

**TEACHERS' CERTIFICATION TO DEAL WITH TEACHERS'
PROFESSIONALISM AND PROSPERITY**
A Case Study on Teachers' Hopes, Challenges and Reality in Indonesia

Moh. Syahrudin Ibrahim

Fakultas Sastra dan Budaya Universitas Negeri Gorontalo

Abstrak: Tulisan ini memberikan uraian mengenai sertifikasi guru yang sekarang menjadi isu hangat di dunia pendidikan Indonesia. Sertifikasi guru sebagaimana diamanatkan oleh UU No. 14 2005 bertujuan meningkatkan kualitas sumber daya guru serta profesionalisme mengajar untuk menciptakan siswa yang berprestasi dan lulusan yang mampu bersaing secara nasional dan internasional. Hal lain yang juga menjadi titik utama dari sertifikasi guru adalah peningkatan kesejahteraan guru itu sendiri. Akan tetapi dalam pelaksanaannya masih terdapat beberapa kesenjangan antara yang diamanatkan oleh UU dan realitas yang ada. Tujuan penulisan artikel ini adalah untuk memaparkan beberapa hal mencakup harapan, tantangan dan realitas sertifikasi guru berkenaan dengan peningkatan profesionalisme dan kesejahteraan guru.

Keywords: Guru, Kesejahteraan, Kualitas, Prestasi.

As a set of process education will be more likely to be questioned seems to be a problem if there are discrepancies between the results and the expectations of this process. Moreover, Shulman (2005) states that educational problems are not problems that are readily solved. One of the educational elements which is sometimes blamed why this condition occur is teacher. However, teachers themselves argue that they have something else to do to deal with their needs and live. They have family which needs to be taken care and to be fulfilled their needs. Therefore, teachers' attention is sometimes divided between doing things for family and completing their job professionally.

This in turn will affect teachers' performances in the teaching and learning process. In most cases, economic and financial problems become one of the reasons the decreasing of teaching and learning quality. Due to the lack of financial capability, many teachers are not doing their duty professionally. They sometimes do part time teaching in other schools in order to get more money fulfilling their family daily needs. Doing this activity will of course decline their stamina in carrying out their responsibility to teach students professionally. Consequently, teaching and learning process could not meet

the targeted objectives which end to the decrease of the educational quality in Indonesia as whole. Dealing with this problem, Odden & Wallace (2003) suggest one of the ways to improve educational quality is through better systems of compensation for teachers.

The purpose of this paper is to give a brief description in terms of hopes, challenges and reality dealing with teachers in Indonesia. This paper is organized into: introduction, brief explanation on teachers' lives, teacher and teaching, teachers' professionalism and the last but not least conclusion. This paper argues that it is not fair to blame teachers only as the reason or the main actor who responsible for the decreasing of Indonesian educational quality since they have to struggle for their own lives and have not yet got sufficient rewards of what have been done. However, in the near future, government will implement a program called 'teacher as profession' which is designed to improve teachers' professionalism and economic condition which will end to the betterment of educational quality now and in the future.

Teachers' Lives

As a civil servant, teachers' lives tend to be similar amongst others in group and simple dealing with their repetitive activity namely the teaching and learning process as their main responsibility. They, therefore, trust the government to manage their other interests besides teaching, salary for instance. Periodically, the government increase teacher salary as well as other government servant. However, this salary is still not enough for them though they might have quite higher civil servant group category and longer time service. It is quite common to hear phrase that teacher has 'General position' but has 'Sergeant salary' (Pasaribu, 1983).

Another reality is some contracted teachers could only take their low payment once in three months. It is probably 710.000 or more and less AU\$ 100 monthly. This amount of money only differs a little bit from the salary of other teachers as a civil servant. Moreover, for those who stay far away in remote areas, they are more likely getting their salary more than three months due to geographical and other technical reasons such as transportation, office or financial administrative.

On the other hand, this obstacle does not decrease their motivation to be a teacher. Those contracted teachers are still hoping that the government will recruit them to be a civil servant. There are some features which motivate them to be a government teacher, for example gaining economic security, having opportunity to practice own ideas. (Maclean & McKenzie, 1991). What is more, they are dreaming that someday they could improve their educational

competency and qualification as well as economic. Accordingly, one of the government's attempts to develop teachers' quality and their economic condition in order to equalize teacher profession to other profession is to declare that teacher is a profession.

To develop their professionalism, teachers, based on decree no 14, 2005, getting salary based on their work achievement. If this happen, it will be a motivator for teachers to improve their working achievement as one of the indicator of professionalism. Thus, their family economic burden will not be a problem again. It is hoped that teacher will gain the same respect in term of economic stability and social status in the society.

There are still some people particularly those who stay in the city or in the region with good economic condition, considering that teacher profession is not a prospective job life guarantee. Status of the profession in society and promotion prospect are some examples of the most unsatisfactory aspects to be a teacher (Maclean & McKenzie, 1991). For some people being a teacher is the last choice rather than being nothing. However, in the villages or rural areas, teacher still get certain honor from the villagers. Teachers' contribution in educating their children though in inconvenient atmosphere is the reason why they still respect teacher which they called as heroes without medals or having less recognitions or rewards toward their attempts.

