

## CHAPTER 3

### A Study of Indonesia's High School Teachers' Competency

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#### Introduction

Teaching profession requires specific knowledge and skills. Therefore, the curriculum of teachers' education should be designed to ensure that teachers are competent in content knowledge and pedagogical skills. By mastering these two main elements, teachers are able to face challenges in school. Norlander (2009) suggests that an effective teacher should be able to carry out his duties and responsibilities successfully. Society assumes that being a teacher is an easy job. Indeed, teacher trainees also assume that the duties of a teacher are easy, manageable and could be carried out successfully. Due to this paradigm, most teacher trainees are not serious in gaining knowledge during teaching training. As a result, it brings adverse effects to the teaching profession. In reality, being a teacher is not an easy task. Teachers have to fulfil parents' expectations and they need to ensure that children are well-educated. Therefore, all teachers have to improve their teaching skills and content knowledge. The following elements and domains are supposed to be fulfilled by all teachers: personality, intellectual, emotion, inter-personal skills, intra-personal skills and creativity in teaching.

Teaching profession is a professional designation which requires resilience, competitiveness and good leadership skills. These come from individual talent and abilities. Good teachers are those who are expert in teaching subject content and able to manage personnel, teaching aids and classroom effectively. Teachers who have undergone training should possess the competencies based on the theoretical knowledge, practical training and soft skills.

Huberman's research (1992) has discovered that teaching implementation depends on the involvement and versatility of teachers in establishing an interesting and effective learning environment. How well a teacher adopts all the knowledge and involvement could be seen in the implementation process? According to Kearsley (1997), teachers' dedication in carrying out the activities to inculcate teaching content is greatly influenced by the mastery of teaching aids and in making changes in students' behaviour. Hence, teachers have to be sensitive

towards the latest development in education world today. Teachers have to be positive and strive to improve the standard of education so that the quality of teaching and learning is improved.

According to Sutadipura (1985), constant thinking and acting which is consistent and continuous could develop a competent person who possess knowledge, skills, values and basic attitudes towards accomplishing something. Professional career requires thinking outside the box and away from mundane routines as required by professionalism via effort and training. Competencies will influence a person's work performance in carrying out his duties as a social agent to the students. The 14th rule of the Republic of Indonesia in 2005 defines professional competencies as a set of knowledge, and behavior which have to be possessed, observed and mastered professionally. Teachers are educational managers and leaders in a classroom. Therefore teachers who are competent would be able to carry out his teaching successfully, making full use of resources and materialise teaching process successfully.

Teachers are expected to work systematically, consistently and creatively (Arifin 2002). According to Blanton et al. (1998), professional competencies are crucial skills which determine the success of a teacher in carrying his duties as professional. Teachers' competencies are aligned with the ability to manage information, framing duty solving and active communication with students. Teachers also have to possess the knowledge about subject curriculum and syllabus through accurate testing procedures. In other words, teachers should be able to integrate the use of technology compatible with the standard technology for undergrads in developing curriculum. Teachers have to know how to make use of technology and cognitive thinking process which is complex. Teachers should also be able to know how students learn and understand the difficulties faced by the students. According to Soedijarto (1989), professional teachers have to master:

- knowledge discipline as teaching resources,
- teaching content that is going to be delivered,
- knowledge about undergrads' characteristics,
- knowledge about the philosophy and aims of education,
- mastery of teaching methods and models of teaching,
- mastery of technological principles of learning, and
- ability to lead and direct learning environment.

In an Indonesian context, professional competencies refer to the mastery of education in depth which enables teachers to guide students and manage teaching activities (National Education Standards, phase 28, line 3, clause c). Abdul Karim (1989) agreed that competent teachers would make the effort to relate teaching content with students' background knowledge and provide effective learning experience through assignments, exercises and homework which are of high quality. Mortimore (1995) and Zigmond (1997) also realized that there was a

relationship between the steps taken by teachers to simplify and master teaching content with their competencies.

### **Issues**

Many studies on professionalism in teaching profession found that most teachers have a lack of professionalism. Three contributing factors identified to the low level of teachers' professionalism are many teachers who failed to carry out their duties, low level of loyalty towards the norms and teaching ethics, and unsatisfactory acknowledgement of teachers towards educational knowledge in implementing the policies to the involved parties (Arifin 2000). Past studies also revealed that teachers' integrity and accountability are often questionable including matters regarding the school milieu and teachers' competency in managing classroom and delivering lesson. A teacher should be accountable to his duties and therefore will work hard and show sense of responsibilities and subsequently will be proud of the profession (Cruickshank et al. 2006). There is no excuse for a teacher especially of the higher ranking to be less proud of their duties and responsibilities. This is because they take a vow on their work responsibilities before they even start working, like any other government officers (Mulyasa 2005, Arikunto 1990).

