



Development of Early Childhood Education Teacher Competency: Reviewed from Perception and Teacher's Motivation

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to describe the perceptions and motivations of kindergarten teachers regarding early childhood educator's competency development. This study used a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. Data was collected through the distribution of questionnaires presented in google form format and enriched through in-depth interviews. The subjects in this study were 55 kindergarten teachers spread across Bali province. The data analysis technique of this research used the development of Miles and Huberman. The results of the study showed that teacher knowledge about educator's competency was still lacking in depth. Most of the teachers considered the competence of educators only having ability in teaching. Based on perception, teachers who had certified competency have positive perception toward development of early childhood education. In terms of motivation, all teachers have high motivation in developing competence as early childhood education educators. Teachers who have been certified to improve the quality of learning lead to training in child development tasks, and certified teachers in addition to insight and skills in teaching are also preparation for participating in PPG programs in the future. The perception and motivation of early childhood education educators will greatly impact the quality of learning provided to early childhood. For this reason, early childhood education teachers must continue to be active and participatory in participating in various teacher competency development programs.

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Introduction

Education is very important in development of a nation. Education can preserve and transform the important components of society such as culture, traditions, or customs to the next generation, thus creating human resources with character and quality (Salgur, 2013). The success of achieving educational goals will not be separated from the various components of education in it. Government policies, educator competencies, student abilities, community support, and the availability of facilities and infrastructure play a role in it. The competence of educators is one that determines how to produce the quality education and prepare graduate students who are useful in nation building.

In Law no. 20 of 2003 concerning on National Education System Chapter XI article 39 states that educators are professionals in charge of planning and implementing learning process, assessing learning outcomes, conducting guidance and training, as well as conducting research and community service, especially for educators in higher education. In line with the formulation in the Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers, it is stated that teachers are professional educators who have the main task of educating, teaching, guiding, directing, training, assessing, and



evaluating students. Based on this, it can be said that educators are professionals who play a role in guiding and assisting students in the learning process.

Research showed that teacher quality is a major determinant of children's learning and well-being. Switching from underperforming teachers to great teachers can improve student learning. Great teachers also have a major impact on students' well-being throughout their lives, influencing not only student academic achievement, but also other long-term social and workforce outcomes (King, 2022). This showed that educators must always improve their abilities because it will not only affect their professional competence but also the quality of their graduates or the outcomes resulting from the educational process.

The Indonesian government recognizes the importance of the influence of educator competence and has regulated the competencies that must be possessed by professional educators. This is stated in Article 10 paragraph (1) of the Law. No. 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers which mandates that teachers must have pedagogic competence, personality competence, social competence, and professional competence. The four competencies are interrelated and become a reflection of a professional teacher. One of the efforts that can be made to develop the competence of educators is through a professional development program for educators. The program in question can be in the form of professional development activities for educators, both in-service and pre-service, such as Teacher Professional Education/PPG (pre-service and in-service), Tiered Education and Training, as well as other programs, including in this case Continuing Professional Education (PKB).

The results of research from World Bank presented by Fasih, et.al explained that improving policies related to certification will increase teacher knowledge and performance. In addition, linking financial incentives to achieving certification and successful completion the ongoing professional development activities will increase the perceived impact of the funds provided for teacher compensation. Teachers in Indonesia will get benefit from a continuous professional development system and teacher professional management system that will continue to strengthen and encourage teacher learning to give impact on student outcomes (Fasih, et.al, 2018).

The achievements of various teacher competency development programs offered by the government, professional organizations and the private sector also need to be assessed from the perceptions and motivations of early childhood education teachers. Perception can be interpreted as the human ability to distinguish, classify and then focus the mind on something and to interpret it (Satriana et al., 2021). Perception is the process of receiving information and stimuli from the surrounding environment, then interpreting that information and categorizing it within the framework of knowledge appropriately (Mahdum et al., 2019). Regarding the teacher's perception of competency or professional development, each teacher has a different perception for different reasons. The results of research conducted by Mokhele & Jita (2010) explain that professional development is perceived differently due to differences in teachers, personal circumstances and investment in the professional development process.

