

## Original Research Article

# The Influence of Training Programs, Academic Qualifications, and School Principal Leadership on Improving the Competence of Junior High School Teachers in North Sangatta, East Kutai Regency

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**Abstract:** The quality of education needs to be improved, including the lack of facilities for learning and the professional abilities of teachers. Teachers can enhance their competence through training programs and by improving their academic qualifications, which are expected to have an impact on their competence. School principal leadership plays a role in enhancing teacher competence. The purpose of this research is to determine the influence of training programs, academic qualifications, and school principal leadership on teacher competence, as well as the combined effects of these factors. The research method used was quantitative research, with a population of 321 teachers and a sample size of 106 teachers. Simple random sampling was employed as the sampling technique, and data were collected through questionnaires and documentation, with regression analysis used for data analysis. The results of the research indicate that there is an influence of training programs, academic qualifications, school principal leadership, the combination of training programs and academic qualifications, the combination of academic qualifications and school principal leadership, the combination of training programs and school principal leadership, the combination of training programs, academic qualifications, and school principal leadership on teacher competence. This research concludes that teacher competence in North Sangatta District, East Kutai Regency, is influenced by the training programs attended, academic qualifications, and the leadership of the school principal, all of which contribute to improving teacher competence.

**Keywords:** Training Programs, Academic Qualifications, School Principal Leadership, Teacher Competence.

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## INTRODUCTION

According to Law Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers, Article 1, a teacher is a professional educator with the main task of educating, teaching, guiding, directing, training, assessing, and evaluating students. The normative and juridical demands mentioned above are not fully in line with the conditions of educators or teachers. Academic qualifications and teacher competencies are still far from the national education standards.

A teacher needs to have a professional standard by mastering the materials and learning strategies. In addition, teachers should also be able to encourage their students to study seriously, (Sjamsir, H., *et al.*, 2020). The low level of teacher education competence is caused

by various factors. First, the low welfare of teachers. Second, the low quality, qualifications, and competencies of teachers. Low academic qualifications and teacher competencies occur in almost all regions of Indonesia, including Kutai Timur Regency, which is geographically located quite far from the provincial capital of East Kalimantan. Data shows that "The number of teachers without a bachelor's degree (S1) is 2,810 in Kutai Timur Regency, equivalent to 82.58 percent. According to the Kutai Timur Regency Education and Training Agency (BKPP), Kutai Timur needs 22,143 teachers, but in reality, there are only 11,260 teachers, so approximately 10,883 more teachers are needed. The low academic qualifications of teachers indirectly relate to teacher competence.

Low teacher competence often becomes a constraint for teachers to obtain limited scholarships. Third, the low commitment of teachers to pursue higher education. Fourth, the low motivation of teachers to pursue higher education. High motivation can overcome any obstacles inherent in teachers. Grabek (2006) wrote, "Without motivation, we stop doing and pursuing what we truly want to achieve, and we stop believing that we can become anything we want." "The way to improve teacher competence is through pre-service education and in-service training," (Sukmadinata 2006: 203; Caldwell and Spinks, 1993: 121). Bradley *et al.*, (1994) write about "the importance of in-service education for teachers so that they can teach new things to their students, and schools can face any changes with confidence."

The improvement of teachers' professional abilities can be categorized into two types of development. "First, the development of employees' abilities through educational supervision, certification programs, and learning tasks. Second, the development of employees' commitments through welfare development," (Bafadal, 2003: 45). Teachers need professional training to broaden their knowledge and enhance their skills. Training will be more beneficial for teachers if they have a lifelong learning spirit. The spirit of lifelong learning must be embedded in every teacher so that they are knowledgeable and skilled. According to Darling-Hammond (2006: 19), "Lifelong learning is essential for teachers because teacher education cannot guarantee their competence as professional teachers." Teachers who are always learning will succeed in becoming educators because teaching cannot be done by just anyone. According to Sanusi (2008: 3-4), "Education is about doing the right thing, which essentially helps the educated person mature. This assistance includes physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual activities, from the most correct and feasible alternatives done consciously, systematically, and continuously."

Training programs and learning resources are often neglected. Although many training programs have been conducted to develop teacher competencies, Darling-Hammond *et al.*, wrote in "The Design of Teacher Education Programs" that "These programs must address the real needs of teachers in their roles as teachers and educators, not just provide theoretical abilities," (Darling-Hammond and Bransford, 2005: 391).

