

IMPLEMENTATION AND IMPACT OF TEACHER CERTIFICATION PROGRAM IN INDONESIA (PERSPECTIVE IN EDUCATION)

Ramli

Universitas Bosowa 45, Makasar, South Sulawesi

Abstract: Education is an effort which is done by people to develop their self competence through a process of learning. Teacher certification program in Indonesia mandated by the Law Number 14, year 2005 on Teachers and Lecturers (or the so called Teachers Law) is an effort by Indonesian government to improve the quality of education in Indonesia. Certified teachers are believed to perform better than teachers who have not been certified. People assume that they have enough competencies in teaching. In fact, many teachers do not follow the process of teacher certification program fairly. There are some cases of deceit done by the teacher certification program participants. However, the finding suggests no impact of the certification on student's performance, it may confirm some concerns that the certification's objective is not oriented to teacher's performance, but more to their living standard, as reflected by their student's achievement that does not make any progress. Therefore, we need to create a better solution on how to improve the teacher certification program. Such improvement in the system can be developed by experts in greater detail but in any case, they need to have characteristics, at the fullest extent, of a performance-based system.

Keywords: Teacher Certification Program

In Undang-Undang Dasar Republik Indonesia Section 31 (1) every citizen has the rights for education, the government gives the same chances for all citizens to get education no matter whether they are rich or poor. This regulation shows that our government does admit the importance of education for their people. quality of human resource of a nation is easily judged by the number of literate population living in it. It means that education is a must if a nation aims at achieving growth and development. This may explain the fact that rich and developed nations of the world have very high literacy rate and productive human resource. Realizing the importance of quality education, the government has been doing many steps to develop the education in Indonesia. Education facility is not the only education aspect that the government concern with. Since all aspects of education determine the quality of education, teacher,

as one of the important components of education, has a vital position in society. Teacher is one of the main pillars of a sound and progressive society.

The teachers bear the weight and responsibility of teaching, and, apart from parents, are the main source of knowledge and values for children. He acts as a pivot for the transmission of intellectual traditions and technical skills from generation to generation. He is also being recognized as the most vital factoring any educational system. He is the key of quality education and the foster parent of the child. Child looks up to him for knowledge, wisdom, manners, morals inspiration, enlightenment, and so on.

A teacher performs many functions in the classroom for the comprehensive development of the students. Teacher keeps the students safe, decides what is important for the students to learn, presents a rich and organized body of information to students, protects and improves the students' self-esteem, provides an environment for the students to explore a variety of experiences, helps students to use technology-related tools to accomplish certain tasks, makes sure that the students are prepared for the next level of education, loves and nurtures the students. Teacher can influence his students since students believe him as a trusted source of knowledge. If a teacher is incompetent and the students follow him, they will grow up with a 'wrong' understanding about certain knowledge. There are many cases a student comes home with a wrong understanding and when parents are trying to correct it, they will say "*But my teacher said so. My teacher can't be wrong*". Therefore, the competence of teachers should be improved.

It is mentioned in the first chapter Of Act of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20, Year 2003 On National Education System with the One and Only God's Mercy President of the Republic of Indonesia that educators mean teaching staffs who have the qualification to be teachers, lecturers, counselors, learning guides (*pamong belajar*), senior instructors, tutors, instructors, facilitators, and other titles in accordance with their specialization, and who participate in the provision of education. Laurence D. Hazkew and Jonathan C. Mc Lenon in Hamzah B. Uno (2007: 15) say that a teacher is a professional person who conducts classes. Still in Hamzah B. Uno (2007: 15), Jean D. Grambs and C. Morris Mc. Clare define teachers as persons who consciously direct the experiences and behavior of an individual so that education takes place. By the definition above, it can be synthesized that a teacher is a professional person and therefore, they are expected to have professional competence.

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF TEACHER SERTIFICATION PROGRAM

A teacher, as a professional educator, should fulfill three requirements: (1) having academic qualification, (2) having competency, (3) having teacher certificate (Diknas, 2006: 4). The competency of teacher can be classified into four areas of competency, namely: pedagogical, personal, professional, and social competency. In brief, each competency encompasses the following: (1) the pedagogical competency is a teacher's ability to manage students' learning which includes lesson plan, learning evaluation, and students' potency actualization (2) the personal competency includes demonstrating certain characteristics, such as faith and devoutness, stability, maturity, sensibility, etc. Teacher should be

critical and skeptical in doing his duty to deliver his lesson (3) the social competency is teachers' ability to be part of the community such as communicating and socializing effectively with students, fellow teachers, teaching staff, and students' parents. (4) The professional competency is teachers' ability to master science, engineering, and/or art (in other words, content or subject knowledge).

