

Evaluation of Acceleration Program Termination for Gifted Children Learning Needs

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Abstract— The enactment of a regulation or law in an education service is determined by the understanding of the authorities in relation to the legal basis. This study aims to evaluate the termination of the acceleration program in schools which is actually held to facilitate the needs of one type of gifted child as part of children with special needs. This research is a qualitative descriptive study. Data collection techniques in this study were interviews, observations, and literature studies. Furthermore, data analysis has been carried out by presenting data that has been reduced, and verification. The legal basis used as the basis for the implementation of acceleration classes were the law, ministerial regulations, and government regulations. In theory, a legal basis can only be stopped with a higher or equal legal basis. The results of this study indicate that the termination of the acceleration program does not use the right legal basis due to the basis for the termination of the acceleration program is a circular letter. At present, different implementations are found in addressing the circular letter. This can be due to differences in the legal basis used in each education unit.

Keywords— *acceleration program, gifted children, bright children, legal basis*

I. INTRODUCTION

Most gifted children experience difficulties in attending classes. This is due to their different ways of learning, for example gifted children have different interests and speeds when compared to other students [1]. Parental understanding of the condition of their children, makes them try to facilitate the learning needs of their children. The acceleration program is quite a solution for few types of gifted children. The acceleration program was in effect since 2012 and has shown many achievements, but this regulation still causes pros and cons. In fact, the implementation of the acceleration program since the 2015/2016 school year was stopped and was quite confusing for parents of gifted children who needed it [2]. The lack of understanding of gifted children is considered as the root of the problem of eliminating acceleration programs. Determination of quotas as a condition for the opening of an acceleration program is a separate burden that simultaneously opens up "business" opportunities for "school" based public services. Another fact shows that the use of report cards as a criterion to be accepted in the acceleration program is a burden for children who are not really gifted.

There are various types of gifted children with different needs. The acceleration program, actually has not been able to help all types of gifted children. At least currently, there

are six types of gifted children with different characteristics. In fact, acceleration classes are needed in the form of educational services available to them. The termination of the acceleration class planned to be replaced by the SKS system, until now it is not clear when it will be ready to be implemented. Referring to the Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 34 of 2012, in further discussion, in this paper, the use of the term gifted has the same meaning with children who have special talented/intelligence (CI BI) [3].

Circular letter which is issued to stop the implementation of the acceleration program, clearly confuses many parties. The impact is uncertainty for the implementation of acceleration programs in schools. Many schools immediately stop the implementation of the acceleration program and no longer accept students for the program. But there are still some schools that still hold acceleration programs with certain considerations. [4] If further reviewed, the implementation of the acceleration program is in accordance with the law of applicable education system. The termination of this program is actually a law violation. Based on the results of field observations, it was found that very few gifted students had a place in the implementation of the acceleration program. A small percentage of those who managed to get a place in the program actually felt uncomfortable with the learning system in the acceleration program and often received punishment from the teacher. This means that the implementation of the acceleration program has not been right and the implementation has not yet referred to the learning needs of gifted students. The acceleration program accommodates more bright children or even children with normal intelligence. [5] This condition shows that it is not the implementation of the acceleration program which needs to be stopped, but it is the system of screening the program participants and the learning system in the program that must be adjusted.

These findings require further studies on the implementation of acceleration programs to facilitate the needs of gifted students. However, the acceleration program is not the only program needed to facilitate the learning needs of gifted students. This research can be used as an evaluation material for school principals and policy makers to rearrange the student admission system in the acceleration program, so that it can continue to be carried out optimally to meet the learning methods of certain types of gifted students according to students' needs. This research will be very useful for teachers to improve and optimize the learning

system in the classroom by paying attention to the uniqueness of each student. Hence, this study is focused on evaluating the impact of the termination of the acceleration program in schools on students in the Parents Support Group for Gifted Children in Yogyakarta.

The rest of this paper is organized as follows: Section II describes the literature review. Section III describes the data and proposed method. Section IV presents the obtained results and following by discussion. Finally, Section 5. Concludes this work and highlights future researches.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section presents the literature review.

