Teacher Empowerment in State Junior High Schools in Indonesia: Policies Review

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Abstract

The objective of this research is to delineate and analyse the policies on teacher empowerment in the context of decentralization of education implemented in Malang, Indonesia. In order to understand the chain of institutions and their authorities in applying the policies in six State Junior High Schools a qualitative approach was employed. The data on the implementation of the policies in the chosen schools and agencies are obtained through document analyses, observations and interviews involving 35 respondents consisting of parliament members, education councils, members and heads of school committee and teachers. The results of the research show that the institutions implementing the teacher empowerment, namely the local parliament, the department of education, education council, and school committee have not yet been able to do their functions and obligations maximum in accordance with the message in the reformation of education. Meanwhile status and self-confidence dimensions have not been able to give maximum satisfaction to them as teachers.

Keywords: Policies; teacher empowerment; implementing agencies; teacher professionalism.

1. Introduction

In order to reach an objective of education, at least four factors should exist namely students, curriculum, facilities and infrastructures and teachers (Rahim, 2005; Ibrahim, 2004). Teachers are the main factor in the process of education and an important part of the teaching-learning process (Fasli and Dedi, 2001; Syaiful, 2000; Ibrahim, 2004). Good quality teachers may result in quality learning, meaning that good quality teachers are the main factor to improve school quality.

On the basis of the condition, to improve the quality and accountability of education for facing global challenges in accordance with the demand for changes in life, policies on sustainable and planned teacher empowerment are needed. Remembering the condition of Indonesia with a large amount of population and various cultures and languages and the Indonesian people who are trying to improve their human resource quality and also to muffle some regions to separate from the Republic of Indonesia, the policies adopted are government decentralisations, including the education matters.

Decentralization in the education matter means that the central government give autonomy to local governments to manage their education, and they are free to make any policies on education that are in line with their situation and conditions.

The decentralisation in education is chosen for the sake of (a) quality improvement, due to the authority, schools are free to manage and empower their own potential resources; (b) financial efficiency, by

encouraging the community to help them in financial matter in order to reduce operational costs the government spends; (c) administrative efficiency, by cutting a long bureaucratic chain and complicated procedures; (d) a chance to arrange education in remote areas in order to extend and distribute education (Sakdanur, 2004).

2. Review of Literature

The concept empowerment was introduced in 1970s and in line with post-modernism; it had been developing till at the end of 20th century. Its principles are on the attitudes leading to jargons 'anti-system, anti-structures, and anti-determinism (Onny and Pranarka, 1996) as applied in the power world. Empowerment is a process of decision making done by those who make the decision (Harry, 2004), and it is also called a dynamic process involving actions between one and his/her daily life in order to gain changes in personal and social contexts (Theresa, 2000).

Empowerment possesses two dimensions of meaning, first is to distribute power, transfer it to delegate authorities to those who lack or who do not have powers, and second to give some capabilities and chances to others to do something (Onny and Pranarka, 1996).

From the two meanings, it is the second one that is appropriate with education. Empowerment in this context means any effort to give capabilities and chances to teachers to do some activities in line with their duties in the teaching field (Sumodiningrat, 2000). Short et al. (1994) propose the aspects of teacher empowerment consisting of 6 dimensions as described below.

2.1 Involvement in decision making

In solving a problem, the best way a leader can take is to give chances to teachers to play a role in solving it, especially that dealing with learning activities. It makes them feel that there are respected. This feeling may encourage them to do their duties well and to result in satisfaction towards their works (Lightfoot, 1986).

2.2 Professionalism

A professional teacher is the one that is able to do his daily work (Suparlan, 2005), a teacher professionalism is a process from knowing nothing into knowing something, from immaturity into maturity, from being led by others into leading oneself and therefore it can be stated that a teacher is professional if he has a high capability and strong will in committing his jobs as well as possible (Ibrahim, 2004). There five efforts a teacher can do to become a professional teacher, namely: a) having a commitment to his profession; b) mastering learning materials and how to teacher them; c) being responsible for monitoring his students' learning through various evaluation methods; d) being able to think systematically of what he is doing and to learn from his experiences and e) becoming a member of a learning community in his professional environment (Dedi, 1998).

