

# Subject Teacher Congress A Strategy Teachers' Capacity Upgrade

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## Abstract

This paper explores efforts in improving teacher professionalism through Subject Teacher Congress. This research was conducted in Aceh Tamiang, Indonesia. Under qualitative methods. The sampling technique was carried out by purposive sampling. This research used primary and secondary data. The preliminary data were derived from non-participant observation and in-depth interviews with teachers, the head of the Ministry of Religion of Aceh Tamiang District, and the coordinator of subject teachers. The data in this study were analyzed using descriptive analysis. Performed Data analysis in three stages; data reduction, presentation, and conclusion. Research showed that subject teacher congress has a positive impact on the development of teacher professionalism. The Subject Teacher Congress (STC) contributes to teachers' capacity upgrades. As their knowledge and skills improve, teachers will also strengthen their capacity in lesson delivery. STC has a significant contribution in enhancing teachers' competence. The Teacher Congress congress has a strong correlation in improving teacher professionalism.

**Keywords:** Professionalism, Teacher Performance, Subject Teacher Congress.

## I. INTRODUCTION

There are numerous approaches to improve the quality of education. One of which is through quality education, in line with developments in science and technology. Sukmadinata (2002) stated that education is mandated to prepare qualified human resources to meet the challenges and problems that arise at present and in the future. As the leading actor in education, teachers are professional educators. Therefore, they are required to have the necessary knowledge and professional skills. One of the capabilities that teachers must possess is managing the learning process, including preparing learning materials, implementing the learning plans, and evaluating student performances.

Brant (Supriya, 2009) explains that almost all efforts in educational reformation such as curriculum renewal and implementation of new teaching methods will finally depend on the teachers. Teachers who are not proficient in

teaching materials, strategies, encouraging students to achieve high will not complete a maximum quality education. Even though teachers' and students' intake influence the quality of education, facilities, and other instrumental factors, the quality of teachers will determine the whole process as it strongly ties with the quality of teacher performance.

For that matter, qualified human resources (HR) is crucial for developing a nation. Many even believe that appropriate human resources are the critical factor to success. Education, especially schools, must play an active role in improving human resources quality to materialize this. The results of the author's study (2015) many factors contribute to the quality of a school. However, various studies stated that effective teaching and teachers play dominant roles in improving students' learning performances.

This is understandable as we look into actors of education. The teacher, in this regard, is

an active player while others are passive. Teachers utilize curriculum, facilities, and learning infrastructure. Therefore, the level of quality of teachers determines the status of the education process. High-quality teachers yield high-quality education, while low-quality teachers yield low-quality education (Saudi et al. 1, 2021). This is also in line with a common saying in Indonesia, "teacher is the spearhead of educational success."

All components of the nation put their hopes and dreams on educational institutions. We all aspire to high-quality output and high-quality education - the essential to meet the increasingly complex challenges of life. High-quality education is a must and should be our target to achieve from time to time. Providing quality education is necessary to increase the competence of teachers, improve infrastructure and change the curriculum. This study wanted to discuss efforts to increase the Professionalism of teachers through the Subject Teachers Congress in detail within the Junior High Schools in Aceh Tamiang, Indonesia.

## **2. CONCEPTUAL BASIS**

### **a. Subject Teachers Congress**

Subject Teacher Congress (STC) is a forum or congregation of professional activity for similar subject-based teachers at the meeting or their respective schools. Subject-based teachers teach the specific subject at junior or senior high schools, public or private. STC is one way of improving teacher performance. STC is a recognized teacher association in our country, aside from PGRI (Teacher Association). It was founded under the Ministry of Education and Culture (Soetjipto, Raffles, and Kosasi, 2009). STC is a professional forum for subject-based teachers. Found it to mediate communication, consultation, and exchange of experience. It can also serve as a medium of training and workshops for teachers at the junior high school level.

Teachers are responsible for transferring knowledge as mandated in the curriculum.

Collaboration is required among all teachers. STC is expected to increase teacher professionalism in implementing quality learning according to the needs of learners. This professional entity contributes significantly to the improvement of teacher professionalism (Sa'ud, 2009). Subject Teacher Congress for Islamic education, abbreviated as STC Islamic education a "medium for professional activities to foster relationships in coordination and functional among teachers who served in the junior and senior high school (Ministry of Education and Culture, 1994).

