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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### THE IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL STANDARDS OF EDUCATION FOR SCHOOL QUALITY IMPROVEMENT FACING THE 21ST CENTURY (DESCRIPTIVE EVALUATIVE STUDIES IN VARIOUS LEVELS OF SCHOOLS IN BENGKULU PROVINCE OF INDONESIA)

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#### ABSTRACT

National Education Standards in Indonesia have been implemented since 2005. More than ten years have not seen any significant impact on school quality. This study aims to describe the application of national standards of education in order to improve the quality of schools facing the 21st century. This study uses descriptive evaluative methods. The research was conducted at various levels of school, both elementary, junior high school, senior high school, and vocational school in the province of Bengkulu Indonesia. Technique of collecting data with checklist, interview, observation, and study documentation. Data were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. The results show that the implementation of national standards of education has a positive contribution to improve the quality of schools. The quality of the school is evident from the increased value of accreditation, the image of the school increases, the average national exam score increases, and the increased school performance. Unfortunately, the implementation of the national standard of education can not be fulfilled by all schools. Thus almost all schools are not ready to face the 21st century are all digital and millennial. Advice to schools, education offices, local and central government to be more concrete complement the national standard of education in the immediate future.

**Key words:** National Standard of Education, School Quality, 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

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#### INTRODUCTION

The nation's competitiveness is the target of the Indonesian government. Similarly, the competitiveness of schools. Schools can compete if their resources are the same as other schools. In other words, schools can have competitiveness if they have the same "standard". Therefore, the Indonesian government through Law no. 20 of 2003 on National Education System, article 35, has set national education standards. Furthermore, the provisions of national standards are operationalized by Government Regulation no. 19 of 2005 on National Education Standards (NES). Government Regulation no. 19 of 2005 on NES regulates standards of content, processes, competence of graduates, management, educators and education personnel, facilities and infrastructure, financing, and educational assessment. The eight standards are operationalized into ministerial regulations in more detail and in detail according to the school level.

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The national standard of education is basically a minimal criterion of the education system throughout the territory of Indonesia. The national standard is aimed at ensuring and controlling the quality of education in order to educate the nation and shape the character and civilization of a dignified nation. The function as a basis in the planning, implementation, and supervision of education in order to realize a quality national education. These government provisions serve as a reference for the organization of schools. Each school in managing education should be guided by the national standard of education. Similarly, school graduated assessments, such as school accreditation, refer to the implementation of national education standards. In America, the national standard of education does not come and be established by the government (Barton, 2009). However, it emerged from various national bodies, such as the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) that published the standard of teaching mathematics in 1989. The standard publication further inspired the formation of national standards of education. This condition illustrates that national education standards in Indonesia appear to be based on "top down". Thus it certainly has advantages and disadvantages. The results of Sasongko's (2015) study show that national education

standards have advantages and disadvantages. The advantages are: (a) the implementation of schools throughout Indonesia becomes the same reference, (b) the quality of education at various levels of school is assured, (c) the community becomes confident in sending their children, because the standards are the same, (d) quality education is evenly distributed throughout Indonesia, and (e) can increase the school's passion to be more nationally standardized. The disadvantages include: (a) Indonesia's territory is very large and the number of educational units is very much costly in order to become a national standard, (b) the system of education in Indonesia is more referring to decentralization, so that very vary the awareness of local government against the implementation of the national standard of education, (c) corrupt practices as illness of State officials result in the absence of implementation of the national standard of education, (d) the regional budget affects the level of application of the national standard of education, and (e) the availability and quality of human resources in an area greatly influences the application of national standards of education.

How important the national standard of education in Indonesia, the national standard of education that has been established by the government in 2005, refined through Government Regulation no. 32 of 2013 on the revision of national education standards. This revision is a testament to the commitment of the government so that the implementation of this education can be in accordance with the provisions of applicable legislation. Schools as one of the formal institutions that have the task of organizing education, should also be guided by the national standard of education. National education standards constitute minimum criteria on various aspects relevant to the implementation of the national education system and must be met by the organizers and / or educational units throughout the jurisdictions of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (Government regulation no.19 of 2005 and no. 32 of 2013). The function of this national standard is as a basis in the planning, implementation, and supervision of education in order to realize a quality national education. The purpose of the national standard of education is to ensure the quality of national education in order to educate the nation's life and shape the character and civilization of a dignified nation.

