

Certification and Competence Policy in Kuta Makmur District, Aceh Utara

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Abstract

Teacher certification policy as an effort to improve the quality and professionalism of teachers coupled with improving teacher welfare. This study aims to find out how the reality in the field impacts the certification policy on teacher competence in North Aceh District so that it can become input for improvement in the implementation of the teacher certification policy. The research method used is qualitative research. Data obtained by using the method of observation, interviews, and documents. The research results show that the competence of certified teachers in North Aceh District is still low due to the lack of motivation and awareness of teachers to develop their abilities personally as educators. Lack of training in providing learning materials and mastery of technology is also a factor in the low competence of teachers. The lack of budget for holding ongoing training is an obstacle in developing teacher competence. As well as the absence of reward and punishment as an effort to increase the motivation of certification teachers to improve their competence and performance.

Keywords: Policy, Certification, Competence, Teacher

INTRODUCTION

Education is very important for the progress of a nation because the progress of a nation is determined by its success in the field of education. Success in education cannot be separated from the role of a teacher, where a teacher is an intermediary in achieving national education goals (Melati, 2013).

Based on the existing facts, the government has sought various ways to improve teacher professionalism which includes teacher competence, including the government has issued a policy on teacher certification. Teacher certification is one of the government's efforts to improve the quality and competence of teachers in a mechanism that has been regulated by the government through the Office of Education and Culture and in collaboration with competent higher education institutions who will be given educator certificates for teachers who are considered professional.

The definition of certification according to the Law of the Republic of Indonesia No.14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers is a process of awarding certificates to teachers and lecturers with certification allowances that aim to improve teacher competence. Competent teachers are a mandatory requirement for creating quality education systems and practices. Law Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers article 1 paragraph 1 states that teachers are professional educators with the main task of educating, guiding, directing, training, assessing and evaluating students in early childhood education through formal education, basic education, and secondary education. The position of the teacher as a professional as referred to in Article 2 paragraph 1 functions to increase the dignity and the role of the teacher as a learning agent functions to improve the quality of national education. The certification program is held by tertiary institutions that have an accredited education staff procurement program, explaining that the program provides certificates for teachers and lecturers who have met the requirements to become professional teachers and lecturers (Ihwani et al., 2021).

Certification for teachers as one of the policies from the government as an effort to increase teacher competence is expected to improve the quality of education in formal education units in a sustainable manner. This is based on the assumption that an increase in teacher competence will be accompanied by an increase in teacher welfare so that it is expected to improve the quality of learning and the quality of education in a sustainable manner. Competence is a characteristic that exists within a person and is related to the effectiveness of individual performance in his work. It can be said that competency is part of a deep and inherent personality and predictable behavior in various circumstances and work tasks (Spencer and Spencer, 1993:9). The purpose of certification is to determine the eligibility of teachers to carry out their duties as learning agents and realize national education goals, improve the process and quality of educational outcomes, increase teacher dignity, and improve teacher professionalism. However, the teacher certification policy has not been able to optimally place Aceh's education in the best position.

One of the districts in Aceh Province that implements the central government's policy regarding teacher certification is North Aceh District. Based on the results of the researchers' observations, that the implementation of the teacher certification program policy in North Aceh district has not shown any impact on teacher competence in improving the quality of education in North Aceh. The Government's program in the field of education that should be able to put the quality of Aceh's education at least in the top ten national rankings. But why today, when all the facilities have been

fulfilled, both in terms of security and funding, the quality of education can decline. The fate of North Aceh District is very apprehensive. The district that was once victorious in the eighties and nineties is now dim without an economy let alone achievements.

The low quality seen from teacher competence certainly has an impact on the education of a region. Teacher competence is important in improving the quality of education. If the teacher has low competence, of course it will have an impact on the quality of student education. And in the end it will have an impact on the human resources of a region. Teachers who have received professional allowances should improve their substance competencies, because part of the allowances will be set aside to buy books for learning resources, design learning media, attend seminars on education, buy computer/laptop equipment and so on so that the teacher's abilities will substantially increase which of course will have implications for improving the quality of education.