2.3 Status

A teacher is someone who should be obeyed and modelled (Dedi, 2003; Suparlan, 2004). In other words, what is said by a teacher should be understood and what is done by him should be imitated by his students. It also happens in a social life; therefore he should be really aware of his attitudes and behaviour that can be models in life (Dedi, 2003). To improve teacher professionalism, the government of Indonesia tries to place a teacher profession in high priority in development; it is in line with their prime roles in the process of education and development of this nation.

2.4 Self-confidence

After Hiroshima and Nagasaki were bombed by the Allied, a Japan leader asked his staffs the number of teachers, instead of soldiers, who were still alive (Dedi, 2003). The question shows that if the number of teachers is high, the learning process can be done and to produce a good quality society can be realized. The development of a country can be done by some experts, among others statesmen, technocrats, and economists. The various experts get knowledge through teachers. And it can be stated that it is the teachers who have succeeded in producing experts who later can develop their knowledge in their fields. Hence teachers should possess self-confidence to do their jobs.

2.5 Autonomy

Autonomy is a right take care of one-self without any control from others (Noresah, 2002). Teacher autonomy, in terms of activities, deals with internal leaders, namely headmasters and external ones, such as the government. The head master, also the external parties, play a leading role in giving freedom to his teachers to do their tasks in the classrooms, including in determining learning models which are in line with the materials taught, so that they have freedom to create and innovate their teaching activities.

2.6 Influence

A teacher is someone whose profession is to teach (Noresah, 2002).This profession is done personally, in groups, either in or out of school (Syaiful, 2000). He is one of factors determining the quality of the results of education (Syaiful, 2000; Ibrahim, 2004). The success a teacher reaches depends on his willingness to do his learning activities at. Therefore the quality improvement of a school is in turn really dependent on its teacher professionalism (Ibrahim, 2004; Suparlan, 2005; Mulyasa, 2005). In short, a teacher should exert his influence on his school environment so that it is conducive to learning.

3. Methodology

In this present research, a qualitative approach was employed. The subject was 35 persons, consisting of three respondents from the department of education, three members of local parliament, six members of school committee, and two members of Education Board and 21 teachers working in six State Junior High Schools in Malang Indonesia, with the codes of A01, A02, A03, A04, A05 and A06, respectively.

The data were collected through document analysis, observations and interviews. Document naturally is any written or filmed materials available in certain places (Noeng, 2000; Nana, 2005; Sudarwan, 2005). The document analysis is intended to help researchers get data objectively through documents and not to require respondents' presence and also to give consistent data since all data are obtained implicitly and to obtain a validity of a response from the analysis (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2007). Documents function to support and add evidence from other sources.

Observations are made in order to obtain a deep picture on what is happening and the ways the headmasters do to involve teachers in making any decisions on the school programs, how teachers teach materials they have planned before by making use of any materials in their surroundings.

Interviews are a research tool if the subjects and the research present in the process of data collection (Sukardi, 2004; Mohd, 2005; Nana, 2005). They deal with facts, beliefs, feelings, wills to reach research objectives (Mohd, 2005), and are also one source of important information in case studies. In this present research, interviews are used to collect data and information with the following considerations a) getting data on a series of agencies and authorities and their field of duties in implementing teacher empowerment; b) obtaining detailed data on the implementation of policies on teacher empowerment in State Junior High Schools in Malang, Indonesia.

The analysis of teacher empowerment dimensions was made on the basis of six aspects namely effectiveness, average, efficiency, adequacy, responsiveness and appropriateness. Effectiveness is interpreted as the attainment of the intended results; efficiency is the way a policy is done, adequacy means the extent to which the results achievement can solve problems, and the average aspect means benefits distributed to all different groups. The responsiveness aspect means the benefits from the policy that give some value to groups and can satisfy them and the appropriateness aspect is the benefit of the results for improving the quality of education.

4. Results and Discussion

On the basis of the data obtained and analysed using the qualitative approach, it can be shown a series of institutions with their functions and duties in the implementation of policies on teacher empowerment in six State Junior High Schools.

4.1 A series of implementers and authorities and their duties in the implementation of policies on teacher empowerment in Malang, Indonesia.

The implementers of the policies on teacher empowerment consist of five institutions namely the Local Parliament, Department of Education, Education Board, School Committee and Schools. The followings are results of the research on their functions and roles.

The Local Parliament is a House of Representative of which its members are elected through a general election and its office is in the local area and its function is to make local regulations used as bases to implement the tasks of local government. This Local Parliament also has an authority to discuss with the local head the budget, to approve programs implemented, to convey people aspiration to the local government as a basis to make a decision, and to guide any program implemented by the local government. The four functions have not been implemented maximum.

