

# Improving Teacher Professionalism Through Classroom Action Research to Achieve Better National Education Quality

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the role of classroom action research (CAR) in improving teacher professionalism and how such improvements contribute to national education quality, with a particular focus on the Indonesian context. Using a qualitative approach, the study draws on an extensive literature review of peer-reviewed journal articles, policy documents, and empirical case studies to analyze patterns and themes related to teacher development and instructional reform. The findings indicate that CAR is an effective, reflective, and context-sensitive approach that empowers teachers to engage in inquiry-based practice, adapt teaching strategies to student needs, and improve pedagogical competencies. Furthermore, CAR supports collaborative learning cultures and enhances teacher agency, contributing to sustained school improvement and alignment with national education goals. The study concludes that teacher professionalism, when nurtured through structured and supportive CAR initiatives, serves as a foundation for high-quality education. The implications highlight the importance of institutional support, leadership, and mentoring in making CAR a sustainable element of teacher professional development strategies.

**Keywords:** Teacher Professionalism, Classroom Action Research, Reflective Practice, Education Quality, Professional Development.

## I. Introduction

Education is universally recognized as a critical pillar for national development, equipping young generations with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to navigate the complexities of a globalized world. In Indonesia, educational reforms have consistently aimed to improve the quality of teaching and learning processes, yet several systemic and classroom-level challenges persist. Despite the implementation of national curricula such as Kurikulum Merdeka and various government initiatives to enhance instructional quality, a substantial gap remains between policy and practice. In many classrooms, teaching practices are still dominated by teacher-centered approaches, leading to passive student participation and limited cognitive engagement. This phenomenon raises important questions about the professionalism of teachers and the effectiveness of pedagogical strategies in supporting meaningful learning experiences.

Teacher professionalism, often defined by competencies in pedagogy, subject knowledge, and continuous professional development, plays a pivotal role in ensuring the quality of education at the classroom level (Darling-Hammond, 2017). A professional teacher not only possesses theoretical understanding but also demonstrates the capacity to reflect on their practices and improve them based on

empirical evidence. In this regard, classroom action research (CAR) emerges as a promising strategy that bridges the gap between educational theory and classroom practice. CAR enables teachers to critically examine their own teaching, diagnose problems, implement pedagogical innovations, and assess the outcomes, thereby fostering a culture of continuous improvement (Kemmis, McTaggart, & Nixon, 2014). One of the fundamental problems encountered in Indonesian classrooms is the lack of active learning engagement among students. Traditional lecture-based instruction continues to dominate, resulting in limited student motivation, shallow understanding, and low learning outcomes. This instructional stagnation is often associated with teachers' reluctance or inability to innovate in their teaching methods, frequently due to insufficient professional development or limited support in designing contextually appropriate learning activities (Widodo & Jasmadi, 2021). Moreover, many teachers still perceive their role as the sole authority in the classroom, rather than as facilitators who guide students through an active and participatory learning journey.

Active learning, in contrast to passive information delivery, encourages students to engage cognitively, emotionally, and socially in the learning process (MY, Ardiansyah, & Sarbani, 2025). Activities such as group discussions, problem-solving tasks, peer teaching, and project-based learning foster critical thinking and collaboration while making learning more relevant and meaningful. Studies conducted by Prince (2004), Freeman et al. (2014), and Bonwell & Eison (1991) consistently highlight the positive correlation between active learning strategies and improved student outcomes, including increased retention rates, deeper conceptual understanding, and heightened learner motivation. Despite the proven benefits of active learning, its effective implementation is contingent on the teacher's ability to plan, facilitate, and assess such strategies. This requires a shift in teacher mindset, supported by systematic professional development and reflective practice. Classroom action research provides an ideal framework for this transformation, enabling teachers to explore new instructional methods, evaluate their impact, and make informed adjustments. According to Mertler (2016), CAR not only enhances instructional quality but also cultivates a sense of agency and professionalism among teachers, empowering them to take ownership of their professional growth. In Indonesia, the integration of CAR into teacher practice has been promoted through various government programs such as Program Guru Penggerak and Program Sekolah Penggerak. These initiatives encourage teachers to engage in reflective inquiry and collaborative problem-solving to address classroom challenges. However, research suggests that the actual engagement of teachers in CAR remains low, often hindered by a lack of understanding, time constraints, and limited access to academic support (Rokhman & Suranto, 2020). Therefore, there is a need for further empirical studies that investigate how CAR can be effectively utilized to improve teacher professionalism and, consequently, student learning outcomes.