As a part of efforts to enhance the academic qualification and competence of teachers, the ministry of education provided scholarships to 170,000 teachers to attain their university diplomas in 2007. Every scholarship recipient was allotted Rp 2 million per year. A total of 12,065 lecturers were also granted scholarships to finish their master and doctoral degrees. This program cost the government Rp 236.6 billion in 2007. Another program which is set by the government in order to enhance the competency of teacher is the teacher certification program. Teacher certification is a process of giving an educator certificate to teachers who have fulfilled the requirements (Samani et al, 2008: 1). The goals of this program are: (1) to determine the qualification of a teacher in doing his duty as a professional educator, (2) to enhance the process and result of teaching and learning, (3) to increase the welfare of teachers, (4) to raise teacher's prestige; in the effort of creating a qualified national education.

Quality teachers are essential to a successful educational system and, unfortunately, contract teachers are getting left behind in the reform process. The education reforms that are currently being implemented are inadequate in terms of sufficient teacher training facilities as well as poor consideration of teachers' needs. Moreover, other factors that contribute to quality education, such as adequate funding for school infrastructure as well as teaching and learning materials, need to be considered in the context of reforms. Because teacher is the key of the education quality improvement. Every government policy places teacher as the central point of their education reform. In fact, the quality of Indonesian teachers is varied. Many teachers have not reached the qualification standard of education. In order to get the admission that a teacher has reached the qualification standard, he needs to be certified.

Teachers who have been certified will get profession subsidy as big as their main salary. It is expected that this policy will encourage teachers to work professionally and improve their teaching quality so that the goal of education can be reached. This program began in 2007 and was aimed at ensuring that state teachers have pedagogic, professional, social and personal competence. It is also being applied to 210,600 contract teachers as the government plans to appoint all of them as civil servants by 2008 at the latest. The teacher certification program is based on the Act of the Republic Indonesia number 14/2005 on Teacher and Lecturer, the Act of the Republic Indonesia number 20/2003 on National Education System, and the regulation of National Education Minister Number 18/2007 about teacher certification. Government believes that this program is the right medicine for the poor quality and payment of education. Launched in 2006, the program is aimed at certifying 2.7 million state and private school teachers in 2015. Nowadays, many teachers have been certified, either by portfolio assessment or by attending teacher training. By passing this

program, it is believed that they have good capabilities in teaching their students. It is proved by the documents they submit and teaching assessment by the evaluator.

Certified teachers are believed to perform better than teachers who have not been certified. People assume that they have enough competencies in teaching. Educators, policy makers, media, and public equate teacher quality with teacher certification. On the other hand, there has been a changing concern from accessibility to quality issue in the educational sector in developing countries. The objective of the Teacher Law is to create good quality national teachers as they should have good competencies in pedagogy, teaching professionalism, personal character and social issues.

The teacher certification program is not the first attempt to improve quality of teachers and the overall quality of education sector (MONE, 2009). During the period 1951-1960, Indonesian government had attempted to eliminate the high illiteracy rate by implementing some crash teacher training programs. After 1960, the teacher training school was transformed to *Sekolah Pendidikan Guru* (SPG or School of Teacher Education). The main objective of SPG is to prepare primary school teachers as huge number of junior secondary school graduates enrolled to SPG and create a surplus in primary school teachers. Yet, beginning from 1989, teacher recruitment became less selective as there was an excessive shortage of primary and secondary school teachers. Under the Education Law of 1989, the basic level of teacher education was increased from secondary education to higher education level. In 1950, the government teacher training institutions (*Lembaga Pendidikan Tenaga Kependidikan* or LPTK) to improve teacher qualification to higher education level. Now, LPTK has been transformed to university. Learning from the past experiences, Indonesian government designs a teacher certification program to improve all aspects of teacher quality including competency, academic qualification, certification, welfare, and status and reward systems for teachers. The government believes that this program is the most comprehensive strategy for teacher quality improvement (MONE, 2009).

Jalal, et al. (2009) argues that Teacher and lecturer law in 2005 aims to develop the quality of Indonesian education system and to anticipate the weakness of teacher competence, low motivation and their salary. The main component of the law is Teacher Certification program. This program is designed to certify teachers who have a good teaching competence. Big allowance is also introduced so certified teachers must earn profession allowance equal with their salary. Since 2005, approximately a million of teacher has been certified. One third obtained certification based on the assessment of their training and job experience portfolio. Meanwhile, The rest would be certified after joining Professional teacher training (PLPG). This program expects that all teachers will get certification in 2015 and It requires teachers continue their study in university to obtain bachelor degree.

