



## **THE TEACHERS' VOICES: UNDERSTANDING AND DEVELOPING STUDENTS' TALENTS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This article analyzes teachers' perspectives on talents and talent development of high school students in Langsa City. Using a qualitative approach, researchers collected data from three high schools, namely Vocational High School 2, State High School 1, and Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 2 Langsa through interview techniques with student affairs teachers. The research results show that the introduction and development of talents in senior high schools in Langsa includes: socialization at the beginning of the new school year, mentoring, development in various extracurricular activities and tentative talent development. Talent development through extracurricular activities focuses on talents that comes from five senses, while talents that come from nature tends to be neglected. The implications of the results of this research are that schools need to develop talent development activities that are integrated with the co-curriculum so that they can accommodate all students' talents.

**Keywords:** *perspektif guru, pengenalan bakat, pengembangan bakat.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Talent is defined as a pattern of thoughts, feelings, and behaviours that are natural and repetitive and can be used for productivity (Gallup, 2008). Talent (aptitude) is an innate ability which is a potential (potential power) that

can be used as much as possible to produce something in the form of performance required for a particular role (Royani, 2016). Because of its potential or latent nature, talent is a potential ability that needs to be developed or trained (Sarwita, 2018). Talent development and continued training efforts to find students' talents must be made thoughtfully and systematically. Knowing students' talents and interest is the foremost issue to be concerned about. Without knowledge of students' talents, it is difficult to understand their strengths and weaknesses to facilitate their development (Kemdikbud & Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2016).

Recognizing and developing talent is necessary to empower a person's potential to carry out the role of life and civilization happily and successfully (Santosa, 2018). A person will do a good job or study if it suits their talent. (Badwi, 2018) in his research, found that students who study not according to their field of talent find it challenging to achieve. Likewise, students fail to complete their studies because they feel they have chosen the wrong major that is not their field of talent (iNews.id, 2020). These facts show that when talent cannot be appropriately recognized, it becomes an inhibiting factor in developing creativity (Hanafie & Amin, 2018). Therefore, every teacher needs to know the concept of students' talents and interests so that teachers can optimally develop students' potential (Kemdikbud & Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2016). Knowing the talents and interests that exist in students is an important thing that every teacher at school should do.

So far, research examining teachers' understanding regarding the recognition and development of students' talents is still limited. So this research will explain the understanding of talent by teachers and the programs that have been carried out by the school to accommodate the development of student talent in high schools in Langsa. Analysis of teachers' understanding of talent will provide an overview of the efforts the school has made to understand and develop students' talents. This study is to identify and analyze the process of recognizing, understanding and developing students' talents in senior high schools in Langsa.

A study of teachers' understanding and development of students' talents is important to see the extent of talent recognition and development programs that have been developed by teachers in schools. Is the program that has been implemented able to facilitate students to be able to explore various types of talents? This means that developing students' talents is not enough just to involve students in various extracurricular activities, but adequate facilities or

facilities and infrastructure must also be provided so that each student can develop their talents.

## **METHODS**

This is a qualitative research exploring teachers perspectives on talent development. The primary purpose of this qualitative research is to understand the object under study in depth (Muhadjir & Muhajir, 1996). Data were collected through an interview directly given to the teachers of the Student Affairs. The interview guide summarizes the content to be sought during the research process (Given, 2008). The researchers selected a teacher of Student Affairs and several other teachers in each school as resources. These teachers were chosen because they were considered to be involved in handling the development of students' interests and talents in secondary schools.

Data triangulation was done by re-interview the teachers from the three schools mentioned above (Creswell, 2014). Re-interviewing the teachers have done via telephone at a different time to confirm the answers of the previous interview. This was done to validate the data and avoid bias due to a single data source. The subjects selected in this study were teachers from three high schools in Langsa City. The selection of SMK 2, SMAN 4, and MAN 2 *Kota* Langsa as research subjects through purposive sampling method. The selected schools have provided efforts to develop students' talent interests based on initial observations made by researchers.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### How Teachers Recognize students' Talent in Senior High School in Langsa

Identifying students' talents is very important for all schools. This is because every child needs an educational program that can develop and use their potential according to their talents to the fullest (Buchanan et al., 1997). Teachers are essential in developing their students' potential, which starts with recognizing the talents of each student at school (Wahidah, 2021). The teachers identify students' talents in several ways from enrollment until the students will complete their studies. Based on the results of the interview, it is known that there are seven ways, for teachers to identify students' talents.