If teachers do not want to improve their own quality for education, what happens is that the mandate of the law will only succeed on the one hand, namely increasing the welfare of teachers, while the other mandate, namely increasing the quality of teachers and the quality of education, will not be achieved. Even so, what happens is that the professional allowance that teachers get from certification is used solely for welfare improvement.

Many observers and non-teacher groups view the benefits of a certification program and teacher professional allowances with pessimism. If all teachers in Aceh consciously understand the essence of having a teacher professional allowance is to improve the quality of education and improve future human resources, then the mandate of the law on teacher certification will be achieved. So that everything will go hand in hand in harmony, that is, teachers will get proper financial rewards as shown by the quality of their prosperous personal life and the quality of education in North Aceh will get better which will have implications for the future progress of North Aceh because golden generations will be born and develop in North Aceh District.

Certification policy as a scientific process really requires moral and academic accountability for certificate holders. This is where the need for awareness and understanding that certification is a means to quality, so that whatever the teacher does is solely to improve quality. If this kind of understanding is owned by every teacher, then the ideals of improving the quality of education will come true. From this amount of information and presentation and given the importance of educational issues, the author is interested in writing related to the reality of teacher certification and competence policies in Kuta Makmur District, North Aceh Regency.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Policy

Policy is an applicable provision that is characterized by consistent and repeated behavior, both by those who make it and by those who obey it. Then there is another definition conveyed by Carl Friedrich that policy is an action that leads to goals proposed by a person, group or government in a certain environment in connection with the presence of certain obstacles while looking for opportunities to achieve goals or realize the desired goals.

Sholichin Abdul Wahab proposed a definition from WI Jenkis which formulated public policy as " *a set of interrelated decisions taken by a political actor or group of actors concerning the selection of goals and the means of achieving them within a specified situation where decisions should, in principle, be within the power of these actors to achieve* " A series of interrelated decisions taken by a political actor or group of political actors regarding the goals that have been chosen and the ways to achieve them in a situation where the decisions are in principle still in the limits of the powers of these actors (Arifah, 2018) .

Teacher Certification

The definition of certification in general refers to *the National Commission on Educational Services (NCES)* which states " *Certification is a procedure whereby the state evaluates and reviews a teacher candidate's credentials and provides him or her a license to teach* ". Teacher certification is the process of awarding educator certificates to teachers. Educator certificates are given to teachers who have met teacher professional standards. Professional teachers are an absolute requirement to create quality education systems and practices (Latiana, 2019) .

The purpose of teacher certification is the process of awarding educator certificates to teachers. Educator certificates are given to teachers who have met teacher professional standards. Professional teachers are an absolute requirement to create quality education systems and practices. Meanwhile, an educator's certificate is a certificate signed by the tertiary institution administering the certification as formal proof of teacher professionalism recognition given to teachers as professionals. In the Teacher and Lecturer Law the legality obtained from the competency test is called an educator certificate. The educators referred to here are teachers and lecturers. The process of awarding educator certificates to teachers is called teacher certification and to lecturers is called lecturer certification. Implementation of a major national activity such as teacher certification, of course, has goals and benefits for teachers. Teacher certification aims to: a) Determine the feasibility of teachers in carrying out their duties as learning agents and realizing national education goals. b) Improving the process and quality of educational outcomes. c) Increase the dignity of teachers. d) Increase the professionalism of teachers. In other words, the purpose of certification is to improve quality and determine the eligibility of teachers in carrying out their duties as learning agents and realizing national education goals (Latiana, 2019) .

Teacher Competency

Competence is an adequate task of owning the knowledge, skills and abilities required by one's position. Competence also means knowledge, skills and basic values that are reflected in the habits of thinking and acting. This definition of competence, when combined with a profession, namely a teacher or teaching staff, then teacher competence means the ability of a teacher to carry out obligations in a responsible and appropriate manner or the ability and authority of a teacher in carrying out his teaching profession. In addition, teacher competence can also be interpreted as a set of mastery of abilities that must exist within the teacher so that he can realize his performance appropriately and effectively (Rasam et al., 2019).