THE IMPACT OF TEACHER CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

Certification program gives a significant effect to national finance. If three millions of teacher in Indonesia were certified, this policy would increase the amount of budget about USD 5-7 millions per year. Actually it just shows that certification program will be higher than any quality improvement in Indonesia and restrict resources of elementary school development. Indonesia government and World Bank still evaluate and control the effect of teacher certification program. This policy analyzes whether certification affects to certified teacher behavior and motivation. However, this program has not yet shown the significant effect to develop the students' learning outcome.

The case is that teachers perform their best only during the program but not after it. Teachers have high motivation to arrange lesson plans and attend any seminars related to their major. The problem is that they do these activities not because they want to enhance their quality of teaching but because they want to pass the certification program and get the profession subsidy. Much skepticism appears from different people related to the teacher certification program. The validity of teacher certification program is being questioned. They are not sure whether teachers who have passed the teacher certification program are really professional teachers, teachers who are eligible to teach. Many assumptions state that teacher certification program is only a waste of time and money since teachers are only interested in the high salary without any quality improvement. Teacher certification is like a candle in the dark for teachers since it offers a raise of profession subsidy for teachers. On the other hand, government hopes that by the process of teacher certification, teachers will be encouraged to improve their quality in teaching, not only during the process of certification but also after the process. Many teachers have high motivation to give their best performance during the teacher certification program. But, whether they keep their best performance after the process is the question that the researcher also deals with. In this research, the researcher is interested to find out the extent of teacher certification affects the quality of English teaching and learning process. Since the main purpose of teacher certification program is to enhance the professionalism of teachers, certified teachers should be teachers who are professional and vice versa. However, there have been many rumors saying that certified teachers do not always lead to professionalism. These rumors may come arise because the phenomenon showing that teachers do not make lesson plan, use various method in teaching, make use of media, or arrange a good evaluation mechanism.

Indonesia had just recently started a large-scaled teacher certification program with the target that all teachers will be certified by the year 2015. With around 2.3 million teachers involved as well as its associated high cost, this program is by far among the most ambitious government-supported certification program in developing countries. Nonetheless, there has never been any rigorous attempt to evaluate its impact on teacher's performance, especially their students' achievement. The certification, as formally stated in the law that governs it, has the objective to increase the quality of education. One elemental part of the program is improving the remuneration of certified teachers as an incentive. In fact, the largest cost will be the professional allowance or about 91

percent of total certification related cost. However, Fahmi, et al (2011) stated that no impact of the certification on student's performance, it may support some concerns that the certification's objective is not oriented to teacher's performance but only to their living standard as reflected by their student's achievement.

The main problem with the current design of the teacher certification is that it has very limited characteristics of a performance-based incentive system. As it uses a portfolio assessment, some teachers can be certified and pay rise earlier but eventually (in the next two or three years) they will get certified. It is very hard to expect improvement in performance when you know that eventually everyone will get reward disregarding of your improvement.

After some teachers are certified and get pay rise, there is hardly any system of in place that may credibly threaten them of losing the pay rise when their performance is not better than the uncertified teachers. When we expect that the teacher certification should improve teacher's performance, such as reflected by their student's achievement, then the improvement in the system needs to work around these issues. Otherwise, there is no need to mention that this certification is aimed to improve teacher's performance. Its sole objective is just to increase teacher's welfare. But again, it can be such a waste of resource, given the nature and the size of the initiative.

Therefore, we need to create a better solution on how to improve this teacher certification program. Such improvement in the system can be developed by experts in greater detail but in any case, they need to have characteristics, at the fullest extent, of a performance-based system. Some elements of those characteristics, but not limited to, among others are: (a) it should reward better teachers (as reflected by student's, as final goal, or other efforts as intermediary goals) and penalize less performing teachers using the same criteria; (b) it should reward teachers when their performance improved over time and penalize them when they perform consistently worse than before; (c) the emphasis of the performance-based system should be stated explicitly and clearly in the rule of the game; and, (d) it should be credible.

CONCLUSION

Teacher certification Program has raised the teachers' salary and made teachers' profession significantly interesting in progress, unqualified teachers currently are still studying to develop their quality level the policies shows that the academic criteria applied to certify teachers have not yet guaranteed to improve the teachers' competence. The government realized that the need of enhancing criteria used in certification procedures must be sustainable. Competency Test is important to make certification program useful and the main requirement for certified teacher's candidates. Teacher certification program still has substantial potency to develop the students' learning output in Indonesia. There could be longer list of rooms for improvement when all stakeholders and experts can think again and improve the certification programs. There could be even more options when we learn more about what other countries are doing in their attempt to improve the quality of education process and at the same time improving the living conditions of teachers. The problem with the current

certification program in Indonesia is that despite its relevant and much needed role to improve teacher's welfare, its impact on the quality of education process is unclear. This is an urgent call for revisions in its design and better governance in its implementation.

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