

Perceptions of Teachers in Indonesia About Having an Exchange Program with Teachers in China

by Ali Rokhman 21

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Research article

Perceptions of Teachers in Indonesia About Having an Exchange Program with Teachers in China

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Abstract.

Teaching is an important profession in a society because it is closely related to the development of a nation's civilization. Teachers must employ professionalism in their work to prepare the young generation of the nation to be better prepared to face the future. Improving the quality and professionalism of teachers should always be a major concern of the government. One potential program to improve the quality and professionalism of teachers is through an overseas teacher exchange program. This paper discusses the prospect of a teacher exchange cooperation program between the Indonesian Government and the Chinese Government, based on the perspectives of Indonesian teachers. An internet-based survey was carried out to find out whether and why Indonesian teachers are interested in participating in this collaboration program. An interesting finding from this study was that factors related to the teachers' interest in the program included the school's background: teachers who came from religious-based schools tended to not accept the teacher exchange program, and have opinions that educational cooperation with the Chinese Government is not necessary.

Keywords: China education system, international exchange program, teacher perception

1. Introduction

Teacher is the longest profession in the world that in line with the development of human civilization. The progress of human civilization cannot be separated from the role of the teacher. Teachers are sources of information, and drivers of change in every stage of human civilization. Without a teacher, human civilization will be static because there is no development and transfer of science and technology which is the main power for good progress or failure of civilization.

Teachers are figures who have capability to provide positive solutions in the school or community environment. The teacher is one of the important components in the education system. Therefore, teachers receive many attentions from many parties in a society especially concerning their role in the quality of education. Teachers act as a

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major role in education, especially in formal education in schools, as well as non-formal education in a country [1].

Teachers are also agents of change for a society. This is in line with Asep Dendih's opinion, who said that the changing cannot be avoided, including in the world of education. The process of change needs to be addressed wisely by education practitioners, especially teachers. Teachers have a strategic role in guiding the direction in which education will be taken, and on their role the quality of education is determined. The role as a manager who designs learning, implements it in the classroom, controls student competencies, and creates qualified graduates, is an integrated part that cannot be separated from the teacher [2].

Based on the strategic and importance role of teaching profession, the Government of Indonesia has regulated the quality and professionalism of teachers in a Law Number 14/2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers, and the Government Regulation Number 19/2005. A teacher who categorized as a professional educator must have four competencies including: (1) pedagogic competence, (2) personality competence, (3) professional competence and (4) social competence.

In addition to the four competencies as included above, a more complete indicator that a teacher must have to be classified as a professional teacher: (1) Have good teaching skills, (2) Have broad insight, (3) Mastering the curriculum, (4) Mastering learning media, (5) Have good skill in technology, (6) Be a good role model, (7) Have a good personality [3].

To achieve all the indicators as mentioned above, a teacher needs opportunity to develop his competence through various programs and activities. One of the programs is international exchange program. This paper reports on prospect of teacher exchange program to China from teacher's perspective of Indonesia, in relation to the characteristics of the school background, especially religion background. The choice of a religious background is very important because the Indonesian people who have a majority religion of Islam today tend to have a negative perception of the People's Republic of China (PRC) for various reasons.

2. Literature review

2.1. Go Interational and Internationalisation

According to Cambridge Dictionary go international is a word that expresses a person or organization ready to open to the international world and in line with internationalization

mean the action of becoming or making something become international. European Union stated internalization ¹³ will support and give direction to international activities, and ultimately have impact on and added value for the whole organization, its students, the employees, the surrounding region, and the world of work [4].

Internationalization of education is an effort to develop knowledge, which is then disseminated throughout the world so that the international community will be able to participate in learning, then the knowledge is also applied in their respective countries. The point is how to make quality education acceptable to the world [5].

⁶ 2.2. Teacher Exchange Program

A teacher exchange is where qualified teachers can swap places with teachers in other countries, typically for a semester / year. It's the perfect opportunity to share ideas and knowledge, as well as learn about educational practices from different countries. It's also a wonderful way to truly appreciate the meaning of the phrase, "walking a mile in someone else's shoes!" [6].

