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# Implications of Teacher Certification in Realizing Teacher Welfare

Shafira Nurulita Salehuddin<sup>1⊠</sup>, Yudithia Dian Putra<sup>2</sup>, Imron Arifin<sup>3</sup>, Eny Nur Aisyah<sup>4</sup>, Pramono<sup>5</sup>

1,2,3,4,5</sup>Universitas Negeri Malang, East Java, Indonesia

#### Abstract

This study aims to analyze the implications of teacher certification policies in realizing teacher welfare. The research uses a qualitative approach. Data was collected through in-depth observation and interviews with certified, noncertified teachers, and school principals, which were then analyzed through the stages of data condensation, data presentation, and verification. The results of the study show that the certification policy has a positive impact on the fulfillment of economic welfare through professional allowances, encouraging teacher professionalism through competency recognition, and improving social welfare through community recognition. However, this study also found that there is an imbalance in access to certification programs, so that policy effectiveness is not optimal. The implication of this study is the need to improve the accessibility and inclusivity of certification programs to ensure that the benefits of the policy are felt equally by all teachers. This result is expected to be the basis for developing more effective and equitable policies in supporting the welfare of teachers.

Keywords: Teacher Certification, Teacher Welfare, Education Policy

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(ICI) Correspondence Author: shafira.nurulita.2401548@students.um.ac.id

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Efforts to improve the quality of education and teacher welfare are encouraged through teacher certification policies (Mislia et al., 2021; Shaturaev, 2021). The teacher certification policy is designed to encourage the professionalism of educators through the provision of professional allowances as an effort to improve the economic welfare of teachers (Indriati & Perrodin, 2022; Tambingon et al., 2024). However, the facts on the ground show that there is still a striking gap between expectations and reality. There are still many teachers who experience obstacles in the certification process, especially in remote areas, such as limited access to training and difficulty meeting administrative requirements (Cahyadi et al., 2022; Potyrała et al., 2021; Zaini & Fahmi, 2023). On the other hand, there are still many who complain about the delay in disbursing the promised professional allowances, so the economic welfare goals of this program have not been fully achieved (Hadin & Rumainur, 2023; Kalolo et al., 2022). This has made several arguments about the implications of teacher certification policies that are not in line with theory and practice.

Several studies on teacher certification show that there is an improvement in the quality of learning if accompanied by continuous training (Casian et al., 2021). This is in line with the results of the research by Munawir et al. (2022), which states that teacher certification improves the quality of teacher professionalism. However, other research shows that the impact of certification on teacher welfare has not had an equal impact, especially in remote areas (Barrera-Osorio et al.,

2022; Evans & Acosta, 2023). This is also reinforced by research by Mislia et al. (2021) that the teacher certification program has not fully impacted the welfare of certified teachers. The impact of certification on the economic well-being of teachers and how to interpret this policy on social justice in the context of the distribution of benefits (Iksal et al., 2024; Popova et al., 2022). This is a unique topic in this study because it integrates the dimensions of teacher welfare from the economic and social aspects in the framework of policy analysis.

This study presents a new perspective by highlighting the relationship between the implementation and policy of teacher certification as an effort to holistically realize teacher welfare in economic, professional, and social context perspectives. Previous research has focused on one dimension, namely improving teaching or financial impact. This study examines the implications of policies in a more comprehensive perspective in measuring the effectiveness of policies that the government has promoted. This research is expected to make a significant contribution to the development of teacher certification policies.

The purpose of this study is to examine teacher certification policies in improving teacher welfare from the perspective of economics, procreation, and social convention. This study seeks to explore the role of certification in teacher welfare. Through a holistic approach, this study is expected to provide a comprehensive view of certification policies in fulfilling their objectives and offer recommendations on the implementation of the policy as an effort to have a positive holistic impact on teacher welfare.