The national standard of education stipulated by the government consists of eight standards, namely content standards, process standards, graduate competency standards, standards of educators and education personnel, facilities and infrastructure standards, management standards, financing standards and educational assessment standards. These eight standards constitute a unity that must be applied by the educational unit to ensure the quality of education management (Rahmi, 2008 and Kemdiknas, 2011). Quality education management can have a positive impact on qualified graduates (Sasongko and Sahono, 2016). Quality education is in accordance with established national standards (Barton, 2009). Burton illustrates in America that the states are almost entirely in line with the standards set by the government. This provides benefits for the community is not hesitant for the education of their children and the implementation of education in every educational unit has been completely in accordance with government policy (Sasongko and Sahono, 2016). Implementation of the national standard of education is an obligation. It is based on rationale if the national standard is not implemented in schools, then the school is certainly not standard.

The impacts are low learning achievement, low graduation rate, underprivileged schools compete with other schools, and image and trust (image and trust) of the community to the school less. This condition can cause the school not to get the prospective students who register. Thus the school may be closed and not allowed to conduct education by the government. A preliminary study in Bengkulu province shows that the government has not done any official research on the implementation of national education standards. Similarly, the local education office, also has not done a similar research. Research on the implementation of this national standard is very important to be done as a basis for improving and improving the quality of application of national standards of education. This condition is very necessary, so that theoretically and practically can be taken advantage of for the improvement of school performance. In addition to this, facing the 21st century needs to be designed how the future education plan. Until now the education office in this region does not have a clear blueprint of how the design of school quality improvement faces the 21st century.

This research departs from the absence of an official description of the application of national education standard in Bengkulu province, Indonesia. Therefore, the problem of this research can be formulated: "How is the implementation of national standard of education for the improvement of school quality facing 21st century in Bengkulu province?" This problem is described to be several sub issues, namely: (1) How is the description of application of national standard of education at various levels of school? , (2) How is the design of school quality improvement facing the 21st century? (3) How are the problems faced by schools in applying national standards to improve the quality of schools facing the 21st century? The purpose of this study is to evaluate the application of national standards of education to improve the quality of schools facing the 21st century in the province of Bengkulu. Specific objectives are to: (1) evaluate the application of national standards of education at various levels of schooling, (2) evaluate the design of school quality improvement in the 21st century, and (3) to describe the problems faced by schools in the implementation of national standards to improve the quality of schools facing the 21st century. Through this research, it is hoped that it can be used as an input for improving and upgrading policies on the implementation of national education standards at the school level, local education office, improving school performance, improving the role of principals, teachers and support staff, and designing school quality improvement in the 21st century.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This research uses the method of policy evaluation study with descriptive approach (Burn, 2009 and Miles and Huberman, 2007). The study aims to evaluate the policy of applying the national standard of education in order to improve the quality of school facing the 21st century. Approach the evaluation study using the countenance model that is with the detailed evaluative description of the implementation of national standards of education at various levels of school. The study was conducted at various levels of schools in Bengkulu province, Indonesia. Research subjects consist of principals, teachers, support staff, and students of state elementary schools, junior high schools, senior high schools and vocational high schools. Subjects and research respondents were chosen purposively and snow ball sampling taking into

account the representation of educational institutions and the types of data collected (Burn, 1995). Technique of collecting data is done by checklist, observation, documentation study, and interview. Checklists are used to see the effectiveness of applying national education standards. Observation and documentation studies are used to look at the evidence at school. The interviews were used to obtain in-depth information about the management of national education standards at various levels of school. The data analysis was evaluative with an inductive "flow analysis" approach (Burn, 1995 and Miles and Huberman, 2007). Evaluative analysis is done by looking at the implementation of national standards of education at various levels of school. The implementation of the national standard of education is said to be effective, in accordance with the eight national standards of investigation established by the government (Government Regulation no. 19 of 2005 and no. 32 of 2013). Data and information collected from various techniques, processed, presented, examined, and mixed into a unity of meaningful patterns. The pattern may be able to produce a picture of a new phenomenon, a new phenomenon, a grounded theory, or a truly original thesis (Miles and Huberman, 2007).

Techniques to improve the credibility of data are done through checks (checking back to respondents repeatedly), triangulasi (searching from various sources minimal), peer debriefing (assessing data and information from peer respondents), negative analysis (check why) nyeleneh), and audit trail (undertake inspection below) (Miles and Huberman, 2007). Likewise, techniques for improving the credibility of the study through objectivity tests (veracity of data and information), transferability (dependability and conformity), dependability, and auditability (Miles and Huberman, 2007).