A. *The termination of acceleration program*

Referring to Law No. 23 of 2002 Article 52 concerning child protection which states that opportunities and access are owned by children who have the advantage of obtaining special education. The 2003 National Education System Law Article 3 and Article 5 Paragraph 4 describes the function of national education which is to develop the ability and form dignified national character and civilization in order to educate the lives of the nation for the development of the potential of students. Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 34 of 2006 strengthens by regulating the achievement of students who have intelligence and or special talents. In addition, RI National Education Minister Regulation No. 70 of 2009 also affirms inclusive education for students who have abnormalities and has the potential for intelligence and or special talents through Article 1 and Article 5 paragraph 1. Even Government Regulation No. 17 of 2010 concerning management and the implementation of education strengthens these rules and is referred to repeatedly in article 25 paragraph 1, article 127, article 134 paragraph 1 and 2, article 135 paragraph 1-5, even up to the next several articles; namely articles 136, 137 and 138.

Government Regulation no. 17 of 2010 can be used as a legal basis for the implementation of acceleration classes. But it becomes a big question, why do all the laws, regulations of the national education minister, and the Government Regulation seem to be absent or no longer valid with the issuance of Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 64 of 2014 concerning specialization and secondary education which is deliberately designed to provide student opportunities to deepen the knowledge of subjects at school? These two service programs should complement each other as educational services for gifted children. Class of deep interest requires IQ conditions 130 / more. Gifted children can take 6 to 10 credits in tertiary institutions as SKS savings which will be useful in cutting the period of study in college. In practice, the SKS program is not yet ready to be implemented, while the acceleration class that has been running is stopped [6].

To understand more about who needs the service acceleration / class specialization / other services that might later be held, it is necessary depth understanding of gifted children. According to Marland in [7] gifted children are those who by professional experts are defined as having outstanding abilities for high performance. They need

education programs and or services that are differentiated, more than what is normally provided by the regular school program, so that they can realize their contribution to themselves and the community. Renzulli, with the three rings theory of gifted children in [8], gives limitations on the character of gifted children who have IQ, commitment to tasks and high creativity. Renzulli's theory by adding an external factor of the child which functions as a supporting element to maximize the potential that already exists in the child [8]. In the latest development, Sandhu through the results of his research, distinguishes gifted/CI BI children into 6 types. Each has a unique character that distinguishes them from one type to another. According to Sandhu, there are only two types that have minimal risk of not being detected as CI BI children, namely successful and autonomous types. While the other four types, are very at risk of not being detected as CI BI children, even one type of CI BI child who is believed to be the most vulnerable to not being detected is the dropout type. Sandhu in a research result, grouped gifted children into six types [9]. Based on several theories related to gifted children, it is only natural that the number of gifted children counted very little, that is only in the range of 2% of the entire human population [10]. But the small number of them in the population should not be a reason for the world of education to ignore their right to get education according to their potential. It is very important for teachers to observe the behavior of gifted students in the classroom, remembering that they do not always show achievement, good behavior, or pleasant temperaments for the teacher [11].

To be able to see the problem with the right perspective, it is necessary to understand gifted and its characteristics:

a. *Gifted/Intelligence Outstanding (cerdas istimewa)*

Some terms are widely used: Child Prodigy, highly talented, creative, superior and talented, formulated it as a genius given to individuals who showed such high abilities in various jobs that would provide great benefits. Gifted is labeled to those who show superior signs/abilities. Precocious is given to those who can complete work that should be done by older people. Gifted children sometimes also get creative nicknames, namely to those who are able to give birth to extraordinary new ideas. While for those who excel in certain fields is called talented. But in the context of intelligence outstanding student definition, interpreting gifted is not an easy task because it has broad consequences regarding the underlying philosophy and identification and education program.