Several studies have explored the relationship between classroom action research and teacher development. For instance, a study by Efrat (2019) revealed that teachers who engaged in CAR demonstrated significant improvements in instructional planning, student assessment, and the integration of learner-centered pedagogies. Similarly, research conducted by Tsui (2009) emphasized that CAR fosters critical reflection, allowing teachers to identify and challenge their own assumptions, thereby enhancing their professional identity. In the Indonesian context, Herawati & Salirawati (2017) found that CAR had a direct impact on teachers' ability to innovate and respond to students' needs, leading to improved classroom dynamics and learning achievements. Given this background, the current study adopts a descriptive quantitative approach to examine the role of classroom action research in improving teacher professionalism in Indonesian schools. The focus is on understanding the extent to which CAR is implemented, the challenges faced by teachers, and the perceived outcomes of such practices on teaching quality and student engagement. The rationale for using a quantitative descriptive method lies in its ability to capture patterns, trends, and variations in teacher responses across a broad sample, thereby providing a comprehensive overview of the current state of CAR implementation and its implications for educational quality.

This research is guided by the overarching objective of contributing to the national discourse on teacher development and educational reform. Specifically, it aims to: (1) identify the current practices of CAR among Indonesian teachers, (2) explore the perceived benefits of CAR in enhancing teacher professionalism,

and (3) examine the relationship between CAR engagement and indicators of instructional effectiveness. By addressing these objectives, the study seeks to provide evidence-based insights that can inform teacher training programs, school leadership practices, and policy interventions aimed at elevating the quality of national education. In conclusion, improving the quality of education in Indonesia requires a fundamental shift in how teaching and learning are conceptualized and practiced. Teacher professionalism stands at the heart of this transformation, and classroom action research offers a viable pathway toward sustained professional growth. Through this study, it is expected that a clearer understanding of CAR's potential and practical application will emerge, shedding light on how Indonesian teachers can become active agents of change in their own classrooms. Moreover, the findings will serve as a valuable resource for educational stakeholders committed to fostering a more dynamic, reflective, and learner-centered educational system.

## II. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

### 2.1. The Concept of Teacher Professionalism in Contemporary Education

Teacher professionalism has increasingly become a central theme in global educational discourse, as it significantly influences the quality of teaching and student learning outcomes. Professionalism in teaching encompasses a combination of specialized knowledge, pedagogical skills, commitment to continuous development, and adherence to ethical standards (Darling-Hammond, 2017). In the Indonesian context, efforts to strengthen teacher professionalism have been institutionalized through teacher certification programs and the implementation of competency standards. However, the impact of these initiatives remains mixed, with empirical findings suggesting that certification alone is insufficient without reflective and context-specific pedagogical improvement (Supriatna, 2019). Globally, the expectations for teachers have shifted beyond content delivery toward fostering critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity among students. As a result, the role of teachers as mere knowledge transmitters has evolved into that of facilitators and co-learners who adapt their methods according to student needs and contextual realities (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). Professional teachers must now exhibit a repertoire of adaptive expertise, which includes being responsive to data, engaging in collaborative inquiry, and integrating innovative instructional practices (Timperley, 2011). Such expectations underscore the importance of professional learning frameworks that are research-based, job-embedded, and sustained over time.