Furthermore, motivation is a desire, willingness and intention that stimulates a person's energy or behavior to work with interest, dedication and commitment to achieve organizational goals. Motivation is also included into actions, desires and teachers' needs which toward to their behavior in a positive direction, achievement and success. Generally, motivation is a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic actions, which are related to internal and external factors respectively (Sahito & Vaisanen, 2018). These two factors will make a person trying his best in achieving the desired goal. The same thing was also conveyed by



Mahdum et al., (2019), that motivation is also defined as internal and external factors that influence and encourage a person to increase success, achieve performance or change behavior and attitudes.

Professional teachers are qualified, competent, and teachers who aspire to bring learning achievement and are able to influence the learning process (Wahyuddin, 2017). Teachers must always develop and explore their potential. Teacher motivation and perception is a dynamic phenomenon (Ekin et al., 2021). The motivations and perceptions of kindergarten teachers related to competency development are sometimes not in line with the opportunities they get to be involved in various existing competency development activities. This research was conducted in Bali province because in Bali the background of social, economic, cultural of kindergarten teachers are very heterogeneous. It is very important to see how the teacher's point of view and motivation are related to competency development, because this will be closely related to the success of children's learning. Therefore, this study aims to describe the perceptions and motivations of kindergarten teachers in Bali regarding competency development.

Research Method

This study used a qualitative approach with a descriptive method to describe the perceptions and motivations of kindergarten teachers on the development of early childhood education educator competencies. The data was obtained by distributing an open questionnaire in form of Google form to kindergarten teachers in Bali Province through WhatsApp application and strengthened by the results of interviews. Questionnaires distributed related to knowledge about the competence of educators as many as 4 questions, teacher perceptions of competency development as many as 8 questions, and teacher motivation in participating in competency development programs as many as 7 questions.

The participants involved in this study were 55 kindergarten teachers (30 certified and 25 uncertified) spread across 8 districts and 1 municipality in Bali Province. Analysis of research data using techniques from Miles and Huberman. Miles and Huberman stated that the activities in qualitative data analysis were interactive and carried out continuously until they were completed, so that the data was saturated. The activities in data analysis are data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification (Miles and Huberman, 2014).

Results and Discussion

Based on the respondents' answers from the questionnaires that have been distributed and supported by the results of interviews, the following is presented the results of the analysis of respondents' answers in tabular form.

Table 1. Results of Research Data Analysis Based on the Answers of Certified and Uncertified Respondents

Dimension	Respondents	
	Certified (30 respondents)	Not Certified (25 respondents)
Knowledge of teacher competence	Teacher competence is a combination of personal, social, and spiritual abilities which comprehensively form the standard competence of the teaching profession, which includes the ability to manage learning, mastery of material, understand students, personal development, and	Teacher competence is the ability of teachers to teach in the form of techniques, methods, strategies and dedication for a teacher to provide learning to children. Competence is used to measure the ability of teachers in the aspects of knowledge, social skills, and standardization in obtaining allowances.



	professionalism. Teacher competence refers to the abilities and skills that must be possessed by teachers so that their duties and functions as educators can be carried out properly in accordance with the standards set by the government.	
Teacher's perception of competency development	Respondents have a positive perception toward development of early childhood education teacher competence because it will be closely related to the ability to manage learning and have an impact on the learning success of students.	Respondents have a positive perception of the development of early childhood education teacher competence because a teacher must always be ready to follow changes and developments in existing science and technology.
Teacher motivation in participating the competency development programs	Respondents' motivation in participating the competency development programs leads to increased insight and skills in teaching and preparing for changes that occur in the world of education.	In addition to improving skills and managing learning, the motivation conveyed by respondents led to preparation for participating in PPG.

Teacher Knowledge toward Early Childhood Educator Competencies

Competence is something that can be developed and related to a professional context (Chiang & Trezise, 2021). Teacher competence is related to the abilities or skills possessed by a teacher in carrying out their duties (Mariyana, 2016). Teachers are required to have basic skills, namely guiding and teaching. In order to produce a golden generation of superior and character, teachers who have high competence are needed. The competencies possessed by teachers are an illustration that teachers have the knowledge, skills, and abilities and are able to carry out their duties and responsibilities professionally.

