

Good Teachers: Indonesia's Perspective

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Abstract: Teachers play an important role in enhancing the standard of education. It might mean that having high-quality or good teachers might lead to high-quality education. However, there is no single clear definition of what good teachers are. This literature review paper will try to explore a brief view of what good teachers are and how to make good teachers generally and specifically from Indonesia's perspective. The term of good teachers covers both subjective and objective things from personalities to qualifications, abilities, and competencies. The ways to make good teachers could start from teacher recruitment, education, status, distribution, support, until teacher reward.

Keywords: education, good teachers, review, quality

Teachers are believed to play a key role to determine the quality of education. Barber & Mourshed (2007) state that the standard of education should not surpass a teacher's quality. It might imply that high-quality teachers lead to high-quality education. More than it, Hanushek (2011) argues that a good teacher will have a greater positive impact on the students' life skills and ultimately on their earnings as the increases on students' achievement gains. Similarly, Chetty, Friedman, & Rockoff (2011) concludes that good teachers produce considerable economic value and that the effect of the test score is helpful in the recognition of such teachers. Based on the above description, it could be seen that a good teacher could lead students to gain achievements and ultimately increase their future earnings. The good achievements that students get might lead them to a good job and a good salary. That all starts with a good teacher.

The definition of a good teacher may vary. It is commonly agreed that there is no single definitive description of it. The definition might be different from one person to another. However, the definition of a good teacher might cover personalities, qualifications, abilities, and competencies. The notion of a good teacher also will lead to another question that is how to grow a good teacher. Thus, this paper will try to explore a brief view of what a good teacher is and to point out the ways to grow a good teacher. Then, it will bring to the Indonesian context of a good teacher.

GOOD TEACHERS

What Are Good Teachers?

When we ask the students about what good teachers are, the answers are only a subjective view of the students. They will give various answers. They will answer, "A good teacher is a teacher who is very kind and able to understand the students," or "A teacher that makes the students succeed in the test and get high marks". The research results conducted by Ida (2017) showed that the students would like to see teachers who make a great deal of effort to assist students with an acquisition. Also, the students want to have teachers who give them personal attention, equal treatment, respect for each other, and help to coping with their problems. As it is a subjective view of students, thus, the best teacher for A student might not become the best student for B student.

Every student has his/her image of what a good teacher looks like. Most of them would talk about teachers' personalities. As Beishuizen, Hof, Van Putten, Bouwmeester, & Asscher (2010) mentioned a good teacher could be described as both personality and ability characteristics. They found that students emphasized the relational aspects of good teachers. Following Beishuizen, et al. (2010), Bullock (2015) pointed out that when identifying a good teacher, students mentioned the personality characteristics such as helpful and kind.

The situation nowadays could have a different idea related to teacher's qualifications and abilities to be a good teacher. This is an objective existence of a good teacher. Ideally, the subjective existence should meet the objective existence. Beishuizen, et al. (2010) revealed that good teachers were mainly identified by primary school students as professional educators, concentrating on knowledge and skills transfer. Likewise, Morrison & Evans (2018) found that students' responses on good teacher focused primarily on teaching abilities that promoted student learning and facilitated critical thinking, especially the ability of the teacher to provide clear explanations supported by realistic, relevant examples. These descriptions emphasized the teacher competencies.

The description of what makes good teachers also come from the teachers themselves. In line with the students' response, they considered good teachers to be a matter of developing personal relationships with their students (Beishuizen, et al., 2010). Similarly, Hoşgörür (2012) showed that regarding the term of good teachers, more personal qualities were mentioned by teachers than professional qualities. Also, Bullock (2015) found that teachers described the relational and ability qualities such as flexibility and caring related to a good teacher. She mentioned that as flexible teachers, they are flexible with changes, willing to adapt or enhance instruction to make success possible, and able to adapt and take a lesson where it might lead while as caring teachers, they are cares about each student in the classroom.

It is understandable that the term "good teacher" only exists in students' subjectivity. However, this subjectivity should deal with the objectivity of a good teacher which could be seen by qualifications, abilities, and competencies. As Fenstermacher and Richardson (as cited in Meuwissen & Choppin, 2017) put in, good teachers are those who not only help students develop consequential knowledge and skills but also demonstrate ethics of care, civility, and responsibility throughout the process. They mentioned that teachers might have successful teaching by delivering the knowledge and skill. However, this teaching might not be good teaching because the knowledge/skills taught are harmful, immoral, or pointless. Thus, a good teacher must show both successful and good teaching.

Likewise, The Economist (2016) holds the view that good teachers set specific targets, impose high standards of behavior and wisely control the time of the lesson.