According to Renzulli in [8], definitions must be explicitly part of policies / regulations. A definition must meet three criteria: based on research, provide direction in the selection / development of identification instruments and procedures, and provide directions related to program practices, such as material selection and instruction methods and teacher selection and training. Thus, the definition of intelligence outstanding can vary depending on the philosophy and concept of intelligence outstanding adopted and agreed upon. As a consideration, there is a definition adopted from the definition of the US Office of Education (USOE), namely intelligence outstanding students are those

who are identified by professional people as being able to achieve high achievement because they have superior abilities. They need different education programs and or services beyond the reach of ordinary school programs in order to make contributions to the community/self-development. These abilities potentially include abilities: general intellectual, special academic, creative-productive thinking, leading, in one field of art, and psychomotor (as in sports).

The implications of this definition for the identification and development of gifted children must be distinguished between talent as potential and talent that has been realized in superior achievement. This means that gifted "under-achiever" students are also identified as special intelligent students.

The definition of OSOE is like what Marland in [7] stated that gifted students are those who are identified by experts as students who have superior potential and achievement. They need special education programs and services that are different from programs and services in regular schools so that they can benefit themselves and the community.

Renzulli in [8] said as a gifted figure: there is no significant way to measure intelligence in the context of gifted children because gifted is a social construction. Therefore, it must be considered that not only by knowing the student's score then it was concluded that students were directly categorized as gifted students. All the latest research results ensure that intelligence is a single entity not only composed of one aspect of intelligence, but a combination of various aspects of intelligence.

Renzulli in [8] divides intelligence into two, namely school house intelligence, and creative productive intelligence. Both are inseparable, but equally important and correlated. In the research conducted by Basuki, which is showed the lack of parents' role in supporting student achievement in acceleration programs, while children feel bored with classroom learning [15], [12]. This study proves that the teacher's understanding of gifted students, the way of teaching, and the admission selection system of the acceleration program greatly influences the success and sustainability of the acceleration program. And through this research, researchers are going to evaluate the termination of acceleration programs.

III. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

This section presents the data used and the proposed methodology.

A. Data

The data of this study were obtained through interviews with several parties related to the termination of the acceleration program, namely the education office as the policy maker, psychologist, and parents of gifted children who were directly related to the termination/implementation of the acceleration program. Data retrieval were also carried out through observing the student admission system in acceleration programs. To obtain information about the legal basis for the implementation and termination of the acceleration program, researchers conducted a literature

study on various legal bases and theories related gifted children.

B. Methodology

This research is a descriptive study using a qualitative approach. The research was carried out in the education department of the Yogyakarta Special Region province and with the involvement of psychologists, as well as parents of gifted children in the Parents Support Group for Gifted Children in Yogyakarta. The study was conducted for two weeks in April 2017. Data collection was done by making an appointment to the respondents to be interviewed.

This study involved six respondents, namely two people from authorized government agencies, two psychologists, and gifted parents, with additional data: Circular letter which was used as a reference for the termination of acceleration classes and various special education regulations and special services [13].

Nonparticipants were also observed in this study, so researchers only observed various activities carried out by the teacher and students in the acceleration program learning process. Data were analyzed using qualitative descriptive. Data analysis was conducted with steps of data analysis according to Miles and Huberman consisting of a reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing / verification [14]. Due to this research is related to legal products, researchers also discuss with legal experts who truly understand legal issues and policies in Indonesia.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results obtained and following by discussion.

A. Result

Regarding the termination of the acceleration program, most of the respondents said they did not agree. One of the related agencies stated that they only carried out the rules imposed from the government. When the government stopped the acceleration program with a rule, then those who live in the field just carried it out. In contrast to that statement, other relevant agencies stating that they have tried their best to accelerate this program, it can continue to be carried out, but because the government asked to terminate the program, inevitably, they as policy implementers must implement it according to the rules. They really understand that children's learning needs are different from other children. Therefore, they have been trying to prepare a replacement program with the SKS system that will be put into effect on a limited basis. Indeed, there may be an enrichment program prepared, but in reality, it has not been able to run well due to various obstacles. While the psychologists involved in this study stated that they did not agree with the dismissal of the acceleration program. Although it was recognized that the acceleration program was only suitable for certain gifted type students, the two psychologists agreed that the acceleration program was only one form of program that could be carried out to meet the learning needs of gifted children.