Certified research respondents described early childhood teacher competence as a set of knowledge and skills that must be possessed and mastered by an early childhood education teacher. Teacher competence is a combination of personal, social, and spiritual abilities which comprehensively form the standard competence of the teaching profession, which includes the ability to manage learning, mastery of material, understand students, personal development, and professionalism. Furthermore, research respondents who have not been certified explained that teacher competence is the ability of a teacher which includes knowledge, skills, attitudes both in thinking and in acting, so that they can carry out their duties and obligations responsibly so that teachers can teach students well. Competence refers to the abilities or skills that teachers must possess. The obligations in question are related to the completion of the teacher's tasks and the skills referred to are related to matters of a technical nature that are directly related to the performance of the teacher himself.

The following are some excerpts from interviews with teachers that reflect knowledge of early childhood education teacher competencies:

“The competence of early childhood educators is related to teaching children” (Teacher 02, Interview, 30 March 2022).

“Early childhood teacher competence is teachers’ ability to teach, such as the way to teach well and create creative learning for children” (Teacher 03, Interview, 31 March 2022).



"The development of early childhood teacher competence is an activity carried out for teachers such as seminars, workshops so that teachers know how to teach children better and develop creativity in learning so that children are more interested" (Teacher 04, Interview, 31 March 2022).

The results of these interviews indicated that early childhood teachers' knowledge was still limited about the competencies that must be possessed. The competencies that have been understood by teachers were still limited to pedagogical competencies. The forms of competencies that were developed mostly directed to the development of pedagogical competencies. In fact, all competencies support each other in an effort to become a professional teacher. Pedagogical competence refers to the ability early childhood teachers to master learning theory and learning principles, so that learning process in early childhood education is holistic, integrative, fun, and meaningful. By applying knowledge, skills, and experience related to pedagogical principles in curriculum development, learning strategies, use of learning technology and evaluation techniques, the teacher has the ability to perform in an academic context (From, 2017). In addition, teachers must also have global competence so that they are able to provide provisions for children as learners to compete globally (Ukpokodu, 2020).

Teacher's Perception Regarding Early Childhood Teacher Competency Development

Teachers are expected to have an understanding of the importance of teacher competence. If the perception of the importance of teacher competence by early childhood education educators is identical, then it can be said that teachers have good performance in the educational process, personal growth, motivation and progress and thus improve the quality of their teaching (Stranovská et al., 2017). Early childhood teachers in Bali, both certified and uncertified, shared a positive perception regarding competency development. All respondents view that competency development as an educator was very important. The efforts made by the teacher in developing competence will lead to success in managing learning.

Certified research participants explained that a teacher has a great responsibility not only to their students, but also to the state. Therefore, as a teacher, you must have at least four competencies and be able to develop them. Early childhood teacher must continue to learn and be able to adapt the change. The ability of a teacher is very influential on his students. Furthermore, research participants who have not been certified also provide the view that early childhood education teachers must develop their competencies because teachers have a big role in equipping children with various skills that can help children develop their talents. Early childhood has various inherent potentials from birth, therefore an educator needs to develop their competencies so that they can recognize, analyze and optimize aspects of their development in accordance children reach the level of ability regarding to their potential. Another opinion also explained that a teacher is required to be able to follow all developments in education area, including development of technology which increasingly rapid, so it must be balanced with the ability of teachers to utilize the technology. If early childhood teacher is able to develop his competence, then the teacher can become a professional teacher and ready to face all educational challenges. It is important for a teacher to develop his knowledge and skills in order to adapt to different situations (Maclellan, 2008).

The results of previous studies described teachers' perceptions about their initial involvement as early childhood educators, namely teachers think that they have to find out how to do it, learn mainly by relying on their own abilities, and learn from their own experiences and from others (Nicholson & Reifel, 2011).). The results of this study were also



in line with the results of interviews conducted with early childhood teachers in Bali, who also have view that although the competency development programs which was offered by the government have not fully touched all early childhood educators, early childhood education teachers in Bali have made various efforts independently by utilizing professional organizations to share experiences and learn directly from colleagues who have attended seminars and training. Cooperation and collaboration between teachers as a team is very important, as a form of support given to each other to improve professional development. Teachers must collaborate and engage each other in learning activities into practice community at schools to enhance their professional development (Akinyemi et al., 2019).