Schools and other educational institutions really need teachers who have good teaching and educational competence, are innovative, creative, humane, pursue their professionalism well, can maintain their authority in front of students and the community so that they can improve the quality of education (Sumitro, 2002: 70).

The ability to teach is a fundamental ability and is an important subject that must be possessed by students teacher, this is because the most important task for a teacher is to teach. In the learning process, teachers are faced with conditions dynamic students, both as a result that comes from within the student and as a result of the demands of environmental conditions that more or less affect students. Therefore, teaching abilities must also be dynamic to match the demands of students who cannot avoided. The teacher's teaching ability is a reflection of the teacher's competence. This competency consists of various important components that teachers must have, namely (Saragih, 2019):

- 1) Have knowledge and learn about human behavior.
- 2) Having knowledge and mastering the field of study he fostered.
- 3) Have the right attitude about himself, colleagues, school and the field of study he is fostering.
- 4) Have the ability about good teaching techniques.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research method used is descriptive method with a qualitative approach, namely by describing the results of the researchers' findings in depth expressed in a narrative. Informant criteria are based on experience, involvement or knowing for certain about the object being studied. Informants who can be seen as competent and know things related to the problems being researched (Arifin, 2019). Data were obtained using observation methods, interviews, documents from various sources.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Certified Teacher Competency in Kuta Makmur District, North Aceh Regency

In Presidential Regulation No. 19 of 2005 concerning National Education Standards states that one of the competencies that must be owned by a teacher is professional competence, where this professional ability is the ability to master learning material broadly and deeply in guiding students. Aspects of this competency are related to teaching abilities, abilities in scientific fields and the ability to understand educational policies. Professional competence is seen as important to develop because it includes the teacher's ability to master learning material and ability to manage learning. As an effort to support the creation of professional teachers, the government issued a teacher certification policy with the aim of improving teacher quality which leads to improving the quality of education.

Currently there are still various problems that need serious handling to boost the quality of education in schools in the Kuta Makmur District, North Aceh Regency. This fact is very concerning considering the results of the Teacher Competency Test (UKG) conducted are still below the national average which is an indicator of the low quality of teachers in Kuta Makmur District as a whole. There are several factors that affect the competence of certification teachers in Kuta Makmur District, North Aceh Regency, one of which is the lack of mastery of learning material by certification teachers. Mastery of this learning material affects the quality of students and self-certified teachers. Where in terms of teaching the teacher must master the learning material optimally so that what is conveyed to students can be absorbed properly.

Mastery of this learning material also affects the teacher when taking the teacher competency test, where the questions on the exam are suitable for covering aspects of the abilities that a teacher should have, especially teacher certification. Data for junior high school teachers in Kuta Makmur District shows that in the 2015 Teacher Competency Test on the aspect of professional competence which includes mastery of teacher learning materials, many of them have not reached the target average score set by the Ministry of Education and Culture, which is 55.

The results of the study also show low mastery of certification teacher learning materials in Kuta Makmur District, there are still certified teachers who have not been able to convey learning material in detail in class. In addition, the low cognitive level of certification teachers in North Aceh District makes it difficult for the teacher to understand the learning material and it is also difficult to analyze questions during the teacher competency exam. The thing that is very influential is the lack of awareness in each teacher to continue to increase the potential in mastering learning material. Another factor is the weak mastery of certification teacher material, namely the recruitment process in the past during the conflict which did not prioritize quality issues from the human resources recruited to become teachers. Where the teachers who were recruited actually did not meet the qualifications as educators. However, because they were driven by conflict conditions, these teachers had to teach so that education would continue. So that many teachers who still survive today have not mastered the learning material to the fullest.