Teacher and Teaching

Changes in information and communication technology are really giving impact on education and other aspects of human life such as in social, culture, economic and politic (Papert as cited in Abbot, 2001). Therefore, curriculum should be revised regularly in order to adjust the material to the development and demands of changes in human life as well as its aspects. However, due to government inconsistencies to apply one kind of curriculum, in just ten years educational curriculum in Indonesia particularly in junior and senior high school already changed three times. These rapidly changes sometimes make teachers get confused in implementing a new curriculum in the class.

On the other hand, the material and teaching and learning process will left far behind and could meet the demand of people's need to pursue education if curriculum is not modified properly. Additionally, Weinstein, Petrick & Saunders (1998) argue that the current curriculum need to re-assess to maintain quality related course topics Despite, the curriculum is well developed, it is not guarantee that it will help educational stakeholders to achieve its objective if this change is not well supported by the readiness of

the teachers to apply it in teaching and learning process. Therefore, the development and change of curriculum should be preceded by the improvement of teachers' ability by having seminar, simulation and workshop so they can be prepared to adapt to.

Ideally teachers with their capability should be able to anticipate and adapt to these changing. Teachers' success in achieving teaching and learning objectives can be seen from their ability to adapt and develop themselves towards these changing such as curriculum, information and communication technologies. By doing this, the educational objectives can be achieved namely to develop Indonesian people who are smart, skillful, have good moral as potential human resources to develop this nation into a better one.

Even though more of the pressure for educational accountability is being applied to schools and teachers today, it is useful to remember that students still vary in ability and effort (Lingenfelter, 2003). From this perspective, educational quality is not only lies on teacher but also students. Without student engagement and effort, however, teachers and schools cannot be successful. Therefore, something need to be done is cooperative and real effort from both teacher and students as well as other educational stakeholders to improve educational quality which indicates by better students' achievement.

According to Indonesian Act 14, 2005, teacher is a professional educator whose duties are to: teach, guide, train, monitor and evaluate students in formal educational level. In addition, teacher is not only teaching which focus on skill and technique but also it imbues with moral purpose (Hargreaves, 1995) and social mission that ultimately develops good citizens of tomorrow. In order to get good education students need to be taught by competent teacher. Good teachers as those who are certified and qualified (Bassett 2003) who knows the material deeply and can teach it well.

On the other hand, Hocking (as cited in Toppo, 2003, p.8) says that the best teachers often are not the most "highly qualified" and that even having a major in a subject isn't a substitute for knowing how to teach it effectively or relate it to other subjects. Furthermore, she says the ability to teach a subject is just as important as having a college major in it. Qualified teachers should be skilled in classroom management and able to collaborate effectively with parents and others in the community. In short, good and competent teachers should demonstrate essential knowledge and acceptable levels of proficiency.

In conjunction with this idea, Hafera, (2000) states that human is a learning creature. It implies that for teacher, learning is a long life process. One of the principle of professional teacher according to decree no 14, 2005,

about teachers is that teacher should have an opportunity to develop his professionalism continually by always studying during his career. Another point is that improving teacher professionalism depends on teacher's motivation. Teachers need to be proactive, synergy and do other things to develop his ability (Covey, 1994).

Teachers' professional development can be gained informally through seminars, teaching-trainings, and workshops. Teachers also need similar time during the workday to focus on the problems of teaching and learning, to figure out how to deal with specific subject matter that is difficult for students (Douglass, 2005), to plan lessons and examine their effect, to engage in ongoing experimentation aimed at specific improvements, and to observe and learn from one another.

Teacher's Professionalism

According to Indonesian Act 14, 2005, profession is a kind of job or activity done by someone and become source of money or payment which requires skill, knowledge and ability which fulfill certain standard and needs professional education. Furthermore, Maclean & McKenzie (1991) define profession as a kind of occupation which involves the classification of knowledge and theory which clarify the area of capability. From these viewpoints, profession is a kind of occupation which requires someone to know and implement certain skills and knowledge which can be gained either by having various professional development or professional educational.

By having teacher certification program, there is a 'by pass' for teacher to get better career and life in terms of economic and financial for their family which in turn will give impact on the attempt to improve the educational quality both in process and result. Lewis (1996) claims that a career continuum for teaching should be based on assessment and compensation system that rewards knowledge and skills. Furthermore, Temin (2002) argues that increase in teacher salaries will have to be accompanied with an increase in teacher's professionalism. This, therefore, makes the government needs to provide extra budget for teacher certified by accreditation board Lewis (1996).

Meanwhile, most teachers are pessimistic as they realize that passing certification test is easier said than done. Who are the pessimistic teachers? They are teachers who have been formed that everything about education and teaching in this country are awful. They are teachers who have been assigned to carry out the tough task by the government to develop the intellectual life

of the nation. Without idealism and nationalism spirit, teachers are no different to other physical labor.

