

TEACHER CERTIFICATION IN INDONESIA: A CHALLENGE FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM.

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Abstract: As the most important school level among the others, elementary school has become the main concern of societies since it serves as the basis for the foundation of education for the children. To achieve qualified teaching learning process in this level of education, it must be supported by qualified teachers too. If the teachers don't have professionalism, they may contribute to the students' misfortune in the future. However, nowadays in reality, the quality of public elementary school is still being questioned. There are two factors influencing this phenomena (1) insufficient professionalism of the teacher, and (2) low monitoring. In this context, as the certified civil servant teacher in elementary school, teachers should improve their professionalism as mandated by Teacher Law.

Keywords: *certification, elementary school teacher, professionalism*

A teacher is an honor profession among the others. Indonesia where most of its citizens are Moslems, believe that being a teacher is a good profession since in Islamic teaching this profession is highly emphasized due to the endless reward from the God. It is believed that when we teach goodness to the students, we will get reward from the God until the end. Thus, the job of teaching should have a special place in society. In western countries becoming a teacher has a high status in society. Teachers are professional who get high salary from the government. Let's say the salary of teachers in our neighbor country Malaysia approximately three times higher than the teachers' salary in Indonesia (World Education Indicator 2007, table 5 hi. P 144). Compared to other countries in the world such as India, Argentina, Philippines, and Thailand, the teachers' salary in Indonesia rank in the lowest position. Consequently, becoming a teacher in Indonesia does not always get tangible reward as mentioned before.

Formerly, being a civil servant teacher in Indonesia is considered as a lower class profession due to its unfair salaries for the living. After the independent day in 1945 up to 2000's, the teachers' salary was not enough

to fulfill the family's need. That's why many teachers have to seek other work as an alternative way to meet the family necessity. They worked as a part timer in various field of works such as farming, merchandising, even some of them work as pedicap's driver ignoring the high status embedded from schools. In this case, the teacher's attention is sometimes divided between earning money for the family and doing his job professionally. This in a long run will automatically affect the teacher's performance in teaching and learning process. Doing these activities will decline the teachers' stamina in carrying out the duty to teach the students professionally. How can a teacher have a qualified teaching learning process if he doesn't have enough time to prepare it. Realizing this condition, the government tried to improve the quality of teachers so that the education in Indonesia will have a better achievement than before to strengthen the development of our country.

To establish qualified education, we need qualified teacher. At this time, the quality of education in Indonesia was rank in a low position, that is 69th among 127 countries. Although it's better than Filipina (85), Kamboja (102), India (107), and Laos (109), Indonesia got lower achievement than Brunei Darussalam (34) and Malaysia (65). How can this happen? Let's compare our education system with Finland, a country with the best achievement of education in the world. In terms of human resources, Teachers in Finland are the seven best graduates of reputable Universities, meanwhile civil servant teachers in Indonesia are not the best graduates from reputable universities. LPTK as an education institution which is responsible to produce qualified teachers is considered as second class of University in our society. It can be seen from the students' choice applying the department to university. Many of them prefer to apply for engineering department, medical department instead of education department. In this case, it can be assumed that being a doctor or an engineer will be more promising than being a teacher. Consequently, it can be concluded that the input of LPTK is not always the best students who could have had better achievement in the field of study.

Another factor that may contribute to unqualified human resources in education in Indonesia is that the system of recruitment of civil servant teachers. So far, the government has implemented three types of recruiting civil servant teachers. First, at the beginning after the independence era, the chance for civil servant teachers were given to anyone graduated from secondary education level without any test. At this time there were only few people who wanted to work for the government due to the little allowance. Thus, the teachers recruited weren't always the professional person but likely a person who didn't have any other choice for living. Second, the recruitment of civil servant

teachers in Indonesia has been conducted using a test and non test. The test is administered by the government yet the result was often questioned since it didn't really employ qualified teachers as study conducted by Jalal, 2010. Another form of recruitment was done with pre civil servant teacher program. This program was given to all public LPTKs in Indonesia with some requirements such as the minimum GPA and had to be ready to be positioned in all parts of Indonesia. In this program the students were given a scholarship in the third year of their study in LPTK. When the students joining this program completed their study, the government can employ them as civil servant teachers positioned in all parts of Indonesia. This program aimed at providing qualified teachers spread in all region even for the remote one throughout Indonesia; however, with the establishment of decentralization system, this program ended in 2000. The last type of recruitment for civil servant teachers is by employing non civil servant teachers working in public school to become a civil servant teacher automatically if they had taught before 1995. This policy is taken by our president (SBY) in responding to the massive protest from non civil servant teachers due to uncertain future career in teaching and very unreasonable salary regarding to their service of teaching given for years. From the teacher's professionalism point of view, this type of recruitment has a high risk of recruiting less professional teachers since there is no test administered to measure their competence. In addition, there were many dishonest practices during the process of recruitment especially in elementary school level. Although the government has declared to stop this type of recruitment, sometimes the government still continues this program. For the next recruitment of civil servant teacher, the government will use test only using computerized system. Hopefully, by applying this new system, the next recruitment for civil servant teacher can capture the professional teachers.