The purpose of establishing STC is to foster excitement for all teachers to enhance their ability and skill in preparing, implementing, and evaluating teaching and learning programs and activities. Besides, it also aimed to increase teacher confidence, match their knowledge and skills in implementing teaching and learning activities. In general, it aimed to enhance the quality of education, discuss problems teachers face when teaching in the class, and find solutions within the boundaries of subjects' teacher, school, and environment. It also aims to help teachers acquire technical information related to the education and scientific activities in science and technology, activities for curriculum implementation, methodology, and evaluation system following the relevant subjects; share knowledge and experiences to adapt to the development of science and technology (Saondi, and Aris, 2010).

Supriadi stated that professional jobs require skills acquired through long and intensive education and training from recognized and accredited institutions (Supriya, 2009). According to Marwansyah, performance is "one's accomplishments over the assigned tasks" (Marwansyah, 2010).

Stephen defines performance as a result of evaluation from individual performances compared with the criteria established together" (Robbins, 2008). Furthermore, Husmparta stated that work performance could be interpreted as a whole, which will be equivalent to the amount of

performance on the functions of critical jobs or behaviors (Husmparta, 2009)".

### **b. Teacher Performance**

Performance is about doing the work and the results of the work. A person's performance is a combination of ability, effort, and opportunities that can be assessed from the effects of their work. Performance is also defined as a person's achievement concerning the tasks assigned to him. Furthermore, performance is defined as the result evaluation of individual work compared with the standard criteria. Work performance can be interpreted as a whole, equivalent to the performance on the functions of critical jobs or behaviors (Rosidah 2009; Wahyudi, 2009; Humparta, 2009).

From the above definition of performance into account, it can be concluded that performance is a result or level of success achieved by a person in the field of work according to specific criteria and evaluated by certain people, usually worker's supervisors. On the other hand, teacher performance is teachers' ability and efforts to implement teaching and learning tasks best in designing lesson plans, executing the projects, and running learning evaluations. Besides, teacher performance can also be measured from their activities in performing their duties as a learner. A teacher should be able to plan, implement and evaluate the teaching. An exemplary implementation of classroom activities and student evaluation may become the standard of good teacher performance.

Having reviewed several definitions on performances, it can be concluded that performance is work results achieved by someone. Performances or work achievements are the results of an activity carried out by someone to achieve a goal. This work achievement is comparative to predetermined standards set previously. Only when the work results are in accordance or exceed the predetermined standard can it be said that the work has achieved a level of good performance.

### **c. Professionalism**

Komarudin (2000) affirmed that the word professional comes from the Latin word "profesia," jobs, skills, positions, professorships. People involve themselves in specific skills acquired through intensive study. Jarvis in Sagala (2006) Professional may mean that a person performing professional duty and as an expert is gained explicitly from learning. Professionalism is strongly related to two critical aspects; structural and behavioral aspects. Structurally, it is established through training, professional associations, code of ethics. Meanwhile, behavioral factors are selected through a mental attitude of Professionalism (Lekatompessy, 2003).

On the other hand, Tilaar (2002) suggested that professionals carry out their work as regulated by their profession or possess the ability and attitude required and expected by their occupation. Professionals carry out their activities based on a professional code of conduct and not being amateurs. Professionalism is not on par with amateurism. A professional will continuously improve the quality of his work consciously through education and training.

## **3. RESEARCH METHODS**

This study used a qualitative approach. This research was conducted in Aceh Tamiang, Indonesia. Qualitative research is a study aimed at describing and analyzing phenomena, events, social activities, attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, thoughts of individuals or groups (Sukmadinata, 2006). The sampling technique was carried out by purposive sampling. Data sources in this research are composed of primary data and secondary data. The primary data were derived from non-participant observation and in-depth interviews with teachers, the head of the Ministry of Religion of Aceh Tamiang District, and the coordinator of subject teachers. Interview conducted in Indonesian. At the same time, the secondary data comes from reports, journals, books, and the internet related to the study. The data in this study were analyzed using

descriptive analysis. Performed Data analysis in three stages; data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

#### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Teachers as a profession is a job usually carried out by educators in the classroom. To educate is a profession that can only be done by a professional. Teacher professionalism goes beyond transferring knowledge and conducting the learning process successfully. In addition to this, teachers also need to hone and develop other criteria when performing their duties.