The parents of gifted children regretted the government's policy of terminated the acceleration program. One of them stated, "My child is greatly helped by the acceleration program. Now he is in 6th grade in a private school, even though he is only 9 years old. But he is very comfortable in the program. As a parent, I am confused. If the acceleration program is terminated, then what will my child do in junior high school tomorrow?" This sentence shows that the acceleration program is still needed by gifted children. While the other parents said, "My child belongs to the underachiever, the student admission time in the acceleration program, my child cannot escape, so he entered the regular class. I see this child being less motivated to achieve because his friends are like that. I hope there will be improvements in the admissions system in the acceleration program, and this program can be continued."

In an informal discussion conducted by researchers with a legal expert informant, it was stated that "The termination of the acceleration program is actually not appropriate. The legal basis for the implementation of the acceleration program is legal products in the form of Government Regulations, Ministerial Regulations, and laws. It should not be terminated with a circular letter. If it really wants to be terminated, it must be with an equivalent legal product, or above it. This expert statement shows the weak rules used in terminating the implementation of acceleration program.

Acceleration programs are still needed to facilitate the learning needs of gifted children. This is known from various opinions of parents of gifted children who questioned the dismissal of the program, as written in a study conducted by a foundation in the city of Semarang. However, it is necessary to improve the student selection system that can join the program, so that it can attract gifted students who are the target of program implementation. Separately, one of the parents involved in the school committee acknowledged the practice of reducing the IQ score of students to be able to join the acceleration program. This has been done by schools to meet the minimum quota set by the government for schools that want to open an acceleration program. In addition, the implementation of the right learning system in the acceleration program also needs to be evaluated again. The termination of the acceleration program resulted in more neglected learning needs of gifted students. This also shows the weak legal basis that applies, even in the form of laws.

B. Discussion

The implementation of the acceleration program is based on various legal bases including laws, government regulations and ministerial regulations. We can see some of these legal bases, for example in Law No. 23 of 2002 concerning child protection. In this law, it is stated that children who have the advantage are given the opportunity and accessibility to obtain special education. Through Law No. 23 of 2003 concerning the education system, Article 3 states that "national education functions to develop the ability and shape of dignified national character and civilization in order to educate the lives of the nation, aimed at developing the potential of students ..." and Article 5 paragraph 4, we can find a statement that "citizens who have

the potential for intelligence and special talents are entitled to special education". Even through the Salamanca statement formulated in 1994, it was firmly stated that "The guiding principle of this Framework is that schools should accommodate all children.... This should include disabled and gifted children, street and working children, children from remote of nomadic populations, children from linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities and children from other disadvantaged or marginalized areas or groups.... The challenge confronting the inclusive school is that of developing a child-centered pedagogy capable of successfully educating all children." Through Minister of Education and Service Regulation No. 34 of 2006 concerning achievement coaching, we can find out that the government has made rules regarding the Development of Achievement of students who have intelligence and / or special talents. Then in *PERMENDIKNAS* No. 70 of 2009, it was elaborated again in article 1 and article 5 paragraph 1 on inclusive education. Even in the Government Regulation No. 17 of 2010 Article 25 paragraph 1, Article 27, Article 134 Paragraphs 1 and 2, Article 135 Paragraph 1 to Paragraph 5, Article 136, Article 137, and Article 138, are detailed in inclusive education for participants students who have abnormalities and have intelligence potential and or special talents.

Not a few legal foundation products that can be used as a basis for the implementation of acceleration programs. There is no reason that is strong enough to stop this program. Facts in the field show that the actual implementation of accelerated programs for gifted children is still very much needed. Although it is acknowledged that in its implementation it still needs to be addressed, both in the student admission system that can join the program, and in its implementation. This needs to be reviewed by paying attention to, considering, and facilitating the learning needs of gifted students with unique characteristics. The termination of the acceleration program through a circular letter shows the influence of certain people who are more dominant than the law as a legal basis. The termination of the acceleration program indicates also a form of practice of ignoring the presence of gifted children in the inclusive education system.