How to Make Good Teachers?

Many ways have been proposed in how to make a good teacher. Nonetheless, some people argue that a good teacher was born, not be made. To some extent, it partially agrees that a good teacher was born. He/she who has a great passion for teaching might be a good teacher in the future. However, having a great passion is not enough to make a good teacher.

There are many factors affecting a teacher to be a good teacher. Naylor & Sayed (2014) claim that there are three main factors affecting teacher quality: professional development, school environment, and government teacher policy frameworks. In other words, a good teacher also can be grown up by providing an ideal school environment, professional development, and supportive policies.

There are important areas to be considered to make a good teacher: teacher recruitment, education, hiring, distribution, support, and reward. These components are inseparable and their sustainability should be consistent. As The Economist (2016) suggested, several main points need to be done to make good teachers. First, novice teachers should spend more time in the classroom. Second, teacher-training institutions ought to be more comprehensive. Third, schools need to pay more attention to teachers' improvement throughout their careers such as through continuous professional development. Fourth, teachers need to be well paid to ensure that they still stay in the classroom.

Indonesia's Good Teachers

When talking about good teachers, it is necessary to look at backcasting, where the teachers are from. Inan (2014) argues that depending on the location where students come from, there are variations between the views of students about the characteristics of a good teacher. These differences are also applied from Indonesia's perspective.

In the Indonesian language, a teacher is called "guru" and in Javanese, "guru" is someone who must be *digugu* (obeyed) and *ditiru* (to be imitated as a role model). Based on this description, being a teacher in Indonesia means not only responsible for transferring the knowledge but also responsible for giving good examples for others. The definition of role model was a dynamic one that not only represented the desires of the teachers to achieve 'a better classroom' and better pedagogical results for children, but also a wider desire to become a better individual identified by a variety of attitudes and behaviors that were socially respected within the

culture and work background of the teachers (Hakim & Dalli, 2016).

Indonesia faces many challenges in providing quality teachers or good teachers across the country. Sulisworo, Nasir, & Maryani (2016) mentioned that teacher quality is one of three major problems in Indonesian education aside from teacher welfare and teacher politicization. The government of Indonesia has taken the challenges by introducing Law on Teacher and Lecturer that is Law No.14 the Year 2005 (hereinafter called Teacher Law).

Despite the challenges, Teacher Law mentioned the opportunities that teachers have. For example, article 7 paragraph (1) stated that teachers have opportunities to carry a continuous professional development and lifelong learning. Also, article 14 paragraph (1) mentioned that teachers gain the opportunities to improve the competencies, take part in determining education policies, and develop and improve the academic qualifications and competencies. In this case, teachers could join the continuous professional development program and scholarship program to pursue their master/ doctoral degrees. These opportunities are expected to improve their quality as good teachers.

Regarding the term of good teachers based on teacher personalities, Indonesian students have several thoughts. Nontin (2016) found that good teachers are those who are “good figure, kind and religious person, discipline, patient, have a nice habit, attitude and behaviorism, always maintain their quality and enthusiasm in teaching” (p.2). In her study, she also mentioned that based on students’ views, good teachers could be related to technical knowledge, pedagogical skills, and interpersonal skills.

In terms of competencies, qualifications, and abilities, good teachers in Indonesia at least must fulfill the requirements standard set by the regulations. Teacher Law states that teachers must have academic qualifications, competencies, educator certificates, and be physically and spiritually healthy to realize the national education goals. Also, the Law states that as a minimum qualification, all teachers must have at least a bachelor’s degree (S1) or a four-year diploma program. Regarding competencies, teachers must have pedagogical, personal, professional, and social competencies acquired through professional education.

In the attachment of Teacher Law, it identifies that pedagogical competency refers to the ability of teachers to manage students’ learning, while personal competency refers to the

ability of teachers as a consistent, noble, wise, and authoritative person and role model for students. Professional competency is the ability of a teacher to master the subject to be taught to students widely and comprehensively. Social competency is the ability of teachers to communicate and interact effectively and efficiently with students, fellow teachers, student’s parents/guardians, and the nearby community.

Based on the above explanation, it can be seen that teacher competencies in Indonesia have covered both personalities and abilities matter. These competencies seem quite good for making judgments about good teachers although they might be not the only requirements for qualified teachers. However, the fact shows that teacher competency has been identified as one of the key contributors to lower performances of students (Jalal et al., 2009). Thus, it is essential to ensure that good teachers' competencies also give a positive effect on students not only in their performance but also in their lifetime as mentioned by Hanushek (2011).

Moreover, to make good teachers in Indonesia, it is necessary to pay more attention to these six areas.