In the national education policy perspective, the government has formulated four types of teacher competence as specified in the

Explanation of Government Regulation No. 19 the Year 2005 on National Education Standards, namely: pedagogical competence, personal competence, social competence, and professional competence. Mustafa (2011) argued that teachers should also meet other aspects to perform at a standard level. They need expertise in subject areas, pedagogics, personal and social skills, so they are expected to collaborate with other teachers. To meet all the standards required by the government and expert academicians, teachers need to get involved in activities such as Subject Teacher Congress. Currently, the number of Madrasah Tsanawiyah teachers in Aceh Tamiang is as can be seen in the following table:

**Table 1: Number of Schools, Teachers, and Pupils in Madrasah Tsanawiyah Under The Ministry of Religious Affairs by Subdistrict, 2019/2020**

| Subdistrict        | School | Teachers' | Student |
|--------------------|--------|-----------|---------|
| Tamiang Hulu       | 2      | 32        | 518     |
| Bandar Pusaka      | 5      | 50        | 444     |
| Kejuruan Muda      | 4      | 34        | 299     |
| Tenggulan          | -      | -         | -       |
| Rantau             | 1      | 14        | 69      |
| Kota Kuala Simpang | 2      | 15        | 142     |
| Seruway            | 3      | 63        | 846     |
| Bendahara          | 2      | 19        | 313     |
| Banda Mulia        | 1      | 6         | 101     |
| Karang Baru        | 1      | 22        | 203     |
| Sekerak            | 1      | 12        | 88      |
| Manyak Payed       | 3      | 76        | 858     |
| Total              | 25     | 343       | 3881    |

Source: Aceh Tamiang in Figures 2019

This working group activity may serve as collegial supervision or partnership

supervision. According to Wahyudi (2009), STC is a moderately formal process where two or

more people work together to benefit the professional development of teachers. The results of the study found:

In Aceh Tamiang, Indonesia, STC was attended by all Islamic education teachers from state and private junior high schools. Ninety-seven teachers From Three Hundred Forty-Three, Were attending this congress. Teachers are teaching Islamic education distributed all around the region. Considering the distance and easy access of teachers participating in the programs, the Department of Education ATI split the areas into three; HC and H. Hulu region were held at School 1 TH with Mr. AK as chairperson. Furthermore, Islamic education STC at Central Region centered in SMP 4 P KB with Mr. I as chairperson. Islamic education STC Hilir Region is held at School 1 SMP with KN as chairperson. To coordinate and ensure the run of STC, Mr. S was elected as coordinator. He will liaison with all teachers with school principals, the Department of Education, and the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Interview with M.N, September 8, 2019).

STC Aceh Tamiang Indonesia coordinator suggested double management in STC Aceh Taming organizations. This happened because there was a disagreement between the administrators of the Education Office and the Ministry of Religion.

Following are the results of the interviews with the respondents.

There is dual management in Islamic education STC. They were coordinated by the Department of Education Aceh Tamiang, Indonesia. They manage the three regions as mentioned above. Meanwhile, the Ministry of

Religious Affairs Aceh Tamiang, Indonesia, recognizes only one Islamic education STC Islamic education management. It has one chairperson and two chairpersons, chairman and two (Interview with S, September 9, 2019).

During the interview with Mr. I, one of the active teachers involved in STC activities, it was found that teachers benefit a lot from activities when participating in STC activities. One of the key benefits of being updated with teachers' latest approaches and methods in different schools. This activity is scheduled weekly. Teachers who missed the last meeting would be able to attend the next meeting. Here are the results of interviews with respondents.

Islamic education STC in Aceh Tamiang, Indonesia, is carried out every week with 3 hours of meeting duration. The topic of discussion in the Islamic education STC meeting covered the area of (1) Learning programs, including syllabus design, annual programs, semester programs, Lesson Plans (LP), (2) Models of Learning, (3) Learning assessment, (4) material enrichment, and (5) Developing teacher professionalism through research paper (CAR) (Interview With S, September 10, 2019).

Teachers gained many valuable benefits from STC activities. They can share and exchange information and knowledge related to learning programs, learning models, and material enrichment. More knowledgeable STC participant can share their knowledge and expertise and become speakers in the meeting. They can also invite a speaker/ facilitator from the Department of Education or Ministry of Religious Affairs for more quality meetings. The Source of funding to support this activity comes from participants and the school. They are willing to pay some fees to support the running of this meaningful process. This indicates that participants' enthusiasm to attend Islamic Education STC is very high.

Teachers have shown excellent progress from taking part in this congress. Improved teacher competencies gained from this activity

can be seen in several ways: First, enhance pedagogical competence. The teacher must possess pedagogical skills and competence in teaching. These skills are strongly related to their students' ability to deliver knowledge, norms, values, and morale. The higher the teacher's competencies, the higher their mastery of learning models, methods, and strategies. This type of competence ties closely with their skills in methods and models they choose when presenting the subject matter to students.