One critical challenge to advancing teacher professionalism lies in the prevalent culture of top-down reforms and prescriptive professional development models. Studies have shown that workshops or training sessions often fail to translate into meaningful changes in classroom practice due to a lack of contextual relevance and follow-up support (Avalos, 2011; Opfer & Pedder, 2011). In response, scholars and practitioners advocate for teacher-driven models such as action research, which empower educators to diagnose instructional challenges, implement interventions, and analyze their impact within authentic learning environments (Burns, 2015). As teacher professionalism is closely tied to student achievement and school effectiveness, it is imperative to explore mechanisms that promote reflective teaching and situated learning. Recent studies suggest that sustainable improvement in teaching quality requires empowering teachers as agents of change, supported by collaborative networks, strong leadership, and access to evidence-based practices (Le Fevre, 2014; Kennedy, 2016). This review thus places classroom action research (CAR) at the forefront of efforts to enhance teacher professionalism and consequently, national education quality.

### 2.2. Classroom Action Research (CAR) as a Tool for Pedagogical Improvement

Classroom Action Research (CAR) is a systematic, reflective process whereby teachers investigate their own instructional practices to solve real classroom problems and enhance student learning outcomes. Introduced as a democratic and participatory research model, CAR encourages teachers to become knowledge producers rather than passive consumers of externally developed theories (Kemmis, McTaggart,

& Nixon, 2014). Through iterative cycles of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting, CAR fosters a culture of inquiry, critical thinking, and continuous improvement in pedagogy. In the context of Indonesia, CAR has been widely promoted through programs like Penelitian Tindakan Kelas (PTK), which are often integrated into teacher certification and professional development frameworks. Despite its potential, the implementation of CAR has encountered several barriers, including limited research capacity among teachers, lack of institutional support, and time constraints due to administrative workloads (Sagala, 2020). Nonetheless, studies affirm that when properly facilitated, CAR contributes to enhanced instructional quality, more engaged learners, and increased teacher confidence (Widodo & Jasmadi, 2021; Kristiawan, Safitri, & Lian, 2019).

Research across various educational systems has corroborated the effectiveness of CAR in improving classroom practices. For instance, a study by Gutiérrez and Bryan (2010) found that teachers who engaged in action research developed stronger instructional strategies tailored to diverse student needs. Similarly, Edwards and Burns (2016) demonstrated that CAR not only enhances pedagogical effectiveness but also fosters professional identity, as teachers begin to see themselves as researchers and reflective practitioners. These findings align with the growing consensus that inquiry-oriented professional development yields more sustainable impacts than one-off training sessions. The utility of CAR lies in its emphasis on contextualization, allowing teachers to respond to unique classroom dynamics rather than applying generic solutions. By aligning the research focus with specific instructional challenges, CAR enables teachers to test pedagogical innovations such as project-based learning, differentiated instruction, or formative assessment strategies, and evaluate their efficacy through direct observation and student feedback (Mertler, 2017). Such data-driven reflection not only informs teaching practice but also contributes to school-wide improvement when shared within professional learning communities.

### 2.3. Improving National Education Quality through Empowered Teaching

Quality education is a key driver of national development, and teachers are the most influential in-school factor affecting student achievement (OECD, 2019). National education quality, as defined by both input and output indicators, hinges not only on curricula, infrastructure, and assessment systems but also—more critically—on the competencies, professionalism, and commitment of educators. The Indonesian government has recognized this through policies like the “Guru Penggerak” initiative, which aims to cultivate innovative, self-driven teachers who serve as change agents in their communities (Kemendikbudristek, 2023). However, improving education quality is not a matter of prescribing uniform solutions across diverse school settings. Rather, it requires empowering teachers to engage in context-sensitive inquiry and reform. Studies from UNESCO (2021) underscore the importance of locally grounded pedagogical innovations, particularly in countries with wide disparities in school conditions. Here, CAR provides a practical framework for localized improvement, enabling teachers to design interventions based on student needs and school realities, and iteratively refine their strategies.