This study argues that teacher certification has the potential to improve teacher welfare if implemented inclusively and fairly. The administrative process, access to teacher training, and the distribution of allowances are some of the limitations of this program that have an impact on the success of this policy goal. Based on previous research, improving the implementation of a program can have a positive impact on program goals such as economic welfare. However, it also has an impact on teacher professionalism and a real contribution to improving the quality of national education.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study uses a descriptive qualitative research design (Purwanto et al., 2023) to deeply understand the implications of teacher certification policies on teacher welfare at Dharma Wanita Persatuan 4 Kindergarten, Sumberpucung, Malang Regency. The location of this study was chosen because it is representative of the implementation of certification policies at the early childhood education level in semi-urban areas, which face unique challenges in terms of the accessibility of certification programs. The study also considers the active involvement of teachers in the location of the certification program and its various impacts. The sources of research information include primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through in-depth interviews with informants. The informants of this study are the components of the school, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Research Informant Sources

No	Informant	Amount	Initials
1.	Principal	1	KS
2.	Teacher certified	2	S, V
3.	Teacher non-certified	2	N, N

The source of information was obtained from several sources, including the principal, two teachers, and two non-certified teachers. Secondary data is taken from policy documents, online news, and reports related to teacher certification. The data collection process was carried out through direct observation to understand the context and interactions in the school environment,

as well as semi-structured interviews to gain the views and experiences of the informants. The data was analyzed through three stages, namely data condensation (data reduction), data presentation (data display), and conclusion (data verification) (Ahmadin, 2022). The analysis methods used are content analysis to understand the document, discourse analysis to review the views and experiences of informants, and interpretation analysis to reveal the meaning of the research findings.

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### Result

### **Fulfillment of Economic Welfare**

This study shows that the dimension of fulfilling economic welfare refers to the ability of teachers to meet basic and secondary needs through income obtained such as basic salary or additional allowances. Kindergarten Dharma Wanita Persatuan 4, Sumberpucung, Malang Regency makes the certification program an effort to improve the welfare of teachers, especially in the economic aspect. However, in its implementation, there are still many teachers who do not have equal access to the certification program, such as in its implementation, they often experience obstacles in the administrative or technical part. Based on the results of an interview with the Principal, a certified teacher knows that the existence of professional allowances can help meet the economic needs of a teacher. This is explained as follows,

"After I passed this teacher professional certification, I got an additional income of around 1.5 million rupiah every month. However, this is undeniable because it needs to go through a fairly difficult process (W\_KS, 2024)".

This opinion is inversely proportional to Nina, a class B teacher, a non-certified teacher, who said that "The certification program has not been felt by many teachers, one of which is me. Because they still experience several obstacles such as financing and training time that often clash with teaching hours. This makes the positive impact such as professional allowances that I have not been able to get (W\_N, 2024)".

The results of observations at Dharma Wanita Persatuan 4 Kindergarten, show that only a small number of teachers have been certified. Teachers who have been certified in kindergarten tend to have better economic stability than non-certified teachers. This can be seen from how they manage their daily needs. The results of this study also show that non-certified teachers tend to look for additional income in institutions or outside of school, such as promoting entrepreneurship programs in schools through school corporations and opening private tutoring services. Judging from the implementation of this program, it has not been declared optimal, because it still often provides many obstacles for teachers in the implementation of procedures that need to be carried out.

The certification program has a significant impact on the fulfillment of the economic welfare of teachers who have been certified. However, this program is not fully inclusive because there are still many non-certified teachers who experience obstacles in the administrative process or practice. Thus, this certification program has not fully met expectations in improving economic welfare evenly at Dharma Wanita Persatuan 4 Kindergarten, Sumberpucung, Malang Regency.

Teachers who have received certification can benefit financially in the form of professional allowances, but on the other hand, non-certified teachers still experience structural obstacles in increasing income through the program. The success of this certification program also depends on

the accessibility of training, ease of administration, and support from schools and the government. This indicates that systematic improvements are needed to the implementation of the certification program to be able to run in a sense of feeling by all teachers.

