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held in **Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, Indonesia**
1-2 September 2018

Organized by
Departement of History Education

as

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Teacher Educator Agency: Dealing with Organisational Culture while Designing the Curriculum of Initial Teacher Education

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Abstract *This qualitative case study explores the designing of the curriculum of initial teacher education in a public university in Indonesia. The curriculum is based on the Indonesian teacher professionalism principles. The data are gathered through interviews to five participant-teacher educators and document analysis. Using the interpretivism paradigm and the thematic analysis, the research reveals that the teacher educators' beliefs about teacher professionalism are rooted in the classic professionalism principles, but accommodate the new professionalism. Then, teacher educators exerted those beliefs about teacher professionalism and initial teacher education while designing both the B.Ed. and the PPG curriculum by: (1) engaging with cultural factors, such as participating in the* musyawarah mufakat, *which is the Indonesian deliberative consensus, and (2) engaging with structural factors in which either accommodating the others' power, authority and seniority or using their own power, authority and seniority.*

Keywords: *teacher agency; teacher beliefs; organisational culture; curriculum design; teacher education; teacher educator*

1. Introduction

The Indonesian Government promotes new professionalism through the standardisation of teacher competence. This challenges the established practices of the professional autonomy of educators. The new approach of teacher professionalism might be related to a new managerialism ethos emphasising accountability as applied in many countries [1]. In Indonesia, this tendency is demonstrated through the Government's centre of attention: the pupil achievements both in the national examination and international achievement index [2][3]. On the other hand, teacher educators might have their own beliefs about teacher professionalism that may contradict with this new professionalism. Furthermore, this tension can affect the ITE practice; it starts from the designing the ITE curriculum in which the contradiction between types of teacher professionalism may occur. The ITE curriculum design leads to the development of novice teachers with certain professional characteristics.

The successful policy implementation depends on a number of factors, such as the clarity of the policy, how the policy is interpreted by the recipients as the agent of change, and matches with recipients' beliefs and values [4]. Teacher education policy, like other education and social policies, is actively translated, mediated, and contested, rather than passively transferred or passed along [5]. Thus, the policy actors and policy implementers should play their agency role in this social change. In Indonesia, the agents of change in the university level are teacher educators, who must synergise the centralised-national policy and their local aspiration. Since their status is government employee/civil

servant, they are demanded to comply with the government policies and regulations. Therefore, they must deal with both the ITE's academic tradition and the bureaucratic agenda at the same time. Consequently, teacher educators' agency within the process of this curriculum design cannot avoid the tension of both individual and organisational interests [6]. Teacher educators' beliefs on teacher professionalism and initial teacher education also contribute to how the curriculum is designed.

2. Literature Review

Individual agency will always result from the interplay of individual efforts, available resources and, contextual and structural factors as these come together in particular, and in a sense, always unique situations. Based on the ecological stance, teacher educators' agency is not something that they can have; but it something that they do [6]. This denotes a quality of the actors' engagement with temporal-relational context-for-action, not a quality of the actors themselves. Therefore, teacher educators are able to be reflexive and creative: acting counter to societal constrains; but also they are enabled and constrained by their social and material environment.

The achievement of agency is always informed by past experience, including personal and professional biographies [6][7][8]. This past experience is orientated towards the future, both in regards to short-term and long-term vision; and that it is actualised in the here-and-now, where such enactment is influenced by cultural, material, and structural resources [6][8].

The aforementioned discourse leads to the practical-evaluative dimension of teacher educator's work. Actually, the manifestation of teacher educator agency is shown in day-to-day activity resulting from the engagement process with the environment in which teacher educator is working. Teaching as a profession rife is characterised with ambiguity, laden with emotional politics, context dependent and contestable in terms of its aims. In the context of initial teacher education (ITE), teacher educators have several roles at the same time: *teacher, researcher,* and *leader* and *manager*, such as head of department, dean, and rector [6]. These roles may affect to their professional agency while they fulfil their responsibility according to their roles. Since the term used is teacher educator, the strongest construction of teacher educators' identity is as a *teacher* [9]. The compliance with prescriptive government mandates is often interpreted by teacher educators to signify a demoralising loss of programme autonomy and integrity, whereas noncompliance may result in the loss of programme accreditation [10].

3. Methods

This qualitative case study was principally located within the interpretivism paradigm of knowledge [11][12][13]. This is because the research explored how Indonesian teacher educators design the ITE curriculum in Sunny University (pseudonym), especially deal with the organisational culture existing in the place where the curriculum are designed. The researcher focuses on the interpretation of the ITE curriculum design experienced by the participants in the natural settings [14]. Within this setting, teacher educators' experiences and behaviour are shaped by their work life context in the University [15]. The data collected in this interpretive research are verbal: transcripts of interviews from five teacher educators and documents regarding the natural context in which the ITE curriculum policy change occurs [11]. Then, the data were analysed by employing thematic analysis. The thematic analysis is identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns or themes within data which organises and describes the data set in rich detail [16]. This thematic analysis was chosen because it could be an interpretivist method examining the effects of a range of discourses operating within this society: the ways in which events, realities, meaning, experiences regarding the ITE curriculum exist in the university.