In addition to enhancing teacher competencies, CAR has been shown to positively influence school culture and collaboration. When action research is implemented within professional learning communities, it cultivates a shared sense of purpose, mutual accountability, and collective problem-solving among educators (Stoll et al., 2006). This collaborative ethos contributes not only to improved teaching and learning but also to broader institutional transformation. Furthermore, evidence from countries like Singapore and Finland suggests that integrating inquiry-based professional development into national education policy is essential to sustaining systemic quality (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). While external quality assurance mechanisms such as national exams and school accreditation are important, they are insufficient without internal mechanisms for instructional improvement. CAR represents such a mechanism, promoting a bottom-up approach to school reform grounded in professional autonomy and accountability (Zuber-Skerritt, 2012). Therefore, enhancing national education quality must involve not just evaluation and regulation but also investment in teacher-led inquiry and innovation.

## 2.4. Recent Empirical Studies on CAR and Teacher Professionalism

Recent empirical studies provide robust evidence of the link between CAR and improvements in teacher professionalism and student outcomes. For example, a study by Putra, Astuti, and Wibowo (2023) involving elementary teachers in Yogyakarta revealed that CAR significantly improved teachers' ability to implement differentiated instruction and foster student engagement. Another study by Hasibuan and Nasution (2021) showed that secondary school teachers who engaged in CAR reported increased confidence in using student-centered strategies and greater awareness of formative assessment techniques. Furthermore, CAR has been associated with enhanced reflective capacity among teachers, a key component of professional growth. According to Farrell (2019), reflective teaching is not merely a technical exercise but a deeper process of re-examining assumptions, values, and goals in education. CAR facilitates this through structured reflection and documentation of teaching experiences. Research by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) confirms that inquiry-based approaches like CAR help teachers construct new pedagogical knowledge and contribute to the professional knowledge base of education.

The effectiveness of CAR also depends on institutional conditions such as leadership support, time allocation, and access to resources. Studies by Cardno and Reynolds (2017) indicate that school leaders play a vital role in fostering a research culture by providing encouragement, allocating time for collaborative inquiry, and recognizing the value of teacher research. Similarly, support from higher education institutions through mentoring and action research training has been found to enhance the quality and sustainability of CAR initiatives (Burns & Edwards, 2020). As schools face increasingly complex challenges—from digital transformation to inclusive education—CAR provides a flexible and responsive methodology to address them. Recent innovations include integrating CAR with digital tools to document teaching practices, analyze student feedback, and share results through online communities of practice (Yuan & Burns, 2021). These developments suggest that CAR is not only relevant but also adaptable to modern teaching contexts, aligning with broader trends in educational innovation and teacher agency.

## III. Research Method

This study adopts a qualitative research approach to investigate the dynamics of teacher professionalism and the application of classroom action research (CAR) as a transformative strategy in the context of national education improvement. The qualitative paradigm is particularly appropriate for exploring complex, contextual, and interpretative dimensions of educational phenomena. In this case, the study aims to gain a deep understanding of how CAR contributes to the development of teacher professionalism, drawing insights from an extensive review of scholarly literature, policy documents, and empirical studies published in recent years. By using a literature-based methodology, the study seeks to identify patterns, themes, and theoretical perspectives that illuminate the intersection between reflective pedagogical practices and the broader goals of educational quality enhancement.

Qualitative research is rooted in the belief that social realities are constructed and that understanding those realities requires interpretive and contextual inquiry. Therefore, this research is not concerned with numerical generalization but rather with gaining depth, richness, and insight into a conceptual framework that is increasingly relevant to educational policy and practice. The focus of this investigation is to map the existing scholarly discourse on teacher professionalism and classroom action research, examine how these constructs are understood and operationalized across different educational contexts, and analyze how they relate to ongoing efforts to improve national education systems, particularly in Indonesia. The methodology is based on the technique of literature review research, specifically through a process known as qualitative document analysis. Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents—both printed and electronic (computer-based and internet-transmitted) material. According to Bowen (2009), document analysis requires data to be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge. This method allows the researcher to access a wide range

of sources including peer-reviewed journal articles, books, policy briefs, government publications, and reports from international organizations such as UNESCO, OECD, and the World Bank. These materials are analyzed through a process of coding and thematic categorization to derive meaningful insights.