The Department of Education serve to handle any matters on local education, covering planning, implementation, services, guidance, maintenance of facilities and infrastructures, and also monitoring in line with the policies the local head makes. The results of this present research suggest that the function of this Department related to the implementation of the policies on teacher empowerment is the aspect of cooperation dealing with the empowerment. However, other functions and roles in the implementation have not been fully done.

The Education Board is an autonomous agency where its members are from the people who care about education. Its function is to help the Department of Education handle matters of education and coordinate with the Local Parliament and School Committee. Its function is to supervise the implementation of policies on teacher empowerment and to bridge between the society and the implementers of policies on teacher empowerment at local level. The Department of Education have done its roles and function in the empowerment but, due to its authority most of them merely limited to the planning function.

A School Committee existing in each school is independent agency of which its members are student parents, community figures and those caring about education. Dealing with the implementation of policies on teacher empowerment, this committee has functions and roles to give consideration, support, guidance and bridge between the school and the society. The results of this research show that its roles and functions are mostly related to financial matters for both facilities and infrastructures development. No full roles are shown in the implementation of the policies.

Schools as the implementers of teacher empowerment directly related to teacher activities have full rights to implement the teacher empowerment and may make coordination with the schools committee. In implementing the teacher empowerment, in general, the schools have done their functions and roles; however it seemed that they had not done it at maximum.

The results of this research showed two institutions that have a hierarchical relationship, namely the Department of Education and Schools. The Department of Education may give tasks to schools and also has a consultative relationship, namely in doing any tasks; the schools can make some coordination with the Department of Education. Meanwhile the Local Parliament is the people's representative of which its duties are to make local regulations as basis for the local government in implementing duties, discussing and approving local budget, guiding the duties made by the local government, and also conveying people's will to the local government as a basis for making any policies. The Education Board and School Committee are autonomous bodies that may help the Department of Education and schools implement education. The two institutions do not have a hierarchical relation, but they make some coordination in doing the tasks.

4.2 The implementation of policies on teacher empowerment in six dimensions in six schools in Malang

Based on the data analysis, the implementation of policies on teacher empowerment consists of six dimensions in six State Junior High Schools in Malang, Indonesia.

4.2.1 Involving teachers in the decision making

Involving teachers in the decision makings are shown in designing school programs, namely in the School Development Planning, the School Budgeting Planning, and in choosing vice-headmasters.

From the effectiveness aspect, teachers in school A01 showed their work satisfaction in their job at their school. While those in schools A02, A05 and A06 felt that they had a chance to improve their school quality, and those in schools A03 and A04 thought that they were less involved in making any decisions, but finally they support and could accept tasks given to them.

In the efficiency aspect, schools A01, A05 and A06 adopted a representative aspect, namely involving teachers of subject matters to study and to discuss a plan, while schools A02 and A03 used a various group of planners consisting of teachers of subject matters for working on the RAPBS and the RPS.

In the adequacy aspect, schools A01 and A02 showed effects to their teachers namely their attendance was appreciated and their motivation increased, respectively. Meanwhile in schools A05 and A06 felt that the programs made were successful. In schools A03 and A04, involving teachers in the decision making raised the feelings of responsibility and consensus among the teachers about the programs.

In the average aspect, all schools studies had shown that they gave chances for teachers to be involved in the decision makings, although the involvement was represented, as shown in schools A01, A02, A05, A06 and A03. In school A04, however, the programs were made by the headmaster and his vices-headmasters, but in the plenary meeting, teachers were given chances to give advises and suggestions to the programs.

In the responsiveness aspect, the teachers in all schools studied felt that they were called upon doing their obligations, and they cared about guiding the school programs. In the appropriateness aspect, those in A01 thought that their school is a place for them to devote their life and they would help one another. Therefore, from this attitude, the objective of improving school quality is reached. In schools A02, A05 and A06, it was found that involving teachers in the decision making on the school programs gave effects that teachers felt to have responsibility for making the programs had not given any effects on the improvement of teacher activities in the betterment of school quality.

4.2.2 Improving teacher professionalism

From the effectiveness aspect, the implementation of professionalism improvement gave some benefits for teacher when they are doing their tasks. In general, however, the improvement is limited to formality, namely getting certificates, instead of knowledge, since the certificates are useful for one of requirements to join in the certification program.