# Encouraging the Welfare of Teacher Professionalism

Encouraging the welfare of teachers' professionalism through certification programs refers to efforts to improve competence, teaching quality, and formal recognition of teachers' professional status. This is related to participation in training to obtain certification, recognition of work results through certification documents, and increasing teachers' motivation and confidence in carrying out their duties. At Dharma Wanita Persatuan 4 Kindergarten, the certification program is seen as an important step to provide added value to teachers' professionalism, although its implementation often faces technical and administrative challenges.

Based on the results of the interview with Surija, a certified teacher revealed "The process carried out during teacher certification activities made me learn a lot to develop my competence as a teacher such as learning new learning methods, effective learning strategies, and making educational media. This made me more confident in class (W\_S,2024)".

Meanwhile, Nenok, a non-certified teacher, stated that "The improvement of teacher professionalism in this institution is not only dominated by certified teachers, because this institution is committed to improving teacher professionalism by procuring training independently. This makes me as a non-certified teacher can learn many things, especially in classroom management even though I have not been able to pass the official teacher certification (W\_N, 2024)".

Dharma Wanita Persatuan 4 Kindergarten shows that the management and confidence of certified teachers are more visible in the implementation of learning—the use of varied learning methods by prioritizing the needs of children. However, non-certified teachers can continue to develop learning effectively because of institutions that facilitate teacher professional development activities, even though, in practice, they seem to be more confident in certified teachers. This shows that the certification program has not provided the same access to improving the quality of teachers, but this is not an effort by the institution to provide similar services in the development of the professionalism of non-certified teachers.

Based on the data above, it can be concluded that the certification program has a significant contribution to improving the professionalism of teachers at Kindergarten Dharma Wanita Persatuan 4, Sumberpucung, Malang Regency. The increase in professionalism shown by certified teachers has an impact on teachers' pedagogic ability, confidence, and recognition from the surrounding community. However, non-certified teachers can develop their professionalism because there is support from the institution in improving professionalism through independent activities held by the institution.

The pattern of the results of this research data shows that certification programs can encourage teacher professionalism, especially in improving effective learning methods and formal recognition. Although non-certified teachers do not feel this due to administrative and practical constraints, it does not provide the efforts of non-certified teachers at Dharma Wanita Persatuan 4 Kindergarten in developing their professionalism because the institution also provides services in the form of supporting programs for the development of teacher professionalism independently as

an effort to obtain the same benefits. This shows the importance of improving the accessibility of teacher certification programs to provide equal opportunities to improve the professionalism and welfare of teachers.

# Improving Social Welfare

Improving social welfare with the existence of a teacher certification program refers to changes in social status, relationships between teachers, and public recognition of the teaching profession. The certification program is expected to have an impact not only on income and professionalism, but also on social rewards, which include respect and appreciation from the community as well as a sense of solidarity among teachers. At Dharma Wanita Persatuan 4 Kindergarten, the certification program is also one of the indicators of social recognition, especially in increasing the position of teachers as professionals in the eyes of the community and colleagues.

Based on the results of interviews with the Principal, as well as as a certified teacher, stated that "Parents of current students trust me more after I get certified. Perhaps this gives them a view of the competencies that have been recognized (W\_KS, 2024)".

Certified teachers in this institution often receive attention and appreciation from the social environment, especially students' parents, which can be seen that they are often involved in parent discussions and trusted in leading several activities at school. However, on the other hand, solidarity between stakeholders in this institution is still established even though it looks higher than certified teachers where teachers share experience and knowledge with each other.

Certification program has a positive impact on improving teacher welfare socially, especially in community recognition and appreciation. However, this difference in status is also one of the potential to cause social inequality in the social environment. Although it has a positive impact with certification, it also strengthens the position of teachers in the social environment in the community.

The pattern shows that certified teachers tend to have more social recognition. This can be seen with higher recognition from the community and the trust of students' parents. On the other hand, social relations between stakeholders show the need to strengthen solidarity and inclusivity in the social environment. This shows that the certification program can be an effective tool in improving teachers' social welfare in reducing inequality between teachers in the educational environment.