The selection of sources for analysis is guided by purposeful sampling, a method common in qualitative research that aims to select information-rich cases or documents relevant to the central phenomenon under study. Documents are selected based on their credibility, relevance, and contribution to the existing body of knowledge on teacher professionalism and classroom action research. Priority is given to recent publications (from 2015 onward) in order to ensure that the findings reflect contemporary perspectives and developments. Scholarly databases such as JSTOR, ERIC, Scopus, and Google Scholar are used to access peer-reviewed articles, while official portals such as those of the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture and UNESCO provide access to policy and institutional reports. The analysis process follows the principles of qualitative content analysis as developed by researchers such as Mayring (2014) and Elo & Kyngäs (2008). Content analysis enables the identification of recurrent themes and patterns across various documents. The steps include reading and re-reading the documents to become familiar with the content, open coding to generate initial categories, and axial coding to connect themes and sub-themes. For instance, major themes that are expected to emerge from the literature include dimensions of teacher professionalism (e.g., pedagogical skills, reflective practice, ethical standards), the conceptual foundations of CAR (e.g., participatory inquiry, practitioner-led research), and the implications of these for education quality.

The reliability and validity of qualitative document analysis are supported through triangulation and reflexivity. Triangulation involves cross-verifying information across different types of documents and sources. By comparing findings from theoretical literature, empirical case studies, and policy papers, the study reduces the risk of bias and enhances the trustworthiness of the analysis. Reflexivity, on the other hand, entails a conscious examination of the researcher's positionality, assumptions, and interpretive lens throughout the study. This is crucial in qualitative research to maintain transparency and ethical rigor. The researcher engages in reflective journaling and peer debriefing to maintain objectivity and consistency in interpretation. The scope of the literature analyzed in this study is international and interdisciplinary, acknowledging that teacher professionalism and action research are influenced by diverse educational philosophies, sociocultural contexts, and institutional structures. For example, the Scandinavian approach to teacher professionalism emphasizes trust and autonomy (Sahlberg, 2015), while East Asian models often focus on lesson study and collaborative reflection (Takahashi & McDougal, 2016). Meanwhile, CAR has been adapted differently in Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa, and Southeast Asia, reflecting varying degrees of teacher agency and system decentralization. These variations provide a comparative lens to assess the relevance and adaptability of CAR in Indonesia's education reform agenda.

One of the strengths of using a literature-based methodology is the capacity to synthesize a large body of knowledge across multiple contexts and to generate conceptual clarity. Rather than producing new empirical data, the goal of this study is to consolidate what is already known, identify gaps, and offer a theoretical framework that can inform future research and practice. The approach is constructive and analytical, seeking to go beyond mere description to interpretation and theoretical integration. In this way, the research provides a foundation for understanding how action research contributes to the professional development of teachers and, by extension, to the improvement of national education quality. Ethical considerations in literature-based research primarily concern proper citation and academic integrity. All sources are appropriately acknowledged using APA citation style, and the study avoids misrepresentation, plagiarism, or selective reporting of evidence. Moreover, the analysis is conducted with respect for the original context of each document, ensuring that interpretations are faithful to the authors' intended meanings. While the research does not involve human subjects or primary data collection, it remains committed to ethical standards in research reporting, including transparency, accountability, and scholarly responsibility.

The decision to use a qualitative literature-based methodology is also influenced by the nature of the research problem. Improving teacher professionalism and achieving better national education quality are complex, multidimensional goals that cannot be adequately captured through statistical indicators alone.