1) Teacher Recruitment

Regarding the ways to grow good teachers, it is widely agreed that recruitment is the first starting point. Barber & Mourshed (2007) mentioned that the key characteristics that distinguish the high and low-performing education system are getting the right people to become teachers and developing them into effective instructors. For instance, Korea succeeded in attracting top students to primary teaching by limiting the number of places for the four-year undergraduate degree and as a result, primary education teachers come from the top 5% of school leavers.

Indonesia has been successful in attracting students into the teaching profession by introducing a certification system and a professional allowance. However, it is necessary to ensure that they are good teachers. Huang, Revina, Fillaili, & Akhmadi (2020) argues that the difficulties to recruit good teachers are because of the institutional, political economy, and social dynamics of the process of recruitment. They mentioned that one of the reason is the social preference for seniority over merit as the indicators of teacher performances which lead to burden teachers from improving their performances.

The increase of the students in teacher training institutions, albeit, gives impacts on the oversupply of the teacher candidate. Therefore, to

tackle this problem, the government should rethink the need for teachers in Indonesia to ensure that supply meets demand. Then, they can take a lesson learned from Korean cases and other countries with the top-performing education system.

2) Teacher Education

Indonesia has 421 teacher training institutes (Lembaga Pendidikan Tenaga Kependidikan – LPTK) both public and private where only 18 of them are accredited “A” and 81 institutions are accredited “B” (Musfah, 2020). It is only around a fourth of those institutions that possess good and excellent accreditation.

A large number of institutions result in a large number of teacher candidates with around 300.000 in 2017 which is three times higher than required by the public service system (The World Bank, 2019). Also, this large number of institutions might affect the uncontrolled quality of teacher education. With around 75% of the institutions which has not got good accreditation yet, the quality of those graduates is questioned.

Teacher education needs to be reformed including the institution number, the quality, even the student selection process. MOEC or the institutions themselves should increase the educational achievement bar for admission into teacher education programs (OECD/Asian Development Bank, 2015). In their document, they also suggest that evaluation of literacy and numeracy competencies, interpersonal and communication skills, ability to continue learning, and desire to teach should be included in the selection of students for teacher education programs. Mukminin, Rohayati, Putra, Habibi, & Aina (2017) recommends that to attract and recruit quality student teachers, policies should be made to establish good standards for teacher education programs. With that kind of system, with the good input of students and the good contents of education, it is expected that the graduates of that teacher education will be good teachers in the future.

3) Teacher Status

Hiring teachers is also about giving status to the teachers where ultimately it can determine their welfare. Article 14 paragraph (1) of Teacher Law has mentioned that teachers have the right to get an income above the minimum living needs and social welfare. These include main salary, allowances attached to salaries, as well as other incomes such as professional allowances, functional allowances, special allowances, and additional benefits related to their duties as

teachers determined by the principle of reward based on achievement.

There are two types of teachers in Indonesia. These are civil servant teachers and non-civil servant teachers. Teachers will get the civil servant status after passing the national civil servant enrolment test. The non-civil servant teachers are often called contract teachers or honorary teachers which are usually hired by schools, districts, and community foundations. The government pays for civil servant teachers' salaries while the schools/ districts/ community foundations pay for the non-civil servant teachers' salaries. The amount of the salary between those two is very different. The non-civil servant teachers get paid lower than civil servant teachers. This income is below the minimum living needs as mandated by the law.

The low income might lead teachers to have other jobs to fulfill their living needs. As a result, their priority is not only about the teaching and learning process, but also about their other jobs. When the main priority is not about teaching and learning, how could teachers assure the quality of it?

The total number of non-civil servant teachers exceeds the number of civil servant teachers. The World Bank (2019) showed the data for the Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC), the civil servant teachers occupied 48% of the teacher workforce while the remaining 52% are non-civil servants teachers which are hired by schools, districts, and community foundations. It means that many Indonesian teachers are not well paid yet. To address this problem, the school, the district government, and the central government should have a clear management policy in terms of hiring teachers, specifically related to their salary which is attached to their status as non-civil servant teachers or civil servant status. With the clear policies, it is expected that they get paid well regardless of their status so it can more motivate them to be good teachers.

4) Teacher Distribution

Indonesia has a large teaching workforce. One of the challenges in the teaching workforce is teacher distribution. The data of MOEC (as cited in Badan Pusat Statistik, 2020) shows that there are 2.893.407 teachers (including principals) who teach in primary school, junior high school, general senior secondary school, and vocational senior secondary school in the academic year of 2019/2020. In terms of teacher distribution, the data also mentioned that the pupil-teacher ratio of primary school, junior high school, and general senior secondary school is 1:16, 1:15, and 1:15 where these ratios are below the ideal ratio set by

the regulation, that is 1:20. On the other hand, the pupil-teacher ratio of vocational senior secondary school is 1:17 where this ratio is over the ideal ratio set by the regulation, that is 1:15.