Teacher certification programs not only provide financial and professional improvements but also have an impact on the social recognition received by certified teachers. This social recognition includes an increase in social status, trust from the community, and stronger relationships between teachers and parents of students. In an interview conducted with the principal, who is also a certified teacher, it was revealed that there was a change in the pattern of public trust, especially among the parents of students, after he obtained the certification. This reflects that certification is considered a marker of competence and credibility in the teaching profession, as well as a symbol of social recognition from the surrounding environment. Therefore, the teacher certification program not only affects the individual aspects of teachers but also has an impact on broader social relations in the educational institution.

Teacher certification programs make a significant contribution to improving the social well-being of teachers through recognition from the surrounding community and peers. Certified teachers are more often given a leadership role in school activities and are more involved in discussions with students' parents. This indicates an increase in social value for teachers who have a

formally recognized professional status. However, this condition also has the potential to create a social gap between certified and non-certified teachers. The existence of differences in treatment and attention from the community can create social dynamics that are less inclusive in the school environment. Therefore, even though certification provides social benefits, educational institutions still need to maintain the spirit of solidarity and collaboration between teachers so as not to cause social jealousy. Social recognition should not only be given based on formal status but also on real contributions to the world of education. Thus, the certification program must still be balanced with the strengthening of the values of equality and togetherness among stakeholders in schools. To illustrate more concretely the impact of the certification program on the social welfare of teachers, here is a comparison Table 2 between certified and non-certified teachers based on social aspects at Dharma Wanita Persatuan 4 Kindergarten,

Tabel 2. Comparison Among Teachers

Social Aspects	Certified Teacher	Non-Certified Teacher
Involvement in parent discussions	Often	Occasional
Trust from parents	Tall	Кеер
Role in school activities	Leader	Member
Support from peers	Tall	Tall
Social recognition from the community	Tall	Low
Solidarity between teachers	Awake	Awake

Table 2 shows the difference in aspects of social recognition and teacher participation in school activities between certified and non-certified teachers. Certified teachers are more trusted by students' parents and are more often involved as leaders in various school activities. This belief arises because certification is considered formal proof of a teacher's competence. However, in terms of solidarity between teachers, both certified and non-certified teachers still show a harmonious and supportive relationship. This shows that despite the difference in social recognition from the outside, the internal relationship between teachers in the institution is still maintained. However, higher social recognition of certified teachers needs to be managed wisely so as not to create a perception imbalance among fellow teachers. Educational institutions have an important role to play in maintaining this balance by providing equal contribution space for all teachers, regardless of their certification status.

#### Policy Effectiveness in Realizing Teacher Welfare

The effectiveness of the teacher certification policy refers to the extent to which this policy can achieve the goals that have been set, such as improving teacher welfare through improving competence and economic welfare. In this context, the effectiveness of certification policies is measured through their impact on teachers' economic, professional, and social well-being. This includes the process of receiving certification, access to professional allowances, and whether this policy provides equal benefits to all teachers, including those in remote areas such as at Dharma Wanita Unity 4 Kindergarten, Sumberpucung.

Based on the results of the interview with Vero, as a certified teacher stated, "Although the certification process that I did took quite a long time, the acquisition of this certification made me more confident and had a positive impact on my life such as awards and obtaining allowances as a teacher. But on the other hand, in my opinion, the policy about this program is not effective, because there are still many teachers who experience obstacles in obtaining their educator certification (W\_V, 2024)".

Strengthened by the results of observations that have been carried out, it shows that there is an uneven implementation of the certification policy. This inequality has an impact on the learning process and the welfare of each teacher. Non-certified teachers still have difficulties in increasing their income, even though professionalism has been supported by school programs that support teacher competencies in this kindergarten. In addition, it is still felt by non-certified teachers who express disappointment over the limited access to certification and training programs that need to be carried out.