Teacher competence in the teaching and learning process will show the performance that will be produced by the teacher. Performance is everything that is achieved by a teacher or achievements that are shown by the abilities they have. If we look at the problems of teachers in the prosperous Kuta District, namely weak mastery of learning materials and teacher achievement or performance that has not been maximized due to the teacher's lack of personal ability. Theoretically stated by Mangkunegara (2006:67) that teacher performance is influenced by ability factors consisting of potential abilities and reality abilities (*experience* and *skills*). The potential capacity of certification teachers in Kuta

Makmur Sub-District can still be said to be lacking, therefore it is necessary to develop reality skills obtained from experience and training so that teacher capabilities are formed and there are more and more competent teachers in North Aceh. The government's policy to provide allowances for certification teachers should be able to increase their ability and work concentration to be used to improve their performance.

Teacher development and training itself is felt to be lacking, there is no full support from the North Aceh district government. Meanwhile, teachers as educators need regular training to develop and express themselves according to the needs, talents and interests of each individual according to the conditions needed. Teachers with ongoing training will be able to meet standards and develop their competencies so that they are able to carry out their main tasks effectively in accordance with the learning needs of students to face life in the future.

Training is difficult to carry out routinely by the North Aceh District Government due to the limited budget owned by the relevant agencies. So that it becomes an obstacle to holding training for teacher certification. In essence, the North Aceh District Government, especially the Education and Culture Office, often experiences a gap between the need for manpower expected by related agencies and the ability of the workforce to respond to needs. Relevant agencies need to make efforts to bridge this gap. One way that can be done is through a training program. Through the training program it is hoped that all the potential possessed can be increased as desired or at least close to what is expected in the education sector in North Aceh. Training is related to the skills and abilities required for the job currently being performed. Training is one of the efforts to improve the quality of human resources in the world of work.

The problem of increasing the competence of teacher certification has not become an important concern for related parties. So that there have been no actions or suggestions regarding efforts that can be made to address the problem of low teacher competency certification in Kuta Makmur District. The North Aceh District government or other related parties should evaluate the problems that arise in the implementation of the teacher certification program in improving teacher competence. So that a policy or solution can be taken regarding budget problems for teacher certification training, especially in Kuta Makmur District, North Aceh.

The low mastery of teacher learning material is also because it is not supported by adequate facilities at school, for example, the library as a source for increasing knowledge. Several schools in the Kuta Makmur District are still very concerned that the classrooms are partitioned off to be used as library rooms. The books owned by schools in the Kuta Makmur District are also inadequate. Even though the certified teachers admit that they really need the facilities and infrastructure to support learning. It is very difficult to advance the quality of education if the facilities and infrastructure are inadequate. Bafadal (2009: 5) argues that organizing a school library is not only for collecting and storing library materials, but with the existence of a school library it is hoped that it can help students and teachers complete assignments in the teaching and learning process. Therefore the school library is very important to increase knowledge for teachers and students in order to improve the quality of education.

The need for equity in aspects of education policy formulation so that disparities no longer occur between urban and rural schools and between education services. Therefore it requires commitment from various related parties to work together to find solutions and policies to improve teacher competence in the Kuta Makmur sub-district. Another effort that can be done is that when there is no training budget, teachers should set aside a portion of the certification allowance of 10% for continuous professional development activities through subject teacher deliberations (MGMP), namely teacher professional organizations. The budget set aside for continuing professional development can also be used for training costs according to the needs of teacher certification.

A successful educational institution cannot be separated from the support of high educational costs as well. The financial and financing component is an important component to determine the maximum implementation of teaching and learning activities. In other words , every activity carried out by educational institutions requires money. This financial and financing component needs to be managed as well as possible so that existing funds can be utilized in an appropriate and optimal manner to support educational goals. To realize teacher competence and quality education, it is necessary to have a thorough and professional management of the existing resources in educational institutions. Further efforts are needed from the government as an elaboration of the implementation of teacher certification in order to protect the teaching profession from incompetent practices that can damage the image of the teaching profession and protect the public from unqualified educational practices. The existence of a process of developing professionalism and evaluation of teacher performance will lead to better perceptions of the community and government and more respect for the teacher professional institution.