Some of our teachers are lagged behind in almost every aspect: they are late in accessing the latest information in their field and technology. This is obvious among teachers working in regions, in villages and coastal areas or those living in remote villages far away from the cities. And they transfer all these backwardness to their students. Students are being educated in backwardness. Indonesian teachers are no longer willing to learn, to read and to think - things they should do independently with full awareness, as a vocation.

Upon receiving their civil servant ID number (NIP), teachers begin to live a life in schools among the community members where they live in stagnation. Indonesian teachers are no longer willing to learn for their own improvement, which eventually contribute to their students. Indonesian teachers no longer read any books, magazines or newspapers, not to mention internet access. Teachers argue that in the regions where they are working hard to get reading materials, books, newspapers, and other publication. However, Morrow (2003) suggested that teacher need to be reflective practitioners by engaging in a continuous process of questioning, planning, trying out, and evaluating their own and their students' learning.

Some teachers are unfamiliar with computer and internet. However, Wise & Leinbrand (1996) suggest that teachers should be versed in educational technology, including the use of computers and other technologies for instruction and student evaluation. The Indonesian government realized, that teachers quality has to be improved as long as the limited financial means allow it, for instance by holding seminars, workshops, and trainings. However, in reality such seminars, workshops, and trainings have become mere rituals. Teachers who have been selected to join seminars are not enthusiastic, they are even unexcited. Teachers are no longer willing to refresh and to develop themselves to become more qualified human resources. Some teachers even ask, Is there any allowance?

After the organizing committee plan the program of a scientific forum or a training session, teachers; the participants interfere. Eventually the schedule is tightened. If possible teachers would prefer to have a shadow activity. They are ready to sign presence sheet. Such a thing is quite common. Therefore, the goal of such an activity to improve teachers' quality might never be achieved because teachers, the beneficiaries, rejected it.

Qualified Teachers

Teachers' quality is an important issue in education development in Indonesia. Therefore, it decided to run teachers certification program. When the program was firstly introduced; teachers were enthusiastic. They saw it as a privilege for teachers and aimed at ensuring equal distribution and not as a competition for career development which is too costly for a standardized teachers' quality. The government also remains cautious not to be too generous.

In the eyes of Indonesian teachers in general, certification test is a revolution in their salary improvement; although this is the government's choice to improve teachers' welfare which contributes for education quality improvement in Indonesia. Good teachers should be awarded or should get a more tangible reward (paid salary) from the government (Shulman, 2005), and no longer symbols (medals, trophies or certificates). In the past few months, several teachers in Indonesia have been appointed to prepare a portfolio for certification test.

There are 10 points which have to be supported by legal documents. The portfolio records their performance in a certain time period. This is not too difficult for truly devoted teachers. What we should consider is how the portfolio assessment team works. These materials should be assessed by experts (Dale & Podgusky, 1998). But these experts should be aware of and manage to see through teachers' ethics if any of them falsified some documents.

The portfolio also requires teachers to write a book, a handout, and teaching module for at least one semester and has been published in the national or regional level. In addition, portfolios should also include video tapes of their teaching and samples of students work (Dale & Podgusky, 1998). This might be very hard because teachers are against writing. Many Indonesian teachers will fail in this point. If the 10-point portfolio has been standardized, teachers' certification might not be something very hard to do. Teachers who have not join the certification test have to prepare themselves in five years from now, to write books, carry out research, participating in scientific forums and many other things to improve their quality and to give the best for their students.

The portfolio cannot be fulfilled in one year because there are many points required. This is a record which documents teachers' performance. It would be assessed by a team, evaluated and given score. The score can be improved or diminished, depending on teachers' performance. Therefore, teachers will live a more dynamic life and not living in stagnation like they

are now (Morrow, 2003). Teachers have to change their perception concerning certification. Salary increase is not the most important, but good working performance is the most valuable, and the government should cherish it. In this case, the government assumes that all of this will contribute to education quality improvement in Indonesia.

Conclusion

Government can significantly develop teachers' quality and enhance the teaching profession if teachers and their organizations let to getting involved in the decision making process in terms of incentives as competitive salaries and academic scholarships. Furthermore, Nonaka & Takeuchi (1995) suggest that teacher should be given chance to involve in the decision making process to enhance the knowledge they have and initiate constructive information to deal with learning process and their professionalism. Having qualified teachers, government or educational institution also need to work with universities to ensure that pre-service programs for teacher candidates require rigorous training in the academic disciplines. In relation to this statement, Dale & Podgusky (1998) suggested that if teacher need to be better trained, it is schools, department and colleges of education strengthening requirement and ensuring that this practice are disseminated throughout the community of teacher educators. Teaching can be respected in the society as a genuine profession if there is evidence that teachers are experts in their subject matter and do a good job of inducting students into that expertise. This requires quality be maintained through peer review and intervention programs and ongoing professional development. When being an excellent teacher is recognized and adequately rewarded, then we will have teacher quality assurance and vastly greater confidence of providing a quality education for all students.

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