From efficiency aspect, in school A01 it was found out that the professionalism improvement makes teachers felt more self-confidence when they were teaching their students because of the increase in their professionalism. The Deliberation of Teachers of Subjects (DTS), Deliberation of Teachers with the Same Subject (DTSS) and workshop activities could be implemented according to the schedule, but with no sustainable activities, due to the fact that the DTS activities were static, without any innovation. The DTSS activities were done in some schools A01, A05 and A06, however these activities were merely limited to some subjects.

In the adequacy aspect, in the school A01, it was shown that the implementation of the professionalism improvement made teachers more self-confidence before their students because of the increase in their abilities. Moreover in schools A02 and A06 the improvement also resulted in better knowledge and abilities in teaching. If in school A05, the teachers were very self-confident in teaching since they could obtain information from the internet. But in school A03, such an implementation did not give much benefit for their teaching activities.

From the average aspect, in schools A01, A02 and A06, all teachers got chances to join in the implementation of the professionalism implementation in turns, meanwhile in schools A03, A04 and A05 some teachers were reluctant to join in such activities although the schools had given chances to them.

In the responsively aspect, in all schools the implementation of teacher professionalism gave teachers values of deliberation. This condition was realized through discussions on subjects among the teachers teaching the same subjects in order to share new information or to solve problems.

From the appropriateness aspect, the professionalism improvement the teachers joined in gave impacts on the improvement of teachers' motivation to do their tasks so that this raised the quality of learning and in turns the quality of education. This situation prevailed in schools A01, A02, A04, A05 and A06, but in school A03, such an improvement had not made teachers motivated to improve their abilities in doing their duties.

4.2.3 Status

According to the opinion adopted by the society teachers have a good social status and may play roles in the society, as the heads of Neighbourhood Association (NA) and also administrative unit at the next-to-

lowest level in a city, consisting of several NA. This is shown in schools A01, A02, A05 and A06, and also in school A04, but in school A03 some teachers had not been awards of this status.

From the efficiency aspect, any efforts to increase the teacher status were made through some policies on raising teacher salary in the certification program. On the basis of the research results, the teachers who proposed to join in the certification program had quality as teachers in schools A01, A02, A05, A06, A03, and A04 and they had passed the program.

Viewed from the adequacy aspect, namely how far the teacher status gives benefit for improving the quality of education, it was shown that the improvement of the quality of education was influenced by some factors and one of them is the status in realizing an environment conducive for learning and this is the case in schools A01, A02, A05 and A06. But in schools A03 and A04 it had not been optimally made yet.

The next is the average aspect. On the basis of the research results, in schools A01, A02, A05 and A06, each teacher got a chance to improve his/her status, such as joining in the certification program. But some teachers working in schools A03 and A04 had low motivation to improve their quality.

From the aspect appropriateness, namely where the teacher attendance may affect on the autonomy improvement to improve the quality of education, teacher in schools A01, A02, A05 and A06 could improve their instruction quality. This may give an effect on the improvement of student achievement and then the school quality. But in schools A03 and A04, some teachers had not been able to improve their instruction quality, and they just did their jobs.

4.2.4 Self-confidence

Viewed from the effectiveness aspect all teachers in schools A01, A02 and A05 felt that their attendances were useful, so they did their duties as intended. But those in schools A03, A04 and A06 were not so sure for their attendances and they often forgot their tasks and did some jobs other than teachers out of schools.

In the efficiency aspect, in the effort to improve the self-confidence, teachers in school A01 may be taken as a model since they gave motivation to their colleague, especially to do researchers, to improve welfare and abilities in order to improve their self-confidence. In schools A02, A04, A05 and A06 teachers tried to hold workshop to improve their professionalism, while those in schools A03 paid more attention to their fellows and deliberations to improve their self-confidence as teachers.

In the adequacy aspect, the results proved that the efforts to improve teachers' self-confidence, due to school abilities and roles, gave good effects on improving the learning qualities at school. This happened in schools A01, A02, A04, A05 and A06, but in school A03 such an implementation had not improved teacher motivation to improve the instruction quality.

Viewed from the average aspect, it was found that in all the schools investigates; each teacher had equal right and chance to improve their self-confidence. But not all teachers had desires and abilities to do that. In the responsiveness aspect, it turned out that all the schools investigated showed some values of deliberation and high concern. In schools A03 and A04 such values were very high.