In a study conducted by the Widyadana Foundation in 2015 in Semarang, it was shown that the existence of an acceleration program was a form of program that could be carried out with curriculum differentiation programs to facilitate learning needs and the different character of gifted children. Basuki in [15], the results of his research on the implementation of the acceleration program at SD Sapen Yogyakarta revealed the emergence of learning boredom in accelerated children [16]. Based on the results of several existing studies, it can be stated that acceleration programs are needed to meet learning needs for gifted students with academic potential.

Though it is clearly stated by Marland in [7] that children who are included gifted children are those who are defined by expert professionals as having outstanding capabilities for high performance. They need to be assisted by the implementation of education programs that are differentiated/different from the education programs that are

generally prepared by regular schools. This difference is needed to realize the contribution of gifted children optimally for themselves and society.

The termination of the acceleration program resulted in increasingly unmet learning needs for all types of gifted students at school. The manifestation of the non-fulfillment of these needs can arise in various problems for gifted students in attending lessons at school. This is because there is a sense of neglect of learning needs, boredom of learning that feels boring, students' lack of understanding of the lessons given due to differences in interests and learning styles, and various other problems. [13]. The findings in this study indicate that the acceleration program that had run in school was not yet a program used optimally according to the purpose of the program for gifted children [14]. Teachers' understanding of gifted children is still limited to children who excel in school which is not necessarily gifted children, but bright children.

The abolition of the acceleration program resulted in increasingly unmet learning needs of gifted students in school. The findings in this study indicate that the acceleration program that had run in school has not become a program which can be used optimally according to the purpose of the program. Teacher's understanding of gifted students is still limited to students who excel in school

Although this study was only conducted with a limited number of respondents in the city of Yogyakarta, similar research was also carried out at a school in Yogyakarta and research in several other cities in fact showed results that were not much different. Hence, the results of this study make it possible as an illustration of the same conditions in Indonesia. For this reason, research can be conducted with more respondents and in other cities to prove the accuracy of the results of this study.

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research and discussion presented in this paper, it can be concluded that the abolition of the acceleration program needs to be reviewed, considering the legal basis, objectives and objectives of the acceleration program. The termination of acceleration programs limits gifted students with academic potential to develop optimally. Through this research, it is expected that policy makers in the field of education can seek the foundation for the implementation of an education service system that can accommodate the learning needs of gifted children as part of children with special needs.

Without intending to ignore the data obtained in this study, the researchers argue that the actual acceleration program is implemented for gifted students with achievements in various academic fields. But with the enactment of a minimum IQ score requirement of 130 to be accepted in the acceleration program, it has an impact for gifted students which they cannot be accepted into the acceleration program. For example, in gifted type underachiever students or students gifted with twice exceptional who might not score a minimum IQ score. For gifted types children, other programs are needed. In other words, the researchers disagree with the termination of the acceleration program

because it is a neglect of the needs of gifted children, but by observing the practice of admission selection acceleration program that occurs, it opens the opportunity to breach IQ scores in order to meet the stipulated quota, then the implementation/termination of the acceleration program need to be evaluated further.

a) Recommendations

This sub-section suggest the future researches as follow:

- Further research is needed on the impact of termination of acceleration classes.
- Further research is needed on the learning needs of gifted children so that a replacement program can be prepared carefully before the ongoing program is stopped, to fulfill the right of gifted children as part of children who need special education services.
- If the acceleration program will be reinstated, it is necessary to pay attention to the following input: a. There need guidelines for the selection of students who are included in the acceleration program. b. There is a need for debriefing for acceleration class teachers. c. It is necessary to provide psychological assistance services for the development of the potential of gifted students attending the acceleration program. d. Acceleration with the Advanced Placement program can be made as an option through collaboration with schools or colleges at a higher-grade level. e. It is necessary to have a differentiated curriculum and the creation of individual learning programs to meet different learning needs.
- The enrichment program can be used as an alternative program for gifted students. But in its implementation, it is not only giving students more material or more difficult but conducting academic assessments for students and designing enrichment materials, processes and products that can enrich gifted students' knowledge, thinking skills and learning skills.
- Program inclusion if possible, will be very good to apply. This implies that students are truly served by their individual learning needs through the preparation of Individual Learning Plans based on the results of academic and psychological assessment.

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