Qualitative analysis allows for a richer exploration of underlying processes, beliefs, and institutional cultures that shape teacher behavior and pedagogical practices. In this sense, the study is aligned with interpretivist traditions in educational research, which emphasize understanding meaning and context rather than quantification and generalization. Furthermore, this methodology is particularly useful for laying the groundwork for subsequent empirical studies. By identifying theoretical constructs, conceptual gaps, and promising strategies in the literature, this research provides a basis for the design of future qualitative fieldwork, action research projects, or mixed-method studies involving classroom observation, teacher interviews, and student assessments. As such, the study has both theoretical significance and practical utility, contributing to a deeper understanding of how CAR can be leveraged to support teacher professionalism in the Indonesian educational landscape.

In conclusion, this study employs a qualitative research design grounded in document analysis to explore the nexus between classroom action research and teacher professionalism within the broader objective of improving national education quality. It draws upon a wide range of scholarly and institutional literature to examine key concepts, historical developments, and practical implications. Through thematic coding and critical interpretation, the study aims to generate insights that are relevant to policymakers, educators, and researchers concerned with transforming teaching and learning in a sustainable and contextually appropriate manner. The qualitative methodology chosen here ensures that the complexity and richness of the topic are preserved, enabling a nuanced understanding that goes beyond surface-level analysis. Ultimately, this research aspires to inform both theoretical advancement and pedagogical reform, emphasizing the centrality of teacher agency, reflection, and professional growth in the pursuit of educational excellence.

## IV. Result and Discussion

### 4.1. Findings

The findings of this literature-based qualitative study highlight a growing global and national consensus regarding the vital role of teacher professionalism in improving the quality of education. Through systematic document analysis, this study identified three dominant themes. First, teacher professionalism is increasingly understood not as a static certification status, but as a dynamic, reflective, and lifelong developmental process. Second, classroom action research (CAR) is widely recognized as an effective approach for enhancing teacher professionalism through practitioner-led inquiry, contextual pedagogical innovation, and critical self-reflection. Third, the integration of CAR within national education strategies has been associated with measurable improvements in instructional quality, teacher agency, and school-level reform. An analysis of empirical studies from diverse contexts indicates that teacher professionalism is most effectively enhanced when teachers are given autonomy to examine their own practice, experiment with new strategies, and assess outcomes using systematic methods. As shown in multiple sources (e.g., Burns & Edwards, 2020; Farrell, 2019), CAR offers such a platform, enabling teachers to transform their classrooms into laboratories of learning. Moreover, documents reviewed from Indonesia's Ministry of Education and recent academic journals emphasize the strategic importance of CAR in achieving national education goals, particularly through programs such as Guru Penggerak and Komunitas Belajar. These initiatives underscore that professionalism is no longer limited to administrative compliance, but increasingly measured by pedagogical innovation and reflective teaching practices.

Furthermore, the findings show that CAR contributes to professional growth in several interrelated ways: it strengthens pedagogical knowledge, encourages collaboration among teachers, and cultivates a culture of accountability and innovation. In both developed and developing contexts, CAR has been employed to address a wide range of instructional challenges, including differentiated instruction, inclusive teaching, and the integration of digital tools. This reinforces the literature's consensus that professionalism is not monolithic but adaptable to contextual challenges, and that CAR is a flexible vehicle for such adaptation.

Finally, the study found that successful implementation of CAR requires enabling conditions such as supportive leadership, institutional incentives, research mentoring, and adequate time allocation. In cases where these supports are present, teachers not only improve their classroom practices but also evolve as agents of change within their institutions. In contrast, without such conditions, CAR risks becoming a procedural requirement rather than a transformative process. This finding reflects the broader literature on teacher agency and professional learning systems, emphasizing the interplay between individual commitment and systemic support (Kennedy, 2016; Cardno & Reynolds, 2017).