Based on the synchronization of the results of the interviews and observations above, it can be concluded that this certification policy will have a welfare impact for teachers who get certified both in terms of economy and recognition of teacher professionalism. However, this policy has not been effective which has an unequal impact on non-certified teachers to get an equal impact. This shows that despite the positive impact, this program needs to be designed to provide equal opportunities for teachers so that it can have an impact on the welfare of all teachers.

Certification policies have a psoitative impact on teacher welfare, but are not felt by non-certified teachers so they have not felt the same benefits. This unevenness makes the certification program not fully successful because of the obstacles that some teachers still feel to obtain it. This shows that it is necessary to increase the effectiveness of the policy so that teachers can feel the same benefits from the certification program policy.

#### Discussion

The results of the research on the effectiveness of the teacher certification policy at Dharma Wanita Persatuan 4 Kindergarten, Sumberpucung, show that the certification policy plays an important role in improving the economic, professional, and social welfare of teachers who have obtained certificates. This finding is in line with research conducted by Mariska et al. (2024), which found that teacher certification can improve the quality of teaching and professional recognition, as well as have a positive impact on economic well-being through professional allowances. However, the study also reveals inequalities in access to certification programs, especially for non-certified teachers, which is not in line with the theory that certification policies should provide equal benefits to all teachers, regardless of their employment status (Alonso-Belmonte & Fernández-Agüero, 2021). These findings show that there is a gap that needs to be overcome in the implementation of certification policies at the local level.

This study shows that teachers who have been certified have increased in terms of competence and income. It is also related to contributing to the improvement of their social welfare (Masterson et al., 2022; Rimmer et al., 2021). The implications of these findings suggest that certification is indeed effective in creating higher standards of competence among teachers and providing social recognition. Opinion that certification increases the credibility of the teaching profession in the eyes of the public (Nowicki et al., 2021; Salama & Hinton, 2023). However, on the other hand, the reach of certification programs for non-certified teachers shows that there is a dysfunction in this policy because it still provides a broader gap between certified and non-certified teachers (Edwards et al., 2021; Kohli et al., 2022). If there is no intervention to address these barriers, certification policies can create inequities in the distribution of well-being among teachers.

The study shows that while certification policies provide significant benefits to certified teachers, they cannot be said to be completely successful in realizing equitable teacher welfare. The access gap between certified and non-certified teachers creates inequalities in aspects of well-being, which can affect social relationships and solidarity among teachers in schools (Holst et al., 2024; Löhr et al., 2021). This is the underlying thing of this inequality, namely the lack of support in

terms of access to certification training, both in terms of cost and inflexible time. This shows that the certification policy structure focusing on certified teachers needs to be improved so that it can be more inclusive for all teachers (Gras & Kitson, 2021; Hood et al., 2022).

These findings suggest that certification policies need to be improved to strengthen their impact on all teachers. Based on the implementation of this program, the certification policy is more favourable for teachers who already have certain access or status. In contrast, non-certified teachers still face significant obstacles to participating in the program. Therefore, to achieve the primary goal of the certification policy, which is to improve the welfare of teachers equally, a more inclusive policy structure is needed through consideration of factors that are lacking in this policy, such as training costs, training accessibility, and time flexibility that is more in line with the needs of teachers, especially in remote areas (Khaleel et al., 2021; Rwigema, 2022).

# **CONCLUSION**

The increasing use of smartphones among students of MTsN 7 Jember has brought about significant changes in their social interaction patterns. Although smartphones facilitate long-distance communication and expand social networks, findings show that they also lead to a decrease in face-to-face interactions, which affects the quality of students' social relationships. Reliance on instant messaging applications and social media reduces important social skills, such as direct communication and empathy. The limitations of this study lie in its focus on only one school in Jember, so the results cannot be generalized to the entire student population in Indonesia. This study focuses more on the social effects of smartphone use and has not explored further impacts on other aspects such as mental health. Based on these findings, it is recommended that schools provide education on the wise use of technology and encourage students to interact more directly to maintain the development of their social skills. Further research can be done by expanding the scope to other schools or by examining the psychological impact of smartphone use on adolescents.

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