In essence, a teacher exchange means that you swap jobs (and even your house or apartment) with another teacher in another part of the world for a specific time. You get to learn how teachers teach and students learn in other locations across the globe. You can teach abroad for as little as two weeks to as long as a full academic year.

For some teachers tired of the routine at their home schools, an international teacher exchange is just what they need to get motivated and back on track. At the end of the program, teachers return to their schools and share what they've learned with their colleagues and classrooms, making for a more internationally focused and fulfilling teaching career [7].

¹¹ A teacher exchange program provides opportunities for teaching professionals with a qualifying degree to teach in partner accredited educational institution abroad. Once they return to their home countries, teachers put what they've learned to work in their own classroom and schools.

Some of the most common benefits of joining a teacher exchange program are: (1) A better understanding of other cultures, (2) Enhanced language skills, (3) Developing new pedagogy ideas, (4) Bringing international perspectives to classroom and schools, (5) Exposure to different education systems and assessment methods, (6) Building an international network [8].

2.3. Teacher Perception on Exchange Program

Perception is a process in human being mind to sensor reality experience of the world. According to Cherry, perception involves both identifying environmental stimuli and actions in response to these stimuli. Through the perceptual process, we get information about the properties and components of the environment that are critical to our survival. Perception not only generates our experience of the world around us; it gives us opportunity us to act within our environment. Perception includes the five senses: touch, sight, sound, smell, and taste. It also includes what is known as proprioception, a set of senses including the ability to identify changes in body positions and movements [9].

Perception is the capacity to see, hear, or become aware of something through the senses. A way of regarding, understanding, or interpreting something; a mental impression. According to the Indonesian Dictionary, perception is a response, direct acceptance of an absorption, or is the process of someone knowing things through his five senses [10].

Perception is a process of receiving a stimulus by the individual through the senses or can be called a sensory process. However, the process does not just stop suddenly since the stimulus is continued to the next process, that is perception process. The process includes sensing after the information is received by the senses where the information is processed and interpreted into a meaningful of perfect perception [11].

Perception is the process of understanding or giving meaning to an information on a stimulus. Stimulus is obtained from the process of sensing objects, events, or relationships between symptoms which are then processed by the brain. The term perception is usually used to express the experience of an object, or an event experienced. This perception is defined as a process that combines and organizes our sensory data (sensing) to be developed in such a way that we can be aware of our surroundings, including being aware of ourselves [12].

The teacher's perception of the education system is the understanding or giving of meaning that comes from the sensing process and his experience of the education system.

2.4. Teacher Readiness to Exchange Program

According to Cambridge University dictionary readiness mean willingness or a state of being prepared for something [13]. Teacher readiness to teacher exchange program mean willingness of teacher to participate into teacher mobility and exchange program.

According to Rapoport³ educational exchange programs provide greatly to the major goals of international understanding by fostering an awareness of the shared nature of most human interests. They develop participants' understanding and respect for other people and their cultures, awareness of the increasing global interdependence between peoples and nations, ability to communicate with others, understanding of the requirement for international solidarity and cooperation, and awareness not only of the rights, but also the duties current upon individuals, social groups, and nations towards each other [14].

3. Research Method

This research used⁵ Internet-based research method. Internet-based research refers to any research method that uses the Internet to collect data. Usually, the Web has been used as the means for conducting the study, but e-mail has been used as well. The use of e-mail to collect data dates to the 1980s while the first uses of the Web to collect data started in the mid-1990s. Whereas e-mail is principally limited to survey and questionnaire methodology, the Web, with its ability to use media, can accomplish full experiments and apply a wide variety of research methods. The use of the Internet offers new chances for access to contributors allowing for larger and more various samples [15]. Internet technology was used in this study, especially in the collecting data from respondents by questionnaires or interviews. Respondents filled out online questionnaires through Google Forms by October 2020. While the interviews were conducted through social media, included WhatsApp application.

This study is quantitative research and used online survey by Google Form. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques, including mean and frequency distribution [16]. Respondents came from 7 (seven) Senior High Schools (SMA) in Purwokerto, with a total of 110 respondents. Schools are divided into two categories, namely religion-based schools, and non-religious public schools. Religion-based schools consist of; (1) SMA Al Irsyad Purwokerto, (2) SMA Muhammadiyah Purwokerto, (3) SMK Muhammadiyah Purwokerto, (4) Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) Purwokerto. While non-religious based schools are (1) SMA Negeri 2 Purwokerto, (2) SMK Telkom Purwokerto, (3) SMA Negeri Banyumas.