Since then, the government put much attention to education sector. As a developing country, the government wants education becomes the priority since the education plays an important role in determining a nation's progress in the future. It means that the government must improve the quality of education. Despite of the facilities, the focus of improvement in education quality lies on teachers since teachers are the main actor during the teaching learning process. It can be said that the teaching learning process in the classroom is the most important part in education. The poor achievement of the students recently may reflect the lower quality of teachers in Indonesia.

One way to improve the teachers' quality is through certification programs. At the first time when this program was established, the teachers were very happy and enthusiastic since certification is a legalization for a teacher to be a professional and deserve to enjoy the

significant improvement of salaries from their teaching job. In contrast, teachers should also realize that the improvement of their salaries must be followed by the improvement of the professional teaching. They should not forget that the salaries are from the government in which most of its income are from the taxes, it means that they are paid by the all people in Indonesia starting from the rich up to the poor such as food seller, farmers, etc. they should not forget that the expense paid by the government is quite expensive since there are still a large number of Indonesian people live with low income. As a good teacher we should do our best in teaching.

The term a good teacher is sometimes difficult to determine since every students has different perspective on an ideal teacher. For example, in a class, if we ask the students to vote for an ideal teacher, they often have different answer. Some students may consider Mr. X is the best teacher in their class; however, some students may not agree about it instead of Mr. Y is their favorite teacher. A good teacher is actually not always easy to describe. Harmer says that ‘one of the reasons that it is difficult. Some people may say that good teachers are born, not made, but there are also others, perhaps, who do not have what appears to be natural gift but who are still effective and popular teacher. Such teachers learn their craft through a mixture of personality, intelligence, knowledge, and experience. And even, of the teachers who are apparently ‘born teachers’ weren’t like that at the beginning at all, but grew into the role as they learnt their craft. Then, is teaching an art or science? Can we obtain the teaching skill? Harmer explains that teaching is almost-scientific attributes. In addition, he also states that teaching is an art too. It is almost scientific attribute since teaching is an understanding the language system and finding the best way in explain it is some kinds of scientific endeavor, especially when we continue to research its changes and evolution. It is also categorized as an art due to his personal responds related to the stimulus. Teachers usually listen and watch, and use both professional and personal skills to respond to what they see and hear. Good teachers have a knack of responding by doing things ‘right’ and it is most definitely an art.

When the term of a good is sometimes difficult to determine; however, as the certified civil servant teacher, we have a clear indicator in completing our teaching job professionally as mentioned in Teacher’s Law 2005. It is said that based on teacher law teaching competency standards are grouped into four major standards: pedagogical, personal, professional, and social.

Pedagogical

1. Teachers should have the ability to understand the students' learning, styles, social, cultural, emotional, moral, and intellectual characteristics.
2. Teachers should understand their students' background (eg: family, social, and cultural)
3. Teachers should understand their students' difficulties.
4. Teachers should have the ability to facilitate the development of their students' potentials.
5. Teachers should master the theories and principles of learning and should develop relevant learning process.
6. They should develop curricula that encourage student involvement.
7. Teachers should develop high-quality learning process.
8. Teachers should carryout high-quality learning process.
9. Teachers should have the ability to evaluate learning process and outcomes.

Personal Competence

1. Teachers should be stable, consistent, mature, wise, and respectful.
2. Teachers should serve as exemplary members of society.
3. Teachers should evaluate their own performance.
4. Professional Competence
5. Teachers should continually develop themselves.
6. Teachers should master their subject matter and their methodological praxes.

Social Competence

1. Teachers should have the ability to effectively and emphatically communicate with their students' parents or guardian, colleagues, and other members of society.
2. Teachers should contribute to the development of the school and the community.
3. Teachers should contribute to the development of education at the local, regional, national, and global levels.
4. Teachers should be able to apply ICT to communicate with their students and for their own personal development.

The four competences above are elaborated in detail so that every certified teacher can use it as a guidelines in having the teaching practice.

Among the schooling system in Indonesia, the education in elementary school nowadays has become the focus of attention from the society. It is very reasonable because Elementary school is a fundamental/ basic education in Indonesian schooling system. Based on our education law (PP no 8 year 2005), the basic purpose of conducting elementary school

education is to provide basic competence for the students to develop the children as an individual, member of society, citizen, and can follow the next education level. The government provides this school in every district in Indonesia, even in a remote area. For example, there are more than one school in every village.