4. Findings and Discussion

One of the factors influencing the teacher educators' agency while designing the ITE is the cultural aspect. Cultural aspects in certain contexts mainly influence the practical-evaluative

dimension of teacher educators' work [6][7]. These include ideas, values, beliefs, discourses, and language in use while designing the ITE curriculum. The Indonesian people have their own term for deliberative consensus, the "*musyawarah mufakat*", which was also used by teacher educators while designing the ITE curriculum. The decision is made through brainstorming, discussion, and decision making, in which those who have dissenting opinions can still accept the decision for reasons of upholding the group's unity. Since the designing of the B.Ed. and the PPG curriculum are institutional activities, these involve a group of teacher educators collectively. The higher scope of curriculum discussion would be followed by the larger group of teacher educators. The national level of discussion usually involves the national association of study programme which consists of teacher educators within the same subject. However, the national consensus is not necessarily gained through the association forum. It could be gained through a national workshop organised by the Government.

The collective-collegial meetings among teacher educators in the national, regional and local levels are the actualisation of the socio-cultural approach of the teacher educators' agency. This implies interplay between the teacher educators as individual actors and the specific social context in the Indonesian teaching and ITE [9][17]. After the teacher educators participated in the national level meetings organised by the Government or their professional association, they brought the decisions to their home bases, their departments which are organising the ITE programmes. They become agents of change to disseminate the national consensus about the ITE curriculum.

Teacher educators brought their local aspirations when attending the national dialogue of the ITE curriculum. Thus the curriculum design also applied a bottom-up approach which considers the contextual grass roots as a starting point. This is how the teacher educators exert their beliefs about teacher professionalism and initial teacher education. The curriculum revision tends to benefit from intensive dialogue among the educational experts that provides an important understanding of the context in which the curriculum revision occurs [19]. In this case, in the Indonesian context, such an intensive dialogue is also common in the department level at universities.

Besides at the national level, the deliberative consensus is also implemented at the small-scale level, such as in the faculty and department. While designing the ITE curriculum, Sunny University positively responds to the Government policy including the KKNI and the other standards. Thus, the implementation of the policy change needs clear communication as part of the organisational culture. In terms of the difficulty in communication, teacher educators should talk with an open mind ethos.

These empirical findings confirm that the collegial environment affects the teacher educators' agency [17][18]. Although teacher educators have individual identity commitments and prior experience, their agency is built collectively in their social environment. Teacher educators empower themselves to built their collective agency and identity through sharing with each other at the meetings, and this involves increased trust and togetherness. Individual teacher educators who have common aspirations gathered to formulate the future curriculum of their B.Ed. study programme. These teacher educators actually do not only bring their personal interests, but also their own institutional interests. Teacher educators have synchronised their individual need disposition with both the national requirement that is actualised as inter-institutional convention or consensus, and the inter-institutions role and its expectations [20].

To some extent, the civil servant ethos in Indonesia upholds the loyalty and commitment to the organisation and the State above the other aspects. The early years of a teacher educator in Indonesia are the time to build teacher educator's commitment and loyalty to the working environment. This is the probation phase to be a civil servant (minimum: 1 year, maximum: 2 years). Thus, the priority is that the teacher educator should follow the nomothetic or normative dimension of activity in the Department as a social system [20]. Furthermore, while designing the ITE curriculum, teacher educators may have their own idealism about teacher professionalism. However, within the culture in which the seniority plays the significant role, the young newcomer could not fully free to express their idealism. This supports the scheme of institutional change in which the beginning teacher educator tends to follow social pressure in general [21]. This pressure means to the implementation of national policy on ITE curriculum change according to his senior colleagues in the Department.

5. Conclusion

Teacher educators have their own beliefs about teacher professionalism and initial teacher education. They exert those beliefs while designing both the B.Ed. and the PPG curriculum. Teacher educators have various experiences of exerting their beliefs about teacher professionalism and initial teacher education while designing the ITE curriculum. Teacher educators exerted their beliefs about teacher professionalism and initial teacher education by engaging with the cultural, structural, and material factors. Teacher educators attempted to exert their beliefs on the *musyawarah mufakat* activity, which is an Indonesian deliberative consensus. Meanwhile, the significant concerns on teacher educators' engagement with the structural factors are related to power, authority, and seniority. Teacher educators either accommodate the others' power, authority and seniority; or use their power, authority and seniority to exert their beliefs about teacher professionalism and initial teacher education..