The effort to improve teachers' quality actually continues even though after they have started teaching assigned in the school. It is also continues for the rest of their teaching profession. It is observed that the quality of work declines as they serve longer in the service. Empirical research on teachers' burnout carried out by Morrison et al. (2005) revealed that the non academic routines of teachers reduce their mood to keep on learning and improve their professionalism. This is because they refuse to change due to high pressure at work, high workload and role conflicts. Burnout causes emotional exhaustion, physical exhaustion, attitudinal exhaustion and low feeling of accomplishment. Consequently this affects the quality of their dedication and teaching towards their students. Therefore efforts and measures have to be taken to improve the quality of the teachers. According to Jamal (2009), teachers' readiness to changes and optimize the use of their professional skills are still limited and not developed that it does not improve their perseverance towards the challenges and changes.

Sadirman (2004) discovered that there were students who were not happy and scared of teachers. Some teachers always scolded their students during learning activities. Some teachers have no respect punctuality and others have been teaching the same topics repeatedly. This discourages and demotivated students to be involved in lesson activities.

### **Teachers Competency**

Competencies are the capacities to carry out the product of learning process (Mulyasa 2005). The capacity is when an individual successfully learn how something complex to abstract is done. According to Indriyanto (2001),

competency is the skills and active appearance and highlighting one's roles. The basic competencies of a teacher consist of these components: time management, focus, feedback, forecast, decision making; and transfer of knowledge; and culture.

The research carried out by Widyoko (2005) on teachers' competency showed that most teachers have an average level of competencies. That study demonstrated that teaching experience has a positive impact on teachers' competency level. In addition to this factor, abilities to integrate modern technology and manage classroom effectively were found to be problems for some teachers (M. Nur 2013).

The international scenario of competency in a more general organisation reveals a similar situation regarding the organisational climate towards professional competencies. Gorman et al. (1997) introduced a competency model through based on the study on outstanding skills and leadership qualities. That study utilised qualitative research design using individual interviews. Each individual was interviewed and results suggest the importance of emotional intelligence to improve competencies in handling organisational climate. Important elements identified including interpersonal skills, initiative, possessing a vision, cognitive abilities, technical skills and high level of IQ. Five emotional intelligence investigated in that study were self-awareness, self-discipline, high level of motivation, high level of empathy and inter-personal skills.

Pillay (2005) has carried out the research on the relationship between burnout and teachers' competencies in Queensland. That study reveals that teachers' workload has a high correlation with burnout tendencies among teachers. It has negatively affected teachers' working competencies. The research discovers that working practices and working environment such as competitions, working nature transformation and technology could bring impact on the wellness and competencies of teachers.

According to Davies (2000), the creative process of learning is crucial for a teacher. Teachers have to be a creative role model to the students. In addition, Baghart and Trull (1973) who have carried out the research on the competency level of creative teachers have proposed several measures that could be adopted by teachers, namely the ability to accommodate to students' learning style, create a fun learning environment, inculcate living skills and versatility in the students, reduce all barriers and limitations in learning activities.

Learning Implementation Plan (RPP) in Indonesia stated that pedagogical competency is the teachers' ability to carry out learning experience. It includes the understanding of education policies, the understanding of students, curriculum development, learning plans, learning implementation, benefits of learning outcomes, learning outcome evaluation and the realisation of students' potential

Daborn (1999) emphasised that the most important things to be considered in teaching practise are regarding the learning outcomes and questioning techniques used. These will lead to effective learning and improve learning readiness and cognitive ability among students. Everything begins with the understanding of the

simplest to the most complex ones. Good teaching practice will educate students to critically thinking involving the process of recalling information, handling information, analyzing, making analogy (to compare and contrast), making interpretations, syntesizing and evaluating.

According to the criteria set forth by UNESCO, quality education is the combination between professional teachers with integrity and competency. Idris (1990) stressed that the quality of teacher should be the primary importance in the effort to develop effective teaching pattern. The quality of teachers is measured through personal competency, work performance, motivation and effort and changes in students' behaviour.