However, having adequate training programs and learning resources or educational facilities is not solely dependent on funding. Even if funding is available, training programs and learning resources will not be implemented and available properly without a commitment to quality from school leaders. The commitment of leaders, specifically school principals, is crucial. School principals must recognize the importance of developing teacher competencies because teachers

need new information and skills related to the development of the education field. With their authority and roles, school principals can fulfill these needs of teachers, including through training programs and learning resources.

## METHOD

This research was conducted in the Junior High Schools located in Sangatta, Kutai Timur Regency. The approach used in this study was quantitative. The population of this study consisted of Junior High School teachers in North Sangatta, Kutai Timur Regency, totaling 321 teachers. The sample for this study was taken from all the teachers in public and private junior high schools in North Sangatta District. Then, all classes were randomly selected to determine a representative sample. Therefore, the sample size for this research was 106 teachers. The data collection technique in this study was conducted using a closed questionnaire for both dependent and independent variables. The analysis used was regression.

## RESULTS OF THE STUDY AND DISCUSSION

### a. Training Program on Teacher Competence

Training programs are crucial for teachers to acquire knowledge, enhance their skills, and gain experience, which will improve their competence in carrying out their duties and functions as professional teachers. Based on the hypothesis test conducted, it was found that training programs have an influence on teacher competence. The success of the training program attended by teachers is influenced by the type of training and the process within the training. The success of a training program is influenced by the following factors:

The training instructor should prioritize enhancing the participants' skills, have adequate academic qualifications, and possess a good understanding of the training material to effectively explain it. Participants have gone through a selection process to attend the training program. To participate in the teacher training program, participants need to have academic qualifications that align with the training field. Effective, innovative, and relevant training methods are employed.

If the training method runs smoothly and effectively, it will create a pleasant atmosphere. At the end of each session during the training program, evaluations are conducted to assess the extent to which the training objectives have been achieved.

The curriculum implemented in various training programs is always aligned with the vision, mission, and objectives of the training program. The training content is tailored to the needs of the participants. It is expected that after receiving the training material, participants will

be able to enhance their future work. The implementation of the training program has been communicated to the participants beforehand.

The implementation of the training program has both general and specific objectives that each participant must achieve. This aligns with Wirawan's statement (2011:7) that a training program is an activity designed to implement policies and conducted for an indefinite period of time. Furthermore, training serves as an empowerment and learning process. This is consistent with the findings of Ilyas (2022) in a study titled "Strategies for Enhancing Teacher's Professional Competence," which states that the professional role of teachers requires systematic and scientific training. Nur'aeni (2014) in a study on enhancing teachers' professional competence explains that offering workshops, training programs, or visits to various schools to acquire knowledge, experience, and skills are necessary to enhance teachers' competence in the learning process. Similarly, Azhari's study (2014) on the influence of education and training on teacher competence affirms that education and training have a significant impact on competence. Nihayatul Mukhlisoh's research (2008) on the influence of education, training, competence, and job satisfaction on teacher performance indicates a positive relationship between training and education with teacher performance. The term "performance" here refers to teacher competence.

These findings demonstrate that providing training programs to teachers can enhance their competence. Therefore, the more comprehensive the training programs provided to teachers, the higher the level of competence they possess.

#### **b. Academic Qualification in Relation to Teacher Competence**

Academic qualification has a significant impact on improving teacher competence. As mandated by regulations, being a teacher requires a minimum academic qualification of a bachelor's degree (S1). This is supported by research conducted by Idayati, I. *et al.*, (2021) titled "The Influence of Academic Qualification and Competence on Lecturer Performance at PTS in Lubuklinggau City." The research findings state that academic qualification and competence have a significant influence on performance, and simultaneous academic qualification and competence have an impact on lecturer performance at STAI BS Lubuklinggau. Based on the hypothesis testing conducted, academic qualification has an impact on teacher competence. The higher the academic qualification possessed by a teacher, the higher their competence.

The academic qualification referred to is that teachers have met the minimum educational qualification standards required by law, which is a minimum of a bachelor's degree (S1). Teachers are expected to

continuously improve their educational qualifications, and the field of study chosen should be relevant to their qualifications and expertise. Being a certified teacher enhances their competence in the teaching and educating process. A professional teacher should have a wise attitude in dealing with issues, complaints, and obstacles faced by students. Teachers often participate in various competitions or activities involving the competence of fellow teachers in various fields, such as scientific writing.