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Teacher Educator Agency: Dealing with Organisational Culture while Designing the Curriculum of Initial Teacher Education

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Background

- The Indonesian Government promotes new professionalism through the standardisation of teacher competence.
- This challenges the established practices of the professional autonomy of educators. (Lynch, 2012)
- New managerialism ethos emphasising accountability. (Lynch, 2012)
- In Indonesia, this tendency is demonstrated through the Government's centre of attention: the pupil achievements both in the national examination and international achievement index. (OECD/Asian Development Bank, 2015; Jalal et al. 2009).

Background

▸ Teacher educators might have their own beliefs about teacher professionalism that may contradict with this new professionalism.

▸ This tension can affect the ITE practice; it starts from the designing the ITE curriculum in which the contradiction between types of teacher professionalism may occur.

▸ The ITE curriculum design leads to the development of novice teachers with certain professional characteristics.

Research Question

▸ How did teacher educator deal with organisational culture while designing the curriculum of initial teacher education?

Literature Review

- The successful policy implementation depends on the clarity of the policy, how the policy is interpreted by the recipients as the agent of change, and matches with recipients' beliefs and values (Robinson, 2012).

- Teacher education policy is actively translated, mediated, and contested, rather than passively transferred or passed along (Cochran-Smith, 2016).

- Thus, the policy actors and policy implementers should play their agency role in this social change.

Literature Review

- Individual agency will always result from the interplay of:
  - individual efforts,
  - available resources, and
  - contextual and structural factors

  as these come together in particular, and in a sense, always unique situations (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998; Priestley, et al. 2016).

Literature Review

- Based on the ecological stance, teacher educators' agency is not something that they can have; but it something that they do.

- This denotes a quality of the actors' engagement with temporal-relational context-for-action, not a quality of the actors themselves.

- Therefore, teacher educators are able to be reflexive and creative: acting counter to societal constrains; but also they are enabled and constrained by their social and material environment. (Priestley, et al. 2016)

Literature Review

- The achievement of agency is always informed by past experience, including personal and professional biographies (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998; Biesta, et al. 2015, p. 627; Priestley, et al., 2016, p. 30).

- This past experience is orientated towards the future, both in regards to short-term and long-term vision; and that it is actualised in the here-and-now, where such enactment is influenced by cultural, material, and structural resources(Biesta, et al. 2015; Priestley, et al. 2016)

Methods

▸ Qualitative case study that is using interpretivism paradigm of knowledge (Bassley, 1999; Paul, et al., 2005; Bryman, 2012).

▸ Data Collection: interviews and document analysis (Bassey, 1999, p. 43).

▸ Data Analysis: thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Findings

- Teacher educators exerted their beliefs about teacher professionalism and initial teacher education by engaging with the cultural, structural, and material factors.
- Teacher educators attempted to exert their beliefs through the *musyawarah mufakat* activity, which is an Indonesian deliberative consensus.
- Meanwhile, the significant concerns on teacher educators' engagement with the structural factors are related to power, authority, and seniority.
- Teacher educators either accommodate the others' power, authority and seniority; or use their power, authority and seniority to exert their beliefs about teacher professionalism and initial teacher education.

Findings and Discussion

First

- Cultural aspects influence the practical-evaluative dimension of teacher educators' work.
- These include ideas, values, beliefs, discourses, and language in use while designing the ITE curriculum.
- The Indonesian people have their own term for deliberative consensus, the "*musyawarah mufakat*"
- The decision is made through brainstorming, discussion, and decision making, in which those who have dissenting opinions can still accept the decision for reasons of upholding the group's unity, from local to national level.

Findings and Discussion

Second

- The collective-collegial meetings among teacher educators in the national, regional and local levels are the actualisation of the socio-cultural approach of the teacher educators' agency.
- After the teacher educators participated in the national level meeting, they brought the decisions to their home bases, their departments which are organising the ITE programmes.
- They become agents of change to disseminate the national consensus about the ITE curriculum.

Findings and Discussion

- While designing the ITE curriculum, Sunny University positively responds to teacher competence standards. In terms of the difficulty in communication, teacher educators talk with an open mind ethos.
- These empirical findings confirm that the collegial environment affects the teacher educators' agency (Tao and Gao, 2017; Hokka, et al., 2017).

Findings and Discussion

- To some extent, the civil servant ethos in Indonesia upholds the loyalty and commitment to the organisation and the State above the other aspects.

- The teacher educator should follow the nomothetic or normative dimension of activity in the Department as a social system (Getzels and Guba, 1957).

Findings and Discussion

▸ Teacher educators may have their own idealism about teacher professionalism. However, within the culture in which the seniority plays the significant role, the young newcomer could not fully free to express their idealism.

▸ This supports the scheme of institutional change from Bridwell-Mitchell (2015) in which the beginning teacher educator tends to follow social pressure in general.

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