Flippo (1997) suggests that teachers need to imprive their delivery quality has in order to meet the professional standards. Thes include the working style, teaching practuce, and the use of interactive approach in communication. Serving quality is the product produced by the workers within a time frame which includes high sosialisation ability among workers to be able to share working qualities. Teachers are able to avoid the decline of work performance due to burnout by sharing their workloads (Bernardin & Russel 1993).

Mulyasa (2006) and Arikunto (2004) proposed several criteria for competent teachers. They have initiated specific tests in their studies which than were utilised in the current study. These tests were adapted and modified to fulfil the current research objectives. The validation of the items in the test was referred to educational experts in Indonesia. The pilot study was then carried out where Cronbach Alpha scores indicated that the items were appropriate to be used.

### **Aim of study**

The current study evaluates the professional level and competencies among high school teachers in Pekanbaru. Specifically this study examined professional competency differences among high school teachers based on gender, work experience and age groups. The current study utilised survey research method using questionnaires. The questionnaires contain five major constructs namely

- the mastery of education foundation,
- the mastery of vision, mission and educational objectives,
- the mastery of national educational standards,
- curriculum development moves,
- classroom management, and
- the ability to use media and educational resources.

Pilot test was conducted in one secondary school involving 50 teachers. All the items in the teachers' professionalism competency test show high validity and reliability whereby the value is 0.82 while teachers' work performance shows an overall alpha value of 0.78. This indicates that all items are acceptable and able to be used. Sample of this study was selected using simple random technique

involving 327 teachers from various fields in 12 secondary schools in Pekanbaru, Indonesia.

Teachers' professional competency test contains 33 items which are divided into 7 constructs which are, the mastery of education foundation, the mastery of vision, mission and educational objectives the mastery of national educational standard, curriculum development, classroom management, the ability to use media and educational resources and the ability to understand and inculcate educational theories and students' development. Teachers' professional competency level is measured based on the five level mean scores. Table 1 shows the interpretation of the mean scores.

**Table 1** Interpretation of the mean scores

| <i>Score</i> | <i>Interpretation</i> |
|--------------|-----------------------|
| 0-54         | Not competent         |
| 55-64        | Less competent        |
| 65-79        | Quite competent       |
| 80- 89       | Competent             |
| 90-100       | Very competent        |

## Results and Discussions

Overall results indicate that most teachers are quite competent (Table 1). Detailed analyses revealed that teachers are competent in two aspects that are the mastery of education foundation and the mastery of vision, mission and educational objectives.

**Table 2** Competency Level among Teachers

| <b>Professional competency aspects (n = 327)</b> | <b>Mean</b> | <b>SD</b> | <b>Interpretation</b> |
|--|-------------|-----------|-----------------------|
| Education foundation                             | 83.49       | 15.12     | Competent             |
| Vision, mission and educational objectives       | 81.65       | 15.78     | Competent             |
| National educational standards                   | 71.25       | 26.73     | Quite Competent       |
| Curriculum development                           | 65.32       | 16.92     | Quite Competent       |
| Classroom management                             | 60.30       | 20.09     | Less Competent        |
| Usage of media and educational resources         | 58.10       | 22.58     | Less Competent        |
| Average Mean Score                               | 70.02       | 9.46      | Quite Competent       |

The level of professional competency among teachers generally is satisfactory. This shows that the serving quality among them is at average level. This reveals that the teachers are mastering the professional competency. Results also indicate that teachers have less competent in classroom management and the use of media and educational resources. Past study suggest that a teacher has to be accountable of his duties which will encourage them to work hard and show high sense of responsibilities that they would be proud of their career (Cruickshank et al. 2006). Recent research carried out by Dinas Pendidikan Negeri Riau (2006) revealed that 45% of the teachers are still teaching using lecturing method. The use of modern technology was limited. Hence, it contributes to less productive

learning. Teachers have to take various efforts to improve qualities including all the competency elements mentioned. Detailed analyses were carried out to seek differences and commonalities between genders.

### **Gender**

Table 3 shows the competency level of female teachers is higher than male teachers with significant differences regard to:

- mastery of education foundation,
- mastery of vision, mission and education,
- understanding and mastery of national education standards, and
- mastering and developing curriculum.

These results are parallel to research findings from Anderson (1990) and Bakalis (2003) that female teachers were more committed in the teaching profession compared to male teachers. It also supported findings from Widoyoko (2005) that female teachers' professional competency level is higher than the male teachers. However the competency in classroom management does not show any differences between male and female teachers in the research carried out by Shullman (1990). Teachers only focus on the delivery of teaching in the classroom towards academic improvement which therefore does not show obvious differences (Marks 1991).