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Research Results

**Implementation of National Standards of Education in Various Schools:** Implementation of national standard of education in schools in Bengkulu province, at elementary schools, junior high schools, senior high schools and vocational high schools shows average achievement rate below 85%. This means that the general condition of schools at various levels is not standard in accordance with the main government policy no. 19 of 2005 on the national standard of education and no. 32 of 2013 on the revision of national standards. The description of national standard of education implementation seen from the school level varies. At elementary schools level, both the school and madrasah conditions are almost similar. The average achievement of national standard fulfillment at the primary level is only 75% or in less standard status. This condition means there are still 25% that need to be met in various schools. Elementary schools with a high percentage in the application of the national standard are able to produce high accreditation (A), high school exam results, and high school achievement achievements. At the junior high schools level the condition of applying the national standard is an average of 84%. This condition is at almost standard status. There are still 16% more that can not be met. This condition indicates that the application of national standard of education has not been in accordance with government policy or condition. When compared with achievement in elementary level, hence at junior high school is better in application of national standard

of education. In junior high schools that have been able to apply high national standards, also have a high accreditation (A), high national exam results, good image in the community, and the achievement of many schools. In senior high schools the condition of applying the national standard of education on average is 75%. This means being in a less standard state. There are still 25% that are not yet standard. The condition of applying the national standard at senior high school level is worse than the junior high school. The senior high schools that implement the national standard is less high produces good accreditation value (B), national exam results are medium (not too high), and the achievement of less. At the level of vocational schools conditions the application of national standards of education on average by 83%. This condition is at almost standard status. There are still 17% to meet the national standard requirements. Almost all of the vocational schools targeted to study the conditions of compliance with national standards are in almost standard position. This gives an indication that at the level of vocational conditions the application of national standards is better than the high school level. In vocational schools that have achieved the implementation of high national standards are able to provide high accreditation value (A), high national exam scores, and the achievement of many schools. Based on the results of the above study can be illustrated at various levels of school as below.

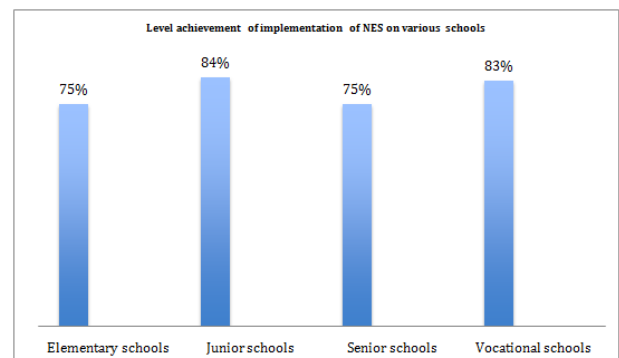


Figure 1. Level Achievement of Implementation of National Education Standards on Various Schools

Implementation of national standards of education when viewed from various levels of school, then the highest achievement of application is junior high schools. Then followed by vocational schools, senior schools and elementary schools. Schools that achieve high national standards are able to contribute significantly to the value of school accreditation, a good image of the community, high national exam scores, and many school achievements. Similarly, schools that lack a high performance of national standards, it will result in less good accreditation and performance achievement that is not too good.

**Design of School Quality Improvement Facing the 21st Century:** Schools at both elementary, junior high school, and vocational high schools that have the achievement of national higher education standards generally have designs for improving the quality of schools in the future. The design of school quality improvement is contained in school activities and budget plans. In this school plan there are a number of efforts to improve the quality of schools in the future. But when asked for a school plan, the plan was not to face the 21st century.

They generally just plan how to program next year to do. School improvement programs generally involve the whole field. The improvement like fields: (1) students, (2) curriculum and teaching, (3) educators and education staff, (4) facilities and infrastructure, (5) financing, (6) public relations, (7) school management, (8) implementation of national education standards, and (9) school accreditation. Each field is detailed and there are activities of how it operates. In addition there are schools that develop quality improvement programs oriented to the national standard of education. The program consists of: (1) improvement of graduate competency standard, (2) improvement of standard of content / curriculum, (3) improvement of learning process standard, (4) improvement of educator standard and educational staff, (5) improvement of standard of facilities and infrastructure, (6) improvement of financing standards, (7) improvement of management standards, and (8) improvement of assessment standards. Each program is also detailed and has operational activities. For schools lacking in poor national standards, they also have similar plans. School quality improvement plans are aimed at realizing government policies in line with existing resources and costs. They generally lack a specific plan to improve the quality of schools in order to face the 21st century. They also do not understand how to prepare the character and competence facing the 21st century. Thus the school is less ready to face the 21st century.