Lack of Technology Mastery

The existence of competent and professional teachers is one of the requirements that must be met in order to improve the quality of education in Indonesia so that it can compete with other developed countries. Almost all nations in the world always develop policies that encourage the creation of competent and qualified teachers. One indicator of a professional and competent teacher is a teacher who is able to adapt to scientific developments that are increasingly sophisticated day by day. In addition, professional and competent teachers must also be able to apply learning models and methods based on the demands of time and the needs of students.

Along with the rapid development of science and technology, especially in the field of *Information, Communication and Technology (ICT)*, it makes it easier for students to explore the disciplines they are interested in, and also makes it easier for teachers to convey knowledge because of the availability of sophisticated facilities. Apart from that, teachers themselves can also dig deeper into knowledge as educators who must continue to learn to improve their abilities.

Departing from the situation of the importance of mastering information technology, here the role of educators is also required to be able to integrate their pedagogical skills with mastery of information technology, so that learning for students becomes more effective. Where, with the mastery of information technology, it is easier for educators to apply active and fun learning. Under these conditions, educators must be smarter, choose or design learning media so that the function of information technology as a learning aid is very effective.

The importance of using technology in this era has not been fully applied by certification teachers at the Kuta Prosperous Middle School (SMP) who still do not use technology as a learning medium to its full potential, even though in this increasingly modern era every education is required to be more advanced and develop in accordance with the times so as not to be left behind by education in other areas. In Permendikbud Number 16 of 2007 it is stated that junior high school teacher competency standards must utilize information and communication technology for the benefit of learning. In fact, there is very little awareness of the importance of information and communication technology for certification teachers.

Technological devices have not been used optimally by the teacher himself as a medium that facilitates teaching and learning. It's sad that there are even teachers who have laptops but have to lie to the teacher monitoring team from the North Aceh District Education Office by claiming they don't have laptops because they are afraid when ordered to operate a laptop program they are not good at. Limited tools and mastery of operating a laptop are obstacles to being able to learn practically. Teachers who master technological devices, especially computers, will be able to computerize all materials and archives they have into computers. Processing grades, attendance, preparation of teaching materials can be stored on a computer so that it will be easier to do data processing.

So that there are no differences between education in rural areas and in urban areas, teachers and educational staff in the current era must have cultural and technological competence among fellow teachers. Without having technological competence, we will be left behind. Therefore, teachers must be literate in technology. There are still many teachers who are not maximal in using technology in learning. As technology develops, teachers in the regions must be able to present interesting learning by utilizing technology.

The basic reason for the low mastery of technology is the lack of enthusiasm by teachers to accept information technology in everyday life, especially in the school environment. So you don't really need to deepen your knowledge of information technology. Older teachers have the view that younger teachers are more suitable for using information technology. The North Aceh District Government through the Education Office also lacks training in technology. If we examine it according to the opinion expressed by the expert Mulyasa (2005: 140) that the technology used appropriately will speed up the completion of the educational process and can reduce waste. So in this case training in technology is also important to be carried out by the North Aceh District Government.

Teachers are required to have awareness individually or in groups with other teachers to learn from each other in mastering technology. Mastery in the field of technology is one of the supporting factors for creating professional teachers. As stated by Tomoredjo (2009) which states that in order for [teachers](#) to become professionals in accordance with this global and digital era, teachers should more or less have the following professional [teacher criteria](#), namely: understand [the curriculum](#) along with its application and development, master theoretical and practical pedagogy along with its development, be able to apply learning-based Information and Communication Technology

The factor of computer laboratory facilities is also an obstacle to the lack of mastery of technology for teachers and students. Facilities are facilities that are absolutely fulfilled to provide convenience in carrying out an activity. If seen from the results of research in the field that Junior High Schools in Kuta Makmur District still have very minimal facilities and infrastructure, especially computer laboratory rooms. Each lesson has a different concept from other lessons. Thus, each lesson also requires different learning tools. In organizing learning, teachers certainly need facilities that can support their performance so that learning can take place in an interesting way. With the support of adequate learning facilities, the teacher does not only convey material orally, but also in writing and demonstrating in accordance with the infrastructure that has been prepared by the teacher.