The following are some excerpts from interviews with teachers that reflect teachers' perceptions of competency development:

"Usually, if you take part in workshops or training, ma'am. Not everyone can come. But I tried to directly ask and ask for softcopy of material from those who participated in the activity" (Teacher 01, Interview, March 30, 2022).

"If I don't get an assignment to take part in training activities, I try to learn on my own from YouTube or ask for training materials from other friends who have attended" (Teacher 03, Interview, March 31, 2022).

Judging from the relevance of competency development program, early childhood education teachers who have or have not been certified viewed that the existing competency development activities as far as were quite relevant to the teachers' needs in the field. However, teachers also expect the government and related parties to create competency development programs whose material coverage is bottom-up, adapted to the region and condition of the teacher and is comprehensive. The implementation of effective professional development programs or teacher competencies requires positive perceptions from stakeholders, especially teachers, because teachers are the main actors to achieve quality education (Tadesse, 2020).

Teacher Motivation in Participating the Early Childhood Educator Competency Development Program

Various studies have been conducted to find out the reasons why teachers choose a career as a teacher. The reasons given are generally based on motivational factors, especially intrinsic, extrinsic and altruistic reasons (Ekin et al., 2021; Engels et al., 2021). The teacher's reasons can also be a strong reflection of whether or not the teacher's efforts in carrying out his profession. In addition, the background of choosing a career as an educator will have an impact on the desire or motivation of teachers in developing their competencies.

Each teacher has their own motivation in participating in various competency development activity programs (Appova & Arbaugh, 2018; McMillan et al., 2016). The motives possessed will lead a person to exert himself more out of his comfort zone (Heystek & Terhoven, 2015). The success of teachers in carrying out learning innovations is influenced by motivation in adjusting to advances in science and technology (Situmorang et al., 2022). Basically, both certified and uncertified teachers have the same reasons for joining the competency development program. The teacher stated that his participation in workshops and training activities was aimed at increasing his knowledge or insight so that he was able to educate children in accordance with the four teacher competencies. By participating in competency development activities, teachers will become more professional in carrying out teaching and learning activities that have an impact on the achievement of children's development. In addition, it was also conveyed that teacher participation in competency



development activities is also a form of effort in increasing insight and knowledge and developing good cooperation between teachers and students. In addition to these reasons, participants who have not been certified also said that their active participation in competency development is also related to their readiness to participate in PPG.

The following are some excerpts from interviews with teachers that reflect teacher motivation in participating in competency development programs:

“Initially I only thought about developing myself because I was not a PGPAUD graduate. But lately I think that participation in teacher competency development can be a savings for joining PPG later” (Teacher 03, Interview, 31 March 2022).

“My long-term goal is to participate in various trainings, trainings, and seminars so that I can pass PPG” (Teacher 05, Interview, April 4, 2022).

Motivation can lead to a conscious decision to act, and that gives rise to an ongoing intellectual and emotional period. Self-starting competency development has a more positive effect on improving professional learning standards. The development of teacher competence and professionalism is heavily influenced by the responsibilities and intrinsic motivation of a teacher (Tyagi & Misra, 2021).

The perceptions and motivations of kindergarten teachers in Bali are a reflection that the active participation of teachers in participating in competency development is not always associated with an increase in teacher income. The positive perception and high motivation of kindergarten teachers in developing competence is based on the awareness that the abilities and skills possessed greatly affect the learning climate and the success of children in achieving developmental tasks. The development of competencies carried out by teachers regularly and independently will lead to a higher quality of early childhood education services in Bali.

Conclusion

This study concluded that teachers' knowledge on educator competencies was still lacking in depth, but teachers have a positive perception toward the early childhood educator competencies development and also have high intrinsic motivation in participating the competency development programs. Early childhood teachers always participate in competency development programs held by professional associations, the government, or attend independent training or workshops that are carried out offline or online. The active participation early childhood teachers in participating the various competency development programs oriented to wider experience and insight, improving learning management skills, and also preparing for the PPG program for teachers who have not been certified.

Recommendation

The recommendations based on the results of this study were for: (1) policy holders and related governments to always make teacher competency development programs whether into training and workshops that are in accordance with the needs in the field and are evenly distributed for all educators, both certified and uncertified yet, (2) early childhood education teachers are always active in participating training, seminars, and workshops through online and offline, not only in pedagogic competence area, but also personality, social and professional competencies.



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