but also significantly influence self-efficacy and instructional clarity, as evidenced by research involving 127,000 teachers across 40 countries (Christensen & Jerrim, 2025). Within the national context, research demonstrates that PLCs foster enhanced learning reflection, collaborative planning, and more adaptive formative assessment practices, which subsequently strengthen teachers' confidence and professional growth (Rizqi & Syafika, 2024). These findings reinforce that well-structured, effective learning communities serve not merely as vehicles for professional development, but also as catalysts for cultivating collaborative and innovative learning cultures.

The Role of Partnerships in Supporting Learning Community Sustainability

Partnerships serve as a strategic component in strengthening the sustainability of learning communities. Document analysis revealed that both internal and external partnerships at the two schools were systematically established. The *Dinas Pendidikan*, MGMP, MKKS, supervisors, and training institutions such as BPMP and BGP were engaged to provide training support, facilitation, and policy reinforcement. Notably, educational support staff also played a significant role in sustaining community activities. At SMAN 1 Karang Intan, support staff

were directly involved in documentation and operational implementation, while SMAN 2 Martapura established a dedicated support staff community that remained aligned with the school's vision.

These findings align with recent studies emphasizing the critical role of cross-functional partnerships and collaboration in strengthening learning communities. Research indicates that the success of professional learning communities (PLCs) is significantly influenced by collective leadership and supportive conditions involving diverse stakeholders both within and outside the school, demonstrating a positive correlation with improved teacher performance (Mydin *et al.*, 2024). Partnerships involving both internal stakeholders (supervisors, support staff) and external stakeholders (*Dinas Pendidikan*, MGMP, training institutions) prove essential in establishing structural and cultural sustainability for learning communities. Formal and informal support mechanisms, structured communication channels, and access to external training and facilitation significantly strengthen program continuity.

Discussion

This study reveals that the successful development of Komunitas Belajar Ramah Guru (KBRG) is influenced by the effective functioning of three core components: school principal leadership, teacher empowerment, and the sustainability of educational partnerships. These elements do not operate in isolation but rather form an interconnected systemic structure that collectively fosters a collaborative and reflective learning culture within educational institutions. The findings reinforce the conceptual understanding that teacher professional development through learning communities constitutes not merely a programmatic intervention, but rather an institutional transformation process requiring simultaneous support from both actors and structural frameworks.

From a managerial perspective, school principals have proven to play a pivotal role in activating learning community dynamics. However, beyond merely driving technical activities, principals also serve as architects of the school's learning culture. This indicates that leadership practices within the KBRG context demand a transformative and contextual approach. The program has not only successfully reduced competency gaps among teachers but has also fostered a sustainable collaborative learning culture. By providing space for teachers to share best practices, engage in discussions, and seek solutions to instructional challenges, the program has enhanced teachers' pedagogical skills, particularly in classroom management, differentiated instruction, and learning assessment (Baco *et al.*, 2025).

Regarding teacher empowerment, this study confirms that learning communities designed through participatory approaches and grounded in authentic needs significantly enhance teacher autonomy and professional capacity. Teachers are no longer positioned as passive policy recipients, but rather as active learning subjects who construct their own instructional experiences, knowledge, and teaching strategies. This demonstrates that empowerment within learning communities encompasses not merely training and skill development, but also recognition of teachers' professional competencies as equal partners in educational quality improvement. Teacher participation in learning communities leads to enhanced teaching practices, increased motivation, and stronger professional identity. These findings

indicate that effectively managed teacher learning communities can substantially contribute to overall educational quality enhancement (Setyasari *et al.*, 2025).

Furthermore, the role of external partnerships serves as a supporting factor in maintaining the sustainability of learning communities. This study found that support from school supervisors, parents, and educational training institutions contributes to more systematic and sustainable implementation of learning communities. *Pengawas Sekolah* (School Supervisors) also effectively facilitate the development process of learning communities, thereby enabling teachers to carry out their responsibilities and enhance their performance more efficiently (Purnamasari *et al.*, 2023). In this study, partnerships extend beyond merely instrumental functions (providing resources) to serve strategic roles in establishing social legitimacy and facilitating access to cross-school learning innovations. Within this context, school principals play a strategic leadership role as they manage, direct, and cultivate effective partnerships with parents (Saputra *et al.*, 2023).

The core findings contribute new understanding that effective KBRG management requires an ecosystemic approach, where principals as change leaders, teachers as reflective agents, and external partners as strategic supporters must engage synergistically. This model represents a shift from individual and administrative approaches toward collaborative, reflective, and systemic methods in teacher professional development. In this regard, the study's contribution extends beyond theoretical significance to practical applications, particularly for regional education policymakers in designing contextual and sustainable community-based teacher competency enhancement strategies.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that the management model for developing Komunitas Belajar Ramah Guru (KBRG) in upper secondary education institutions is significantly influenced by the synergy between school principal leadership, teacher empowerment, and external partnership support. Contextual and participatory school leadership has proven effective in initiating and guiding learning community practices in more meaningful and sustainable ways. Principals who accurately identify their school's specific needs and characteristics can create conducive collective learning spaces that foster teacher collaboration and reflection. Furthermore, teacher empowerment within learning communities fosters professional transformation, evidenced by enhanced reflective capacity, active engagement in instructional decision-making, and initiatives to develop student-centered teaching strategies. Meanwhile, partnerships with stakeholders such as *Pengawas Sekolah* (School Supervisors), committees, and training institutions play a strategic role in sustaining learning communities through both resource support and capacity-building facilitation. Collectively, these findings demonstrate that successful KBRG management requires an integrated, collaborative, and contextual approach to cultivate a teacher learning culture that is both reflective and responsive to school-based instructional dynamics.

Consistent with these conclusions, the study recommends that future research should develop an operational management model for KBRG that can be piloted more extensively

across different educational levels or regions with varying social contexts. Additionally, it is advisable to conduct evaluative studies utilizing quantitative data to measure the impact of teacher participation in learning communities on the improvement of instructional quality and student learning outcomes. Local governments and policymakers are further advised to integrate learning community activities into the framework for continuous professional development, including within performance indicators for school principals and educational institutions. At the practical level, schools and teacher professional networks should establish systems for documenting and disseminating best practices from learning communities so that the experiences and innovations developed can be replicated in other educational settings with similar needs.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this article, either individually or institutionally. All data, analyses, and content represent original findings and independent scholarly work, free from plagiarism. The authors affirm that all referenced sources have been ethically cited in accordance with academic writing standards.

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