In the appropriateness aspect, in all schools studies, it was found out that the self-confidence as teachers was really needed to improve abilities in doing their tasks. This may give motivation to improve the teacher professionalism.

4.2.5 Autonomy

The research results suggest that the teachers in schools A01, A02 and A05 had shown their creativity and innovation in their teaching-learning activities. They made use of facilities and infrastructure in their schools to help their children understand the lessons. But some of the teachers, who did not teach in schools A03, A04 and A06 still used their old methods, namely without any creativity and innovation in their instruction.

From the efficiency aspect, the efforts made in schools A02, A05 and A06 were to ask teachers to join in workshops, so that they could interact with other teachers holding the same lessons. Moreover, those who had made some creativity and innovation can give examples for others. It was shown in schools A03. The teachers who had shown good achievement in the instruction process became the best teachers in terms of

instruction innovation at the city level, meanwhile in school A04, in general such creativity and innovations lacked.

The next is the adequacy aspect. In schools A01, A05 and A06 the learning autonomy gave teachers chances to make some creativities and innovations. This resulted in a learning model that may make students glad. In school A02, A03 and A04 teachers were not able to improve their learning quality due to lacking of innovation and creativities in teaching.

In the average aspect, the research results showed that the teachers in all the schools studied got chances to make creativity and innovation in learning. In the responsiveness aspect, it turned out that in all schools studied, the autonomy to teachers to make creativity and innovation gave an impact, namely teachers teaching the same lessons were willing to discuss problems they encountered. This condition gives values of deliberation among teachers.

The last aspect is appropriateness. It was shown that all schools studied suggested that autonomy to teachers to be creative and innovative would facilitate their students to understand their lesson so that their achievement will increase. This in turns improve the quality of schools and it can be said that such autonomy is very useful for improving the quality of education. But some teachers had not implemented the autonomy maximally.

4.2.6 The influence of teachers in creating school environment conducive for learning

The first aspect is effectiveness. Teacher in schools A01, A02, A05 and A06 may realize school environment conducive for learning, but those in schools A03 and A04 had not shown done that.

The next is the efficiency aspect where it was found out in all the schools studied some efforts had been made to have teachers to realize school environment conducive for learning by making continuous interactions among teachers to discuss any problems dealing with learning. Moreover, the schools had given chances to teachers by placing those teaching the same subjects to sit side by side in the teacher rooms.

From the adequacy aspect, the research results showed that in all the schools studied, the influence the teachers exerted concerning with the school environment conducive for learning gave benefits for improving the learning quality. But some teachers did not shown any impacts on the improvement of the quality of learning.

The average aspect showed that, from the research results, the teachers in all the schools got equal chances to improve the quality of school. Different from the responsivity aspect, the authority to the teachers to realize the school environment conducive for learning gave impacts on high concern and deliberations among teachers working in the schools.

In the appropriateness aspect, it was shown that in schools A01, A02, A05 and A06, some teachers had high spirits and motivation to take a part in realizing school environment conducive for learning. But such motivation is not permanent; it may decrease or even come to zero as is the case in schools A03 and A04.

Conclusion

The research results show that the institutions handling teacher empowerment, namely the Local Parliament, the Department of Education and the School Committee have not served their functions and obligations maximally in accordance with the message in the reformation of education. Moreover, they also suggest that the dimensions of involvement in the decision making, professionalism improvement, autonomy and influence may give satisfaction to teachers, meanwhile status and self-confidence dimensions do not fully give satisfaction to the teachers.

Viewed from the aspect of the implementation of policies on teacher empowerment consisting of six aspects, the results are as follows: a) the effectiveness aspect may give them benefits, satisfaction and professionalism improvement; b) the efficiency aspect for implementing policies on teacher empowerment has not been made maximally; c) the adequacy aspect in general has been seen, but not been maximally made, and it means that this is merely a preliminary step to improve the quality of education; d) the adequacy aspect can be accepted by most teachers; e) the average aspect shows that teachers show some satisfaction in doing their duties; f) the responsively aspect shows that the policies on teacher empowerment can improve the quality of teachers and g) the appropriateness aspect shows that the

implementation of policies on teacher empowerment in some dimensions are still in the planning stage and it is about being implemented.

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