Based on the data above, it can be seen that the total number of teachers in primary school, junior high school, and general senior secondary school are over. However, the distribution of teachers in Indonesia is unequal in terms of the region, especially for the civil servant teachers. Based on the data from MOEC (as cited in Jayani, 2019), most of the civil servant teachers are deployed in Java and Sumatera. It is understandable because those two islands are the most populous island in Indonesia. However, this deployment may affect the quality of teachers, ultimately the quality of education, in other islands. The ratio of quality teachers in each region should be equal. Therefore, to solve these issues, it is needed to revisit the teacher distribution map and redistribute those qualified teachers to other regions to make teacher deployment equal, not only related to the quantity but also quality.

5) Teacher Support

Being a teacher does not mean that they do not need any support anymore throughout their career. Teachers need support. It does not mean only achieving effective performance in teacher appraisal but also having continuous professional development (CPD). This CPD will increase teacher knowledge and capacity and help boost student performance (OECD/Asian Development Bank, 2015).

In terms of CPD, there are two kinds of activities that teachers can join: the clusters of a primary school teacher (Kelompok Kerja Guru/KKG) and secondary school subject teacher (Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran/ MGMP). If the clusters work effectively, the teachers will be benefited from those activities to equip them for better teaching. They can learn classroom research activities, teaching materials and skills, evaluation tools for group study, new/interesting teaching models, teaching methods, and competency-based curriculum (Ragatz and Kesuma as cited in OECD/Asian Development Bank, 2015). Besides KKG and MGMP, there are other types of CPD, the recent one, that is pengembangan keprofesian berkelanjutan (PKB).

However, the outcomes of the CPD seem not satisfying so far. The CPD has not strengthened the skills and teaching methods of teachers. Revina, Pramana, Fillaili, & Suryadarma (2020) revealed that there was an essential feature of effective teacher professional development that is missing in PKB. They mentioned that the PKB program has not targeted

teachers based on years of experience, has not followed teachers with post-training events, has not implemented teaching practice into lesson implementation, and has not expanded on established teacher practice. Thus, it is necessary to revisit the CPD program for teachers in Indonesia and reform it based on evidence-based data that has been shown.

6) Teacher Reward

As it is mandated by Teacher Law, teacher certification followed by professional allowances is believed as one of the reward systems to improve teacher performance or quality then ultimately, improve student outcomes in Indonesia. Teacher certification is the official acknowledgment that the teacher has achieved the level approved by the education authorities and is a mark of the teacher's expertise in teaching methods and subject-matter knowledge (Chang et al., 2014). They mentioned that the teacher certification process in Indonesia could improve teaching quality through three different channels: (a) the attraction channel by attracting more better-qualified high school graduates into teacher education due to professional allowance, (b) the upgrading channel by acquiring skills that improve their capacities as teachers, (c) the behavioral channel by motivating teachers to become more productive, absent less often, and having more time in a day for educational activities such as classroom preparation and involvement in teacher working groups.

The previous study has shown mixed results, both positive and negative results, about the effect of teacher certification on teacher quality. Zaharah (2014) found that certification has a positive and significant impact on teacher quality. Also, Murwati (2013) revealed that teacher certification affects teacher performance. Kusumaningtyas & Setyawati (2015) emphasized that compensation, as well as competencies, had a significant influence on teacher performance.

However, there are many negative results found. The double pay, as a consequence of being certified teachers, had no improvements in measures teacher effort and had no positive impact on student learning outcomes (de Ree, Muralidharan, Pradhan, & Rogers, 2015). Similarly, OECD/Asian Development Bank (2015) revealed that there is no evidence of any disparity in teachers' abilities or their effect on the student learning process between certified and uncertified teachers. Kusumawardhani (2017) found that there is no clear proof of the effectiveness of certified teachers on the results of student learning and the performances of teachers. Therefore, it needs to re-concept teacher

certification programs to ensure that the program can fully improve teacher quality. Also, it is necessary to ensure that teacher certification is something reliable and meaningful to develop teachers' skills and capacity.

CONCLUSION

In summary, a good teacher is a term covering both subjective and objective existence from personalities until qualifications, abilities, and competencies. Good teachers in Indonesia's perspective show a set of comprehensive competencies where those competencies have included personalities and abilities. Besides, to make good teachers, it is necessary to look first at teacher recruitment, education, status, distribution, support, and reward.

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