In Government Regulation No. 19 of 2005 concerning National Education Standards concerning national standards of educational facilities and infrastructure in chapter 4 article 42 it is stated that: a) Each education unit is required to have facilities which include educational equipment, educational media, books and other learning resources, consumables, as well as other equipment needed to support an orderly and continuous learning process. b) Each education unit is required to have infrastructure which includes land, classrooms, education unit leadership rooms, educator rooms, administrative rooms, library rooms, laboratory rooms and other spaces/places needed to support an orderly and sustainable learning process.

One aspect that should receive the main attention of every [education manager](#) is about educational facilities. Educational facilities generally include all facilities that are directly used and support the educational process. There is a gap regarding school facilities and infrastructure in cities where many already have computer laboratory facilities, so teachers and their students can directly learn computers. Meanwhile, schools in the village, namely in the Middle School District of Kuta Makmur, do not have adequate library and laboratory facilities for use by teachers and students. It is common knowledge that there is a political element in the construction of facilities and infrastructure carried out in North Aceh District. Where many schools really need assistance but have not received the maximum injection of funds from the North Aceh District government through the Education Office. Projects for procuring school facilities are mostly given to schools that actually don't need the assistance of these facilities and infrastructure. Budget limitations and the large number of schools in North Aceh District require a long time to make facilities and infrastructure more feasible.

The low competence of teachers is based on the lack of training received by certified teachers, especially training in the field of technology, so that the knowledge they have is very limited and underdeveloped. An educator is required to be able to have competence in mastering learning materials, learning methods, and student mastery as well as technology mastery. The development of science is growing day by day, while the competency of certification teachers is rarely honed through training.

The training is often conducted once a year. This is not effective considering that the number of certified teachers is very large in every sub-district in North Aceh, while the teachers participating in the training are only representatives. When training is rarely carried out, efforts must be made by related parties to work together to evaluate, find solutions,

and issue a policy to improve teacher competency and the quality of education in Junior High Schools, Kuta Makmur District. Because teacher and education problems will greatly affect the human resources in Kuta Makmur District so that they are of higher quality in the future. The Regional Government of North Aceh Regency has a very important role in improving educational facilities and infrastructure in North Aceh. This is also motivated by political elements in which certain schools receive the procurement of school facilities and infrastructure.

So far there has been no discussion at the Education Office to seek programs or activities to encourage certification teacher competence in Kuta Makmur District, North Aceh. North Aceh District has not yet adopted a program from other regions that sets aside a portion of the certification allowance from each teacher who obtains certification to then be used for training or developing the competence of educators who are urgently needed to advance Junior High Schools (SMP) in Kuta Makmur District. If you only rely on and wait for local government policies, it will take quite a long time. What's more, considering that the area of North Aceh is quite large, with quite a large number of teachers from other districts/cities, so it is difficult to allocate education funds for teacher training evenly in all sub-districts in North Aceh.

CONCLUSION

Competency of certified teachers in Kuta Makmur District Aceh Utarai, The lack of mastery of certification teacher learning materials is due to a lack of motivation in the teacher, the lack of awareness of the teacher to develop abilities personally as educators. Lack of training is also a factor in the low mastery of learning materials by teachers who do not understand the subject matter being taught. The lack of budget for holding ongoing training is an obstacle in developing teacher competence. Evaluation for teachers is difficult to do because of the lack of a team of study teacher supervisors and school supervisors in Kuta Makmur District, so that supervision is not fully covered throughout North Aceh, making it difficult to improve the quality of education.

Mastery of technology has not been considered too important by certification teachers in Kuta Makmur District. So that there is still very little use of technology as a teaching medium for students and learning media for teachers personally who should be able to access various kinds of knowledge through information and communication technology. Most of the certification allowance is spent on personal interests without being used for capacity building for quality education, because it is considered that the economic condition of teachers in Kuta Makmur District is still low, so a paradigm has emerged that the certification allowance is only used for teacher welfare.

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