They are: (1) through a questionnaire given by the school to students at the beginning of the new school year. (2) Through extracurricular activities that students choose and participate in. Usually, teachers provide school orientation for new students, where teachers take the opportunity to identify

their students' talents. Furthermore, students can choose activities according to their wishes through extracurricular activities the school provides. From these activities, teachers recognize students' talents and provide continuous talent consultation services through guidance and counseling teachers and student affairs teachers. (3) Identifying students' talents through the majors' students choose and the subjects they are interested in. From these choices, the teacher deduces the student's talent. Then the student affairs teacher communicates with the student's parents, who "organize" their child's future plans, which are considered talents that need to be developed. Furthermore, students who have identified their talents and interests are directed to the extracurricular activities provided by the school. For example, if a student is interested in natural science studies, additional assistance and coaching will be provided outside of school hours.

Furthermore, (4) recognizing students' talents by involving students in competitions organized by the school. These activities can be in the form of art performances, sports, fare, or other activities that require student performances. This activity is organized to provide opportunities for students to express themselves. (5) Exploring students' talents by exploring and seeing students' daily potential. This makes the teacher an observer for a certain period. This will help teachers to recognize their students so that they can provide more meaningful learning for their students. This method will take much time because observing students' daily lives cannot be done in just one day. However, it shows that the teacher has a broader view of talent. (6) Recognizing students' talents through students' work, for example, hand skills. In this case, it can be seen that the teacher will understand that students have potential from birth in a specific field so that they are able to do something with their skills (Hanafie & Amin, 2018). (7) Talent recognition through student involvement in intra-school organizations, where teachers see students' talents in terms of leadership, cooperation, and communication built among themselves and teachers.

### Teachers' Understanding of Talent

Teachers need to understand students' talents so that they can motivate them to engage in various cheerful activities (especially extracurricular) in accordance with their characteristics (Balázs, 2016). In general, teachers understand talent comes from five senses only. Meanwhile, talent comes from nature such as achiever, activator, adaptability, analytical, arranger, belief, command, communication, competition, connectedness,

consistency, context, deliberative, developer, discipline, empathy, and focus are only sometimes considered.

A detailed understanding of what the talents mean is needed for high school teachers in Langsa. It is an assumption that only a few students are talented. At the same time, talent comes from nature or characteristics (which direct to roles) is ignored. Although teachers claimed understand about talent comes from nature, it is only in leadership talent that students appear to have. In comparison, other talent comes from nature have not been able to identify to be developed by teachers. As a result of the lack of understanding of this talent, many student potentials come from productive traits such as achiever, activator, adaptability, analytical, arranger, belief, command, communication, competition, connectedness, consistency, context, deliberative, developer, discipline, empathy, focus, and others are not well developed.

Each student is unique, one student and another has different capacities (Wahidah, 2019). For example, one student may be talented in academics, dance, sports, but perhaps another student only has talent in academics (Ulwan, 2007). If talent is left alone without any effort to develop it, then that talent will not have any influence on a person's life. Talent is like flour as an ingredient for making donuts. So the flour must be specially processed and other ingredients added so that it can actually produce something called a donut (Royani, 2016). So talents must be identified to avoid becoming dead objects that have no power at all.

The school also must be provided with adequate facilities and infrastructure to build their students' talents properly (Susilawati, 2017). The development of student talents is coordinated by the assistant principal of students' affairs. He or she collaborates with all subject teachers from other parties to compile a script on ways to develop students' talents and creativity in learning (Wintara, 2017). Teachers and schools have roles as facilitators, motivators, and role models in developing students' talents at school (Wahidah, 2021). So that students can recognize their talents through the students' perspectives since the self-development period at school.

#### Students' talent development

In the introduction and development of the talents mentioned above, the teachers act as a guide to students in carrying out activities that have been planned by the school. This allows a teacher to observe the progress experienced by the students. This is because every child needs an educational program that can develop and use their potential according to their talents to

the maximum (Buchanan et al., 1997). Teachers are important actors in developing their students' potential, which starts with recognizing the talents of each student at school.

Talent development with several extracurricular activities programmed by the school and introduced at the beginning of the semester to new students are related to talents comes from five senses. As they are easy to recognized and activated. Extracurricular activities programmed include Quran memorizing, Scouting, Sports, Madrasah Police, flag-raising troops (*Paskibra*), Laboratory, and foreign language club. All of these activities are more directed towards the development of talent comes from five senses only. In contrast, talent comes from nature has no special attention from the school. It is proofed by so many students cannot channel their talents properly at school. Extracurricular activities are flexible, meaning that not all students are required to participate in them. They choose according to their preferences. Scouting activities are mandatory for all students because this is a compulsory extracurricular activity for all high school students. Scout activities are also provided for students who want to be involved in various activities, so there will be intense training for students interested in scouts. However, in depth training of scout activities is not mandatory for all students.