On the contrary, many public schools in elementary level nowadays were merged, the number of the students decrease from year to year, what is this indicate of? These questions are often raised in primary education context. Nowadays, in this modern world, there are many impacts of fast developing technology from the society. Compared with the positive impact, the negative dominates the children. We sometimes are surprised knowing that the teenagers' delinquency increased significantly. They do irrational actions such as doing abortion, having drug, fighting etc. Parents want to protect their children from the negative influence of the society while they don't have enough time to educate their children maximally: consequently they prefer to send the children in one stop service school to gain the best education in producing desired children who not only are good in science but also faithful to the religion. In relation to this, the people now are having that demand. The people turn to be critical persons who demand a qualified education for their children since they want to give the best in preparing their children to be a good citizen with good moral and ethical. Since the establishments of private (many of them are Islamic schooling), public schools become second alternative for primary education. As the name suggest, these schools use government curriculum besides Islamic content. Although public schools are free of charge, parents still prefer to send their children to a private schools pending extra money for the education. There are at least 3 reasons why they choose private than public schools: (1) The teachers' professionalism, (2) the curriculum, and (3) the facilities.

Besides the curriculum and the facilities consideration, based on the writer's experience so far, the teachers' professionalism was actually the main reason for this phenomenon since teacher professionalism is the key success in the teaching learning process. Murphy (1992) cited in Ester says that the success of school is mostly determined by the teachers because the teacher is a leader in learning, facilitating and the center of initiative in the teaching learning process. From this statement it is clear that the teacher is the most influenced person in education. He should be a creative person who must be able to handle any possible actions needed in the teaching learning process; for example, a teacher must able to serve the students with different learning styles so that they can follow the learning process successfully. He should also not be a dependent person to his leader (headmaster) or higher ordinance. It means that a teacher should be an independent person in conducting their duties. He must not

an object, but the subject in devoting his teaching; for example, when the headmaster ask the teacher to have outdoor practice and he face some difficulties, he should not wait the headmaster instruction to solve the problem, instead he should have his own ideas to make the teaching learning process successfully.

In reality however, the civil servant teacher's professionalism in elementary school is still far from being perfect. A study conducted by Musmuliadi showed that from the result of UKG, the competence of certified civil servant teacher was low. In pedagogical aspect their average competence is only 42,10 while the score for professional competence was only 41,26. Further he adds that the improvement of certified civil servant teacher in elementary schools need serious attention. The teachers are weak in mastering the basic concept of the subject and applying the teaching method which can make the students enthusiastic in learning. Those two aspects are very important in achieving the successful teaching learning process. As a teacher, mastering the basic concept of knowledge is the main function of a teacher. He must transfer his knowledge to the students. If he is not an expert on his subject, how can he make the students understand the mass knowledge of the world? As a teacher we should be ashamed when we don't have something to deliver to our students. Besides having something to transfer to the students, a teacher should have a strategy to make them easy to understand the material. When the teacher can activate the students' interest, it will contribute to enjoyable situation in the teaching learning process and in the long run, it will be very beneficial in assisting the students to achieve success in education.

In addition to teachers' low competence, the certified civil servant teacher in elementary school sometimes also had a low workload due to help of non civil servant teacher employed by the school. The number of these teachers increased significantly lately. By teaching in this school, most of them are hoping to be recruited as civil government someday. Since the civil servant teachers in elementary school is not a specialist like what we have in junior and senior high school teacher, their work can be replaced by other teachers easily considering the material given to the students is quite easy. As a result, this practice often happens in our society. The certified civil servant teacher will have a comfort life since the salary is attractive enough for the living but the work is not so difficult to do. It means that they are not supervised intensively by the official.

CONCLUSION

Elementary school is the most important level of education for the students. It is usually serve as the basis for the students' next education

in the future. In this case, a teacher in this level should be a professional person who must be responsible for internalizing the basic concept of knowledge/life to be used in the future. If we are not professional, we may contribute to the students' difficulties in the future. For example, as a mathematics teacher, we should introduce the basic mathematics concept of calculation. If we are not an expert in this area, the students won't have this skill either. In the next education level, when the students get the same material with different level of difficulties, the students will be confused or can't reach their maximum result in the teaching learning process, and this is due to our mistake. In this case improving the professionalism is a must for the teacher. If we don't do this, our career as elementary school teacher will be at a high risk. By having the improvement of salary through the certification program, we should use that teacher law (UU no14 2005) a guideline to monitor our responsibilities to the students, society, and the government.

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