In addition to participating in scientific competitions, teachers also receive various achievements and recognition for their competence and dedication as educators. To enhance their competence, teachers must attend various trainings and participate in all relevant training activities according to their expertise. In addition to attending training programs, teachers are also expected to conduct research related to teaching and education. Teachers should enjoy reading, writing news, books, and scientific journals as part of their effort to study and keep up with the demands and developments in science and technology. A high-quality teacher forms the foundation of a good school. A good school, in turn, serves as the basis for creating a civil society and an advanced nation.

Therefore, high-quality teachers are an asset to a nation in preparing human resources that can compete on par with developed countries in the era of global competition. High-quality teachers are the greatest determinant of student achievement (Hayes and Wendy in Mulyasa, 2008: 167). Since teachers play a crucial role in creating educational quality, improving teachers' knowledge and skills is an important investment for a country (Resnick in Rustaman, 2005: 2).

#### **c. School Principal's Leadership in Relation to Teacher Competence**

As a leader, the school principal must have managerial abilities to manage various resources in the school. Therefore, the school principal's leadership plays a crucial role in providing conditions that support and enhance teacher competence. If the school principal's leadership is not aligned and supportive in various aspects, it can become an obstacle to improving teacher competence. Based on the hypothesis testing conducted, the school principal's leadership has an influence on teacher competence. The higher the leadership provided by the school principal to teachers, the higher the teacher's competence.

The school principal's leadership that influences teacher competence includes the following: Encouraging teachers to participate in various training programs; motivating and supporting the evaluation team in assessing student learning outcomes; encouraging effective utilization of learning time. The school principal carries out their duties with the assistance of several deputies who oversee specific areas. As a school

principal, one must be committed to managing the school for the betterment of its future and progress in various aspects. One of the improvements refers to the curriculum used and implemented in the school.

The school principal also manages and supervises various administrative matters in the school, such as finances for students, teachers, and non-teaching staff. As a leader, the school principal must understand the conditions of the teachers and consistently create a positive, peaceful, and familial climate within the school environment. If teachers face challenges in carrying out their tasks and functions, the school principal must be able to motivate them in various ways.

The school principal continuously strives to provide the necessary facilities and resources in the school to develop teachers' abilities in the teaching and education processes. Additionally, the school principal encourages teachers with strong enthusiasm and confidence to pursue higher education beyond their previous qualifications. To support academic advancement, the school principal facilitates support, regulations, and financial assistance for teachers to complete their studies. The school principal also facilitates teachers' participation in various training programs to enhance their competence, organizes training activities for teachers within and outside the school.

The school principal's programs for enhancing teacher competence are implemented through empowering the teachers. Empowering teachers is expected to involve them in school decision-making and train them to take responsibility for school development. In formulating their programs, the school principal involves all teachers and school staff. The school principal's program for enhancing teacher competence is prioritized because teacher competence is considered to have a significant impact on improving school quality and student achievement (Karin *et al.*, 2014, pp. 397-398). Furthermore, the school principal's strategies for enhancing teacher competence include providing training inb. Academic Qualification in Relation to Teacher Competence

Academic qualifications have a significant impact on improving teacher competence. According to regulations, teachers are required to have at least a bachelor's degree (S1) as a minimum academic qualification. Research conducted by Idayati *et al.*, (2021) titled "The Influence of Academic Qualification and Competence on Lecturer Performance at PTS in Lubuklinggau City" supports this notion. The research findings indicate that academic qualification and competence have a significant influence on performance, and having a higher academic qualification is associated with higher competence.

The academic qualification refers to teachers meeting the minimum educational standards required by law, which is at least a bachelor's degree (S1). It is expected that teachers continuously improve their educational qualifications, choosing fields of study that are relevant to their expertise. Being a certified teacher enhances their competence in the teaching and educational processes. Professional teachers should demonstrate a wise attitude in dealing with issues, complaints, and obstacles faced by students. Teachers often participate in various competitions or activities that involve the competence of fellow teachers in different fields, such as scientific writing.