Problems Facing Schools in Implementing National Standards to Improve School Quality Facing The 21st Century: Implementation of national standards of education at different levels of school shows the difference in outcomes. There are high achievements and low tones. It depends on the potential of each school. Such as quality of accreditation value, principal quality, teacher quality, support staff quality, students, committee or others. The level of implementation of the national standards also affects the ownership of school quality improvement plans facing the 21st century. For those applying the national standard well, generally the school plan is also good. Vice versa. Schools generally have a number of problems facing the 21st century. The problems can generally be: (1) the concerns of school principals, teachers, school staff, and committees that lack understanding and are required to apply national standards; (2) lack of socialization, guidance and supervision of the application of national standards to face the 21st century by supervisors and education offices, (3) lack of support / assistance of facilities and infrastructure to comply with national standards, and (4) inadequate financing support. The four problems are a unity that hooks together.

## **DISCUSSION**

The level of achievement of the implementation of national standards of education at various levels of Bengkulu provincial schools is not in accordance with the standards set by the government. This condition is a picture of the school itself. In other words it is a feat in itself. Schools are generally still "less standard" or not in accordance with national standards set by the government. This condition also has an impact on not having a definite plan to improve the quality of schools facing the 21st century. Schools generally have a regular plan each year in the form of activity plans and school budgets. In the plan there is a school program that seeks to improve school quality. The results of this unfavorable study are similar to those of previous studies. The results of Teguh's (2013), Sasongko (2015), Sasongko and Sahono (2016) studies on the

implementation of the national standard of education in schools also indicate the same achievement of the national standard that has not been able to achieve the full national education standard. Similarly, the results of Rahmi (2008) and Teguh (2013) research on the implementation of national standards indicate that none of the national standard items are met thoroughly. The condition of the school still has some heavy work to meet the government's requirements. The results also show that the conditions of application of national standards of education have a strong relationship with high school accreditation scores, high test scores, good community image, and many school achievements. The results of this study are in accordance with the government's expectation that the implementation of national standards can improve the quality of schools (Sasongko and Sahono, 2016). Even according to Bandur (2009) who examines the implementation of school-based management in Indonesia shows a positive thing for schools that are obedient to government policy.

This condition is also in accordance with Burke and Marshall (2010) who gave a statement that the role of government is needed to increase the academic unit more academic quality. Discussing the quality improvement of schools facing the 21st century, in fact the school has little knowledge. They do not directly gain an understanding of how the strategy faces the 21st century. They generally understand little from seminars, from discussions with co-teachers. They are generally less understanding of the competencies facing the 21st century, such as technological literacy competencies, millennial culture, global communications, and competitive performance competencies.

School has its own problems in management to improve the quality of the institution. School-Based Management that has been implemented in schools, is actually a quality base given authority to schools (BNSP, 2007). Implementation of school-based management and national education standards each has issues that are closely related to others. For example, the policy of the Regional Government, especially the Municipal / District Education Office has not fully fulfilled the national standard. This is similar to the implementation of the School Based Management model which until now the government has not measured the effectiveness of this model. School-based management has not been fully recognized to be effective in addressing school management issues (Barton, 2009). Many problems arise when school-based management is implemented in schools. The problem is that school-based management, schooling, and the origin of schools are not understood by schools, are routine, and lack of serious control or guidance. The results of Sasongko and Sahono's (2017/2018) research on the acceleration of national standard of education fulfillment also show many factors affecting the achievement of national standards at various levels of school. These factors are in fact the headmaster and his staff already understand how the step meets those standards in a better direction. However, because the financial problems that support the fulfillment of the national standards are not sufficient, then the school is just waiting for the fate of such conditions. This condition, according to Bosshardt and Walstad (2014) needs an intenasif skills training so that the national standard is actually implemented.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The conclusions of the study indicate that the implementation of the national standard of education in schools has not been

implemented effectively. The government policy has not been fully implemented by schools in accordance with the established standards. Even so for schools that have implemented in accordance with government policy has a positive contribution to improve the quality of school. The improvement of school quality can be seen from the increased accreditation scores, the school image increases, the average national exam score increases, and the increasing school achievement. Implementation of the national standard of education has not been well fulfilled by all schools. Almost all schools are not ready to face the 21st century are all digital and millennial. They generally lack understanding of how character and competence confront the 21st century. Recommendation to school principals, heads of education offices, local government leaders and the ruling center should be more concrete to complement the national standard of education in schools. In order to face education in the 21st century, the application of national standards should be one hundred percent fulfilled. Principals and teachers need to be trained how to prepare students to have 21st century character, competence and literacy, such as religious character, superior performance character, harmonization character, innovative critical thinking competence, communicative competence, healthy and harmonious competition competence, technological and information literacy, cultural literacy, and career literacy.

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