List of questions include: (1) how necessary is education cooperation with China Government, (2) are you interested in joining a teacher exchange to China? (3) which education system is better, China or Indonesia?

4. Result and Discussion

4.1. Respondent Profile

Total respondent 110 teacher consist of female more than 52 percent while male respondents were 48 percent. The age of the respondents varies greatly. The average age is 37 years. The youngest respondent is 22 years old, while the oldest respondent is 59 years old.

4.2. School Background

This study aims to analyze differences in interests and opinions on teacher exchange cooperation with the Chinese government. Therefore, data on school background is very important. The 110 respondents were divided into two parts, namely, 64 teachers (58 percent) from Islam-based schools, and 26 teachers (42 percent) from non-religious schools.

4.3. The importance of Cooperation

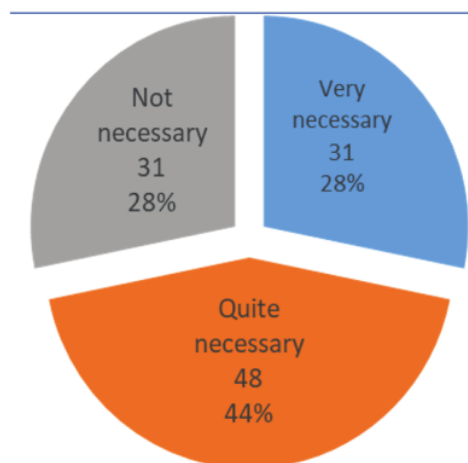


Figure 1: The importance of Cooperation.

The Graph above shows that most respondents think that educational cooperation with the Chinese government is quite necessary, namely 40 respondents (44 percent), 31 teachers (28 percent) said it was very necessary, and only 31 teachers (28 percent) stated

that cooperation Education between the Government of Indonesia and the Government of China is neither important nor needed.

School background is proven to be related to respondents' opinions. As can be seen in the table below. Teachers from religious background schools said that educational cooperation with the Chinese government was not important (35 percent), while for schools with non-religious backgrounds only 17.4 percent said cooperation was not important. Respondents who said that cooperation was very important also came from schools with non-religious backgrounds, namely 34 percent, while those from schools with religious backgrounds were 23.4 percent.

TABLE 1: The Importance of Education Cooperation and School Background

School Background	Very important	Important	Not Important
Religious	23.4%	40.6%	35.9%
Non Religious	34.8%	47.8%	17.4%

4.4. Level of Interested in Exchange Program

Most respondents (52 percent) stated that they were not interested in joining the teacher exchange cooperation program to China. While those who are interested in participating are 48 percent.

The table below explains, based on school background, respondents who expressed no interest in joining the teacher exchange program to China mostly came from religion-based schools (59.4 percent), while only 41.3 percent came from non-religious schools.

TABLE 2: Interested in Exchange Program and School Background

School Background	Very interested	Not interested
Religious	40.6%	59.4%
Non-Religious	58.7%	41.3%

4.5. The Opinion concerning China Education System

The graph above shows that most respondents (37 percent) stated that the education system in China is better than the education system in Indonesia. Respondents who said the education system between the two countries were no different were 27 percent, and 27 percent of respondents who said they didn't know.

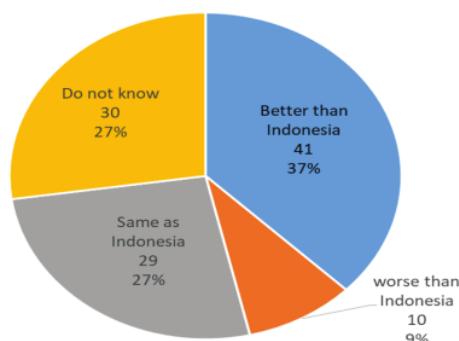


Figure 2: The Opinion concerning China Education System.