**Table 2** Professional Competency Level, by Gender

| <i>Aspects</i>  | <i>Gender</i> | <i>n</i> | <i>Mean</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>Type III</i>     |           |                    |          |          |  |
|---|---------------|----------|-------------|-----------|---------------------|-----------|--------------------|----------|----------|--|
|   |               |          |             |           | <i>Total square</i> | <i>df</i> | <i>Mean Square</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>p</i> |  |
| Mastery of Education Foundation                           | Male          | 132      | 81.25       | 17.02     | 110.94              | 1         | 110.9              | 4.90     | 0.028    |  |
|   | Female        | 195      | 85.00       | 13.53     |                     |           |                    |          |          |  |
| Mastery of vision, mission and education objectives       | Male          | 132      | 75.76       | 15.73     | 769.14              | 1         | 7689.1             | 34.0     | 0.000    |  |
|   | Female        | 195      | 85.64       | 14.54     |                     |           |                    |          |          |  |
| Understanding and mastery of national education standards | Male          | 132      | 67.12       | 25.70     | 379.38              | 1         | 378.3              | 5.36     | 0.021    |  |
|   | Female        | 195      | 74.05       | 27.12     |                     |           |                    |          |          |  |
| Mastering and developing curriculum                       | Male          | 132      | 62.39       | 19.14     | 191.45              | 1         | 190.4              | 6.78     | 0.010    |  |
|   | Female        | 195      | 67.31       | 14.97     |                     |           |                    |          |          |  |
| Mastery of classroom management                           | Male          | 132      | 59.85       | 20.90     | 46.29               | 1         | 46.29              | 0.11     | 0.735    |  |
|   | Female        | 195      | 60.61       | 19.57     |                     |           |                    |          |          |  |
| Ability to use media and education resources              | Male          | 132      | 57.39       | 22.85     | 113.99              | 1         | 113.9              | 0.22     | 0.637    |  |
|   | Female        | 195      | 58.59       | 22.42     |                     |           |                    |          |          |  |

There is no significant differences between genders in terms of classroom management and the use of resources which indicate that both genders are moderately competent in these two aspects.

### **Working Experience**

Table 3 shows there is a significant difference on teachers' working experience. Teachers who have been working between 16 and 25 years are found to be more

competent which indicates working experience is a major predictor of teachers' competency.

**Table 3** Teachers' Competency Level on Working Experience

| (I) Work Experience | (J) Work Experience | Mean Difference (I-J) | Range | P     |
|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-------|-------|
| 4-9 years           | 10-15 years         | -2.28                 | 1.15  | 0.118 |
|                     | 16-25 years         | -6.66(*)              | 1.36  | 0.000 |
| 10-15 years         | 4-9 years           | 2.28                  | 1.15  | 0.118 |
|                     | 16-25 years         | -4.38(*)              | 1.33  | 0.003 |
| 16-25 years         | 4-9 years           | 6.66(*)               | 1.36  | 0.000 |
|                     | 10-15 years         | 4.38(*)               | 1.33  | 0.003 |

The MANOVA analysis shows that there are no significant differences between teachers based on their working experience with regards to the following aspects mastery of vision, mission and education objectives and mastery of classroom management (Table 4). Ability to manage classroom effectively is important in teaching profession as it encourage and motivate students to be involved in lesson activities. Sadirman (2004) and Awang et al. (2013) found students are unhappy to study with angry teachers. This has negatively affected the teaching and learning process.