#### 4.2. Discussion

The discussion of these findings positions CAR as a transformative tool that bridges the gap between theory and practice in teacher development. Drawing from the literature reviewed, it becomes evident that traditional approaches to professional development—often characterized by one-off training sessions or standardized certification tests—fall short in fostering the depth of professional understanding needed to meet 21st-century learning demands. Instead, as suggested by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009), meaningful professional development must be inquiry-driven, situated in authentic practice, and sustained over time. CAR embodies these attributes, allowing teachers to engage in a recursive process of diagnosis, experimentation, evaluation, and reflection. Moreover, the findings align with contemporary theories of adult learning and professional agency. According to Knowles' (1984) andragogy model, adults learn best when the learning is self-directed, problem-centered, and immediately relevant to their work. CAR aligns with these principles by enabling teachers to identify their own problems of practice, design and implement context-specific solutions, and evaluate their impact using real-time classroom data. This process not only supports immediate pedagogical improvement but also nurtures a mindset of lifelong learning, which is a hallmark of professionalism.

The study's emphasis on contextual relevance further reflects constructivist and sociocultural perspectives in education, particularly those advanced by Vygotsky and Dewey. CAR encourages teachers to co-construct knowledge within their own classrooms, taking into account the unique backgrounds, needs, and responses of their students. This is particularly important in diverse and decentralized systems like Indonesia's, where a one-size-fits-all approach to teaching and learning is neither practical nor effective. Through CAR, teachers become curriculum developers, researchers, and reflective practitioners—roles that align with the multifaceted nature of teacher professionalism in contemporary education. The implications of these findings extend beyond individual classrooms. When conducted collaboratively and supported institutionally, CAR can contribute to broader school reform by generating locally grounded innovations that are scalable and sustainable. As noted by Stoll et al. (2006), schools that embrace collaborative inquiry as a core professional practice tend to exhibit stronger collective efficacy, improved student outcomes, and more adaptive cultures. In this light, CAR is not merely a research method, but a professional stance that redefines what it means to be a teacher in the modern world. However, the discussion must also acknowledge the limitations and challenges associated with CAR. While the literature celebrates its transformative potential, practical constraints such as time, workload, and lack of research skills can hinder its effectiveness. Moreover, without proper mentoring and support systems, teachers may struggle to conduct rigorous research or may reduce CAR to a bureaucratic exercise. Therefore, as part of its broader educational reform efforts, the Indonesian government and school leaders must create enabling environments that value teacher inquiry, provide structural support, and integrate CAR within school-based professional development plans.

## V. Conclusion

This study has explored the intersection between teacher professionalism and classroom action research (CAR) through a comprehensive qualitative literature review. It has been demonstrated that teacher professionalism is a dynamic, evolving construct that encompasses reflective practice, pedagogical

innovation, ethical responsibility, and lifelong learning. In parallel, CAR emerges as a strategic methodology that enables teachers to examine and improve their own practices within the context of their classrooms. As the literature suggests, CAR is not only a tool for instructional improvement but also a transformative process that empowers teachers to become agents of change in pursuit of educational excellence.

The findings of this study suggest several key conclusions. First, the professional growth of teachers cannot be adequately achieved through top-down mandates or one-size-fits-all training programs. Rather, meaningful and sustained professional development occurs when teachers are engaged in inquiry-based learning that is situated, reflective, and collaborative. Second, CAR has been shown to enhance teacher competencies across multiple domains, including pedagogical planning, student engagement, classroom management, and assessment practices. These improvements, when scaled across schools and districts, contribute directly to raising the overall quality of national education systems.

From a theoretical standpoint, this study reinforces constructivist, sociocultural, and transformative theories of teacher development, asserting that learning to teach is a lifelong, context-bound, and reflective process. The integration of CAR into teacher development pathways aligns with adult learning theory and the concept of professional agency, as it gives teachers ownership of their learning journeys and provides the means to conduct localized, evidence-based instructional reforms. From a managerial perspective, the study implies the need for supportive structures that enable teachers to engage in action research meaningfully. These include allocating time for research, embedding CAR in school professional development plans, fostering communities of practice, and providing mentoring by experienced facilitators. Educational leaders at the school and policy levels must recognize the value of teacher inquiry and embed it within institutional and national frameworks for teacher evaluation and development. By doing so, CAR can serve as a scalable and sustainable model for improving teacher professionalism and, ultimately, national education quality.

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