The table below describes the relationship between respondents' opinions about the education systems of the two countries and their school of origin. An interesting fact was found that respondents who came from religious-based schools stated that the Chinese education system was better than the Indonesian education system, namely 40.6 percent of respondents. Meanwhile, from non-religious schools, only 32.6 percent stated that China's education system was better than Indonesia.

TABLE 3: The Opinion concerning China Education System.

Education System	School Background	
	Religious Background	Non-Religious Background
Better than Indonesia	40.6%	32.6%
Sama as Indonesia	21.9%	32.6%
Worse than Indonesia	10.9%	6.5%
Do not know	26.6%	28.3%

5. Discussion

Based on the results of the research as described above, it can be explained that school background can affect teachers' attitudes towards the need for cooperation with the Chinese Government. Teachers from Islamic-based schools stated that there was no need for cooperation in the field of education, especially teacher exchange. On the other hand, teachers from non-Islamic schools tend to agree with educational cooperation with the Chinese government. This fact proves that religious background can influence a person's attitude. If we analyze this more deeply, it is related to the stigma of the Muslim community towards the Chinese government which has a communist ideology. This is in line with the results of the study which stated that some of the negative perceptions of

the Indonesian Muslim elite regarding the closeness of the two countries were caused by the issue of communism which incised a dark record in the history of the Indonesian state. Fear of the rise of the ideology of communism causes unrest in some people [17].

The suspicion of Muslims against the Chinese government is also caused by the viral information on Indonesian social media that cooperation with the Chinese government is not profitable. This is caused by the media report where the cooperation between the Indonesian and Chinese Governments was highlighted, especially in economic and investment sectors. The reason was that China's investment was followed with entry of Chinese workers, as reported by the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI) that noted increased China's investment in Indonesia. The increase in China's investment in Indonesia was also directly proportional to the increased number of Chinese workers entering into Indonesia. The increased investment that was followed with massive entry of Chinese workers certainly would lead to negative view [18].

The resistance to China Government is not only for ideological reasons but also for economic reasons. China is considered a threat to the economy of a country and even the world economy. Every country is starting to be wary of China's moves by China's widespread expansion through its technological ambitions and foreign aid China against its partner countries so that there is no economic penetration with pressures politics that is detrimental to them. It is not impossible that China's economic ambitions can become a controversial polemic will support western hegemony and replace the position of the United States as a country new imperialism. This phenomenon supported by achievement that China is the second largest economic giant in the world. Its GDP reached RMB 82 trillion in 2017, a very significant increase from 2015 which reached 68.91 trillion yuan and thousands of times compared to the GDP in 1978 which only reached 364.5 billion yuan. Indeed, its per capita income is still far from that of developed countries. In 2017, China's per capita income only reached US\$9,481.88, ranking 70th in the world, after the large GDP was divided by a population of almost 1.4 billion, approximately five times the population of Indonesia [19].

China's rapid economic growth has a very significant impact on several countries in the Asian region, including Indonesia. The China's economic growth can provide more opportunities for bilateral cooperation between China and Asian countries, especially in economic cooperation as an important trading partner. This will increase the value of trade between China and countries in the Asian region. Included in the trade in Covid-19 vaccines. China is also the largest economic growth actor in the region. Not only electronics products, but many other Chinese products have also been exported to Asian countries for a long time and dominate the market. The rapid growth of China's

trade will still occur in the future and will always have an impact on the economic growth of other countries, ¹² including Indonesia.

Another impact is in the field of educational cooperation. In the future, educational cooperation between Indonesia and China will increase significantly. Indonesian teachers have more opportunities to participate in exchange programs in China. Indonesian students also have more opportunities to get scholarships from the Chinese government.

6. Conclusion

Based on the research results that have been presented above, it can be concluded:

1. Educational cooperation programs between the Government of China and the Government of Indonesia are necessary, especially the teacher exchange program.
2. School background correlates with teachers' opinion of the need for cooperation with the Chinese Government. Teachers who come from religious-based schools tend to disapprove of educational cooperation programs with the Chinese government.
3. School background correlates with the teacher's interest in joining the teacher exchange program to China. Teachers who come from religion-based schools tend not to be interested in participating in cooperative programs.
4. The current socio-political conditions in Indonesia have relatively affected teachers' perceptions of the Chinese government.

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