They also receive recognition and achievements for their competence and dedication as educators. To enhance their competence, teachers must attend various training programs and engage in relevant training activities within their expertise. Research related to teaching and education is also encouraged. Reading, writing, and staying updated with scientific journals and literature are essential for teachers to keep up with the demands and developments in science and technology. High-quality teachers form the foundation of a good school, which, in turn, contributes to the development of a civil society and an advanced nation. Therefore, investing in improving teachers' knowledge and skills is crucial for a country's educational quality and competitiveness.

Motivating teachers in various ways is important when they face difficulties in carrying out their tasks and functions. Providing necessary facilities and resources for teachers' professional development is a priority for the school principal. The school principal also encourages teachers to pursue higher education beyond their current qualifications, facilitating support, regulations, and financial assistance for their studies. Organizing training activities within and outside the school is another way the school principal promotes teacher competence.

Programs for enhancing teacher competence involve empowering teachers, involving them in decision-making processes and training them to take responsibility for school development. The involvement of all teachers and staff in formulating these programs is essential. Enhancing teacher competence is prioritized because it is believed to have a significant impact on improving school quality and student achievement. The strategies employed by the school principal include providing training and development opportunities for teachers.

The policy of the school principal in improving teacher competence plays a crucial role in implementing the top leadership's policies to manage all available resources that can support the school's excellence, especially in determining policies to enhance teacher competence. The school principal always involves the

staff in carrying out the school's vision and mission, school targets, and formulating the school curriculum. In addition, the school principal provides opportunities for teachers to actively participate, be open, and collaborate in realizing the school's vision. Similarly, according to the research by Yuliana *et al.*, (2022), the school principal plays a significant role in improving teachers' professionalism related to their competence through quality teacher development, especially for certified teachers. Therefore, the success of a school principal in leadership is crucial as it ultimately influences the improvement of teachers' competence and professionalism.

Based on the above description, it can be concluded that with the continuous leadership of the school principal in providing space and guidance towards improving teacher competence, it will eventually be able to enhance teachers' competence. The better and higher the leadership provided by the school principal to teachers, the higher the competence of the teachers will be.

#### **d. Training Programs and Academic Qualifications for Teacher Competence**

Based on the results and analysis of the research, teacher competence will be developed through continuous training programs attended by teachers, coupled with ongoing improvement of their academic qualifications. This will have a real impact on enhancing teachers' competence in carrying out their duties and functions. Based on the hypothesis test results, training programs and academic qualifications have an influence on teacher competence. Therefore, the higher the quality and quantity of training programs and academic qualifications possessed by teachers, the higher their competence. This is in line with the research conducted by Nur'aeni (2014) on improving teachers' professional competence, which emphasizes the need for training programs and visits to various schools to gain knowledge, experience, and skills in self-improvement as a teacher in the learning process.

Similarly, the research by Mukhlisoh (2008) on the influence of education and training, compensation, and job satisfaction of teachers' performance explains that consistent improvement of teacher competence and performance is related to training and education, as they provide practical knowledge and skills in the learning process. Therefore, the training programs and academic qualifications provided will affect teacher competence. This shows that the implementation of training programs and the possession of academic qualifications by teachers can enhance their competence. The higher the level of training programs attended and the academic qualifications possessed by teachers, the higher their competence will be.

#### **e. Academic Qualifications and School Principal's Leadership on Teacher Competence**

The continuous improvement of teachers' academic qualifications must be in line with school management and be supported by a school leader, namely the school principal, in order to achieve an increase in teacher competence. Based on the hypothesis test results, academic qualifications and the school principal's leadership have an influence on teacher competence. Based on data analysis, there is a positive influence between academic qualifications and teacher competence. Therefore, the higher the academic qualifications and the leadership provided by the school principal to teachers, the higher the teacher competence will be.

The magnitude of the influence of academic qualifications and the school principal's leadership on teacher competence is 0.576 or 57.6%. A good school is the foundation for creating a civilized society and an advanced nation. Therefore, qualified teachers are an asset to a nation in preparing human resources that can compete on par with advanced countries in the era of global competition. Qualified teachers are the most significant determinant of student achievement (Hayes and Wendy in Mulyasa, 2008: 167). Since teachers are the primary determinants in creating educational quality, improving teachers' knowledge and abilities is an important investment for a country (Resnick in Rustaman, 2005: 2).