**Table 4** Teachers' Competency Level, by Working Experience

| Aspects in Professional Competency Constructs               | Total          | Average   |     | F       | P          |
|---|----------------|-----------|-----|---------|------------|
|   |                | Quadrat   | df  |         |            |
| Mastery of education foundation                             | Between Groups | 3459.76   | 2   | 1729.88 | 7.88 0.000 |
|   | Within Group   | 71115.93  | 324 | 219.494 |            |
|   | Total          | 74575.69  | 326 |         |            |
| Mastery of vision, mission and education objectives         | Between Groups | 1224.06   | 2   | 612.03  | 2.48 0.085 |
|   | Within Group   | 79934.20  | 324 | 246.710 |            |
|   | Total          | 81158.26  | 326 |         |            |
| Understanding and mastering of national education standards | Between Groups | 12828.32  | 2   | 6414.16 | 9.44 0.000 |
|   | Within Group   | 220157.61 | 324 | 679.50  |            |
|   | Total          | 232985.93 | 326 |         |            |
| Mastering and developing curriculum                         | Between Groups | 1857.45   | 2   | 928.73  | 3.29 0.039 |
|   | Within Group   | 91483.83  | 324 | 282.36  |            |
|   | Total          | 93341.28  | 326 |         |            |
| Mastery of classroom management                             | Between Groups | 1207.29   | 2   | 603.64  | 1.50 0.225 |
|   | Within Group   | 130362.13 | 324 | 402.35  |            |
|   | Total          | 131569.42 | 326 |         |            |
| Ability to use media and educational resources              | Between Groups | 6719.32   | 2   | 3359.66 | 6.83 0.001 |
|   | Within Group   | 159305.14 | 324 | 491.68  |            |
|   | Total          | 166024.46 | 326 |         |            |

This result is parallel with the research carried out by Manullang (2002) and Tillman (2002) which covered that working experience brings influence towards the increase of commitment and education service quality. Teachers working experience has influenced teaching versatility in classroom and the knowledge of education foundation. Logically, the longer one works, the better the competency is

and this affects the standard and work style and also service quality. It was suggested that experienced teacher should guide young teachers to carry out duties in school (M. Nur, 2012).

Overall results from this study are parallel with the results obtained by Widyoko (2005) which demonstrated that most teachers are competent due to the selection criteria to become a teacher is considerably high. Research by Daniel (2001) found that a competent individual possesses these characteristics: initiative, with a vision, highly intellectual, possesses technical and cognitive skills, with high IQ and EQ. By having and practising these elements, positive school ethos may be able to develop. Happiness in learning activities was found to be vital in attracting students' engagement in socio-educational activities (Awang et al. 2011). Contrary to this, the current study revealed that competency criteria of the teachers are not evenly distributed whereby the competency management is still lacking compared to the mastery of education policy which consists of mastery of education foundation, vision, mission and objectives, national education standard and curriculum development.

### **Implications and Suggestions**

Overall, the competency levels among Pekanbaru high school teachers most teachers are moderate. There are rooms for improvement for teachers especially in terms of classroom management and the utilisation of learning resources. The current study revealed most teachers have a lack of skills in managing classroom effectively. In-service training for teachers in Pekanbaru is essential. They must be exposed to the best practice of classroom management by visiting other schools either at national or international level. Teachers are also need to attend training on the use of various learning resources. It is important for teachers to have creativity in teaching and carry out own-initiative to utilise learning resources.

The current study also has an implication towards policy makers as data from this study can be used as a guideline in developing short term or long term courses in order to improve educational qualities in Indonesia. As data from this study reveals that demographic factors play important roles in developing teacher competency, any policy made by the Ministry of Education Indonesia has to take into account demographic variables. Suitability with local needs is an important factor for policy making consideration. At a school level, results from this study can be used as guidelines to improve teacher competency by designing specific in-service training programmes and on-going practice.

### **Conclusion**

This research has brought clear indication regarding several aspects of teaching profession at high schools in Pekanbaru Riau, Indonesia. The level of professional competency of the high school teachers can be considered as average. Therefore strategies for improvement are necessary especially in terms of classroom management and the skill of using media and educational resources. This is

followed by understanding and mastering of national education standards and curriculum development.

As results of this study found that teachers are able to understand the education foundation and the interpretation of mission, vision and education objectives; the Ministry of Education Indonesia has to design the best formula for improving teacher competency. Overall this research results show the differences in mastery of education foundation, mastery of vision, mission and education objectives, understanding and mastering of national education standards, and mastery and curriculum development.

The professional competency level of the Pekanbaru high school teachers can be considered as average. Therefore, improvement is needed, especially in terms of classroom management and the versatility in using media. This is followed by the understanding and mastering of national education standards and curriculum development. Special attention has to be given so that the teachers themselves as they are the main subjects determining the quality of works. The understanding and awareness can also be instilled in the students to help teachers succeed as tradition ancestral agent and versatile curriculum evaluator. Career professionalism reflects the implementation of work using intellectual based techniques and procedures. The foundation is specifically acquired in a well-planned manner and directly practised for general use. Professional teachers are those who inspire their students, become the best role models, and generate brilliant and new ideas which bring benefits to their students and colleagues.

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