The school provides funds allocated annually for several extracurricular activities, but only activities that take place through student organizations accommodate students' interests. With the allocation of funds, extracurricular activities can be carried out regularly, annually, and in semesters. Schools provide facilities and infrastructure as support. It also provides continuous motivation for students to be actively involved in various activities. Of course, extracurricular activities organized at school are a means for students to be able to develop the potential, interests, and talents that exist within themselves in order to channel them in the right field and also be given appropriate guidance by the teacher in charge (Wintara, 2017).

Talent development in senior high schools in Langsa City is also carried out through *outbound* activities at certain times. Teachers develop students' talents in dance and sports teams in this activity. Students are directed to follow continuously to be included in the student sports and arts week. This talent development model accommodates talent comes from nature, namely command, arranger, communication, developer and others. The development of the talent is directed to participate in basic leadership training activities (LK).

In this activity, teachers hone students' skills in working together, leading, and organizing. However, the activity is more limited to members of the intra-school student organization (OSIS). The development of the talent of students who like to ask questions and want to know other people's business can be seen in the teacher's efforts to form members of the school intelligence team. Teachers pay attention to students who have integrity, courage, high curiosity, and responsibility to become members of this team. According to the teacher at SMKN 2, there are eight members of the school intelligence team who were selected based on the teacher's observation of the above characteristics. The membership of this team is confidential, similar to the membership of BIN (state intelligence agency), which is kept secret to gather information if there are irregularities or imbalances that occur at or outside of school related to students.

However, talent development is more tentative, where the school will select students who will be prepared for art festivals, sports festivals, and academic competitions (writing, debate, and speech competitions). Student affairs teacher and student council advisor to meet the needs of these events and coach the students involved. So that talent development is more focused on tentative interests and circumstances. The students can participate in competitions both between schools and with other institutions.

The implication of a lack of understanding of talent that comes from nature is that a lot of students' potential comes from productive traits such as being helpful, able to work with others, love to look after animals or flowers and others traits which are not developed properly. Previous studies show that teachers really need to understand students' talents so they can motivate them to engage in various positive activities that suit the characteristics of each individual (Balázs, 2016).

Schools as formal institutions need to provide time, opportunity and space for students to be able to further explore their full potential through activities that are varied, repeated and involved with many people. So students will be able to test and hone their abilities after recognizing their strengths and weaknesses (Royani, 2016). With this ability, teachers can strengthen their students to develop their full potential. Teachers who are able to properly recognize students' talents will be the key to success in producing superior students by maximizing the unique potential of each student. Because each student's different potential requires stimulation and motivation from varied activities (Wahidah, 2019). Interest and motivation are the bridge between potential and talent and creativity. The interest and motivation required is

positive and in accordance with the learner's capacity (Hanafie & Amin, 2018). Efforts to comprehensively identify each student's talents by teachers are a must so that no one's potential is neglected because they feel they are not talented.

Schools play an important role in honing and developing students talents so that they become potential people. By recognizing students' talents, teachers will be able to recognize potential and talents so that they can directly direct and guide them to positif and usefull activities for them. Thus, the results of this research provide a picture that is in line with the talent development theory presented by Gardner (Gardner, 1999) that children must be well facilitated in their learning environment so that they can develop the different talents they have.

## **CONCLUSION**

Talent development is limited to talents that come from five senses and ignores talents come from nature. Only some teachers understand that talent can come from the five senses and from traits. However, they do not understand in detail what the talents are and how to develop it. As a consequence, the introduction and development of talents in Langsa secondary schools generally only facilitates students in developing their talents that come from five senses by providing several extracurricular activities at school. The rest of the school only encourages and motivates its students to take part in extracurricular activities outside of school. More innovative efforts are needed from the school to develop student talents and increase student creativity.

Teachers need to recognize students' talents more comprehensively. It is important to map this so that students do not make mistakes in determining a major or carrier plan that is suitable for them. Apart from that, it will also make it easier to choose a field of work and determine a specific role in life or make choices when continuing their education to college level. So that later students will be able to carry out whatever specific role they play in life. And they will get enjoy, easy, earn and excellence. More in-depth and comprehensive research is needed to find models for developing students' talents in order to optimize their talents in a systematic and directed manner by accommodating talents that comes from five senses and nature.

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