Islamic education STC promotes the improvement of teacher competence in the field of pedagogy. Several indicators are used to notify the improvement of teachers attending this activity. One standard hand is the increased pedagogical competence in preparing syllabus, Semester Program, Annual Program, and Lesson Plan (Indonesia: RPP). In addition to this, teachers also benefit from additional information and skills in learning models.

The second is the increase in professional competence. Professional competence serves as the foundation for teachers to develop their profession. This is related to understanding the core substance of science or the subject they need to teach at schools. Teachers need to continuously develop their competencies as knowledge and science continue to evolve progressively. Professional teachers constantly develop their professional competence to keep pace with the progress of science. These competencies include the ability to master their field of knowledge.

Teachers indicate significant improvement after participating in STC. It was noted that the development of professional competence among teachers in Aceh Tamiang Indonesia after following STCs increased by 85%. The increase was gained from an active and continuous discussion on essential and complex materials in STC forums. They can share and discuss rigid materials to come to a consensus. Besides, teachers also showed progress in professional competence. Teachers are now more adept at Information Technology. 75% of teachers improved their IT skills after participating in STC.

The third is social competence. Like other human beings, teachers are also social beings who interact with each other. Teachers need to develop good interaction skills with others as well as their fellow teachers. In addition, harmonious interaction should also be developed with students. Social competence is necessary for a teacher and everybody to ensure the success of their work. STC or Subject Teacher Congress activity attended by Islamic education teachers in Aceh Tamiang Indonesia has increased teacher competence socially. Research data showed that 70% of teachers approved that STC significantly improved teachers' social competence.

High social competence occurred when teachers interacted and communicated with each other, STC participants. Positive communication and relationship building during STC became fertilizer for the growth of teachers' social competence. Positive interaction and communication among teachers participating in Islamic education STC are continued and fostered in their social life out of STC. For example, a teacher invited all STC Islamic Education members to attend a wedding party in his premises in location S on Monday, September 7, 2019. This event increased teachers' social competence.

Fourth is personal competence. Professional teachers are required to have a good personality. A good attitude characterizes this. This competence is very positive to support teachers in performing their duties. It also ties closely with community trust who have entrusted teachers to provide education to their children. Not every profession is blessed with such confidence from the community, and teachers are one of them. STC participants formed positive and meaningful interactions among teachers, which further shaped their competence.

Subject Teacher Council (STC) in Aceh Tamiang Indonesia has been implemented for several years. STC has a significant contribution in improving the competence of teachers in Aceh Tamiang, Indonesia. Implementation of good Islamic education STC provided a positive impact in improving teacher performance. Performance is one activity in conducting the

assigned task on them. Thus, job or work performance results from a job or study performed in a certain period by their profession. Performance is teachers' ability and efforts to implement teaching and learning duties, planning of teaching programs, learning, and evaluating learning outcomes. The teacher's performance should be achieved at professional capability standard. Teachers are expected to carry out their duties at a certain level of standard. Sagala (2009) proposed eight aspects of measurement for teachers' performance appraisal: loyalty, Work Performance, Responsibility, Obedience, Honesty, Cooperation, initiative, and Leadership.

It is expected that all teachers participating at Islamic Education STC in Aceh Tamiang, Indonesia, will increase those aspects. One of the STC participants stated in the interview:

Islamic education teacher performance in the district of Aceh Tamiang Indonesia increased. Improved performance is characterized by an increase in responsibility, loyalty, honesty, and loyalty among teachers in everyday chores as a teacher (Interview with W, September 7, 2019).

Good, systematic, and well-planned STC implementation highly contributed to the increase in teachers' work ethic. Additional information and experience gained from interaction with colleagues and speakers during the STCs directly impact improving the quality of learning. Effective implementation of STC positively affected teachers. Therefore, taking part in STC activities have a close correlation to the increased performance of teachers when performing their task at schools.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The success of education is strongly correlated with teachers' competence. Often, failure of teaching implementation is caused by teachers' insufficient knowledge, skill, and ability to understand their tasks. This fact indicates that

one factor affecting educational success is teachers' ability to execute good teaching and learning processes. Teachers need to guide their students to acquire knowledge, skills, values, as well as attitude. Students will need all of the skills to live their lives, champion all obstacles, and contribute to their environment.

Taking part in STC contribute to teachers' capacity upgrade. As their knowledge and skills improve, teachers will also strengthen their capacity in lesson delivery. STC has a significant contribution in enhancing teachers' competence. An exemplary implementation of STC brings a positive impact in improving teacher performance. The performance of teachers in the district of Aceh Tamiang Indonesia increased. Improved performance is characterized by an increase in the attitude of responsibility, loyalty, honesty, and loyalty among teachers in the day-to-day exercise of the duties.

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