This indicates that with the improvement of academic qualifications and the high leadership provided by the school principal, teachers can enhance their competence. The higher the academic qualifications and the leadership obtained from the school principal, the higher the competence of the teachers will be.

#### **f. Training Program and School Principal Leadership on Teacher Competence**

Training programs are highly necessary for teachers to enhance their competence. The availability of training programs that teachers can participate in should be supported and encouraged by leaders who provide opportunities for teachers to participate in various training programs. This support should encompass both logistical and financial aspects to enable teachers to engage in training activities that will ultimately impact their competence in the teaching process.

Based on the hypothesis testing results, it has been found that training programs and school principal leadership have an influence on teacher competence. Therefore, the higher the quality of training programs and the stronger the leadership provided by the school principal to teachers, the higher the competence of the teachers will be.

This is in line with Ardianto's (2012) statement that leadership is about a person's ability to lead, direct, and control both the people within their unit and other facilities under their authority. Therefore, a school leader or principal must be capable of fulfilling their responsibilities as an educator, manager, administrator, and supervisor (Mulyasa, 2004:98). The key element of leadership is the influence that a person possesses and how it affects those who are influenced. This is also consistent with relevant research results that indicate that the training programs and leadership provided by school principals will affect teacher competence.

This demonstrates that with an increase in the quality of training programs and strong leadership from school principals, teachers can enhance their competence. The higher the level of training programs and leadership that teachers receive, the higher their competence will be.

#### **g. Training Program, Academic Qualifications, and School Principal Leadership on Teacher Competence**

If these three elements, namely training programs, academic qualifications, and school principal leadership, can work together, they will significantly influence the enhancement of teacher competence. Based on the data analysis results, there is a positive influence between training programs, academic qualifications, and school principal leadership on teacher competence. Therefore, the higher the quality of training programs, the higher the academic qualifications possessed by teachers, and the stronger the leadership from school principals, the higher the level of teacher competence will be. The magnitude of the influence of training programs, academic qualifications, and school principal leadership on teacher competence is 0.583 or 58.3%. This is in line with the analysis results that indicate that training programs, academic qualifications, and school principal leadership will affect teacher competence. This shows that with an increase in the quality of training programs, academic qualifications, and the level of school principal leadership obtained by teachers, their competence will also increase.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the research and discussions conducted by the researcher regarding the influence of training programs, academic qualifications, and school principal leadership on teacher competence in Sangatta Utara, East Kutai Regency, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- a) There is a significant influence of training programs on teacher competence. The obtained coefficient of determination is 0.221.
- b) There is a significant influence of academic qualifications on teacher competence. The obtained coefficient of determination is 0.525.
- c) There is a significant influence of school principal leadership on teacher competence.

The obtained coefficient of determination is 0.316.

- d) There is a significant influence of training programs and academic qualifications together on teacher competence. The obtained coefficient of determination is 0.555. This means that 55.5% of teacher competence is influenced by the variables of training programs and academic qualifications.
- e) There is a significant influence of academic qualifications and school principal leadership together on teacher competence. The obtained coefficient of determination is 0.576. This means that 57.6% of teacher competence is influenced by the variables of academic qualifications and school principal leadership.
- f) There is a significant influence of training programs and school principal leadership together on teacher competence. The obtained coefficient of determination is 0.350. This means that 35% of teacher competence is influenced by the variables of training programs and school principal leadership.
- g) There is a significant influence of training programs, academic qualifications, and school principal leadership together on teacher competence. The obtained coefficient of determination is 0.583.

#### **The Recommendations from this Research are as Follows:**

- a. Teachers should make efforts to participate in training programs as often as possible to enhance their competence and improve work motivation. This will also enhance teachers' ability to create a pleasant learning environment that motivates students to remain enthusiastic about learning.
- b. Academic qualifications of teachers should be adequate, and continuous attention and improvement should be given by:
  - 1.) Understanding the general policies of developing and enhancing qualifications through education and training as professional reinforcement.
  - 2.) Understanding the essence, principles, types of continuous professional development programs for teachers, as well as teacher competency tests and their impact. All competent teachers should possess teaching certifications.
  - 3.) Understanding the meaning, requirements, principles, stages of implementation, and conversion of performance evaluation scores as an embodiment of teacher competence.
- c. School principals should also implement a reward system because rewards create a sense of pride and recognition. When teachers are

rewarded, they will collaborate to achieve pleasant outcomes.

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