

# Factors Influencing Elementary School Teachers in Composing Final-Term Exam: A case study in the Bangka-Belitung Islands Province

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## **Abstract**

This research was conducted in the Bangka-Belitung Islands Province with the purpose of identifying: (1) factors which cause teachers to experience difficulties in developing the final-term exam; (2) correlations between teachers' education level, years of teaching, and their ability in composing the final-term test items; (3) efforts given by the local educational department and local government to help teachers write the final-term exam; and (4) impacts of the final-term exam which was made by the teachers on the students' learning achievements. As many as 122 teachers were involved in this research as the respondents distributed in four different regional districts in the Bangka-Belitung Islands Province. The data were collected using a questionnaire as the primary data collection instrument. All of the responses from the 122 respondents were analyzed using a descriptive qualitative research method. From this research, it was concluded that: (1) factors which support the teachers' readiness in developing the final-term exam include: (a) the teachers' experience in joining trainings in designing tests, (b) motivation given by the headmaster, (c) contribution from the handout as the main source of reference in writing the test, (d) support from the school inspector, and (e) availability of the blueprint of the final-term test design; and (2) obstacles which were experienced by the teachers in developing the final-term test consisted of (a) the lack of motivation to write the final-term exam due to the fact that there was only 50% of the subject materials were selected and used in the final-term exam, and (b) lack of training opportunities in designing a good quality test; also, (3) efforts given by the teachers in order to prepare themselves in designing the final-term exam comprised: (a) reading the handout and resource book of the test materials, (b) asking for some guidance from the supervisors who are considered to be the experts in their field, (c) initiating cooperation with teachers from other elementary schools, and (d) improving the strong level of confidence on the good quality of the final-term exam questions which were already composed. The suggestions proposed were: (1) the

teachers had to be provided with adequate training opportunities to write a good quality of a final-term exam, and (2) as this research reached out the 122 teachers as the respondents, therefore, there was an urgent need to conduct a more comprehensive research study with more respondents to be involved.

**Keywords:** factors, writing final-term exam, obstacles, teachers' efforts, test items

## INTRODUCTION

In every learning process, assessment always holds a significantly important role in order to identify the success rate of learning. With the assessment representing the actual students' learning performance, the determination between a good and bad teaching and learning process dichotomy can then be executed. The assessment on the learning outcomes basically deals with how the teachers can identify the learning outcomes of the completed teaching and learning process. One way to conduct the assessment is by providing scores on the students' learning outcomes using certain criteria. In this case, the teacher needs to be able to identify how far the learners have understood the instructional materials which have already been taught or how far the already managed learning objectives or competencies in a teaching and learning activity have already been completed. The achievement level of certain instructional competencies or objectives of an already completed learning activity is likely to be expressed in scores.

Scoring is an activity of determining the value of an object, such as good or bad, effective or ineffective, successful or unsuccessful, and else in accordance to the pre-determined criteria. One characteristic of scoring is the existence of an object or program to be scored and criteria as the basis of comparing between the realities, or real conditions, with the expected criteria. Scoring the learning process is the effort of providing scores on the teaching and learning process completed by the teacher and students in achieving the teaching objectives. Therefore, scoring the learning process and scoring the learning outcome are intertwined because an outcome is the result of a process.

A policy on assessment is a part of the reformation of the National Education System as stated in the Act of the Republic of Indonesia No. 20 Year 2003, of which implementation is regulated by Government Regulation No. 19 Year 2005 about the Standard of National Education. In that regulation, there are some important points related to the policy in scoring or testing, they are (1)

standard of content, (2) standard of graduate competences, (3) standard of process, and (4) standard of assessment.

Assessment on the learning outcomes is an important component in every learning activity. An effort of improving the quality of learning can be done through the improvement of the quality of assessment system. Assessment within the context of learning outcomes is referred to as an activity of interpreting data of measurement results of the students' abilities of each student after completing a learning activity. With regard to this, Noehi Nasution (2001) defines measurement as the act of providing a number to a particular attribute or characteristic of an individual, thing, or object according to a clear set of rules or formulations, while scoring is a process to make a decision by using some obtained information obtained from the measurement of a learning outcomes using either a test or non-test instrument.

This is in line with the statement expressed in Arikunto (2003) which differentiates between measurement, assessment, and evaluation. Arikunto (2003) says that measuring is comparing a thing using a measurement unit. Measuring is quantitative, while scoring is making a decision on one thing using a good or bad classification; therefore scoring is said to be qualitative. The results of measurement which are considered to be quantitative is proposed by Norman E. Gronlund (2009: 28) by saying that "measurement is the assigning of numbers to the results of a test or other types of assessment according to a specific rule (e.g. counting correct answers or awarding points for particular aspects of an essay)".

Based on scoring, the level of educational achievement of one school or region can be compared with that of another school or region. This is similar to the opinion of Gronlund that scoring is a systematic process which holds an important role in an effective teaching activity. In other words, scoring can be understood, in a general term, as an activity which includes all kinds of procedures in order to obtain information about the students' learning (observation, performance or project scoring, and written-test) which can describe the achievement of a learning process (Gronlund, 2009). In a similar vein, Nurgiyantoro (2014) states that scoring is a systematic process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting information to determine how far a learner can achieve the educational objectives.

One example of a relevant research study on this is Susila (2014) which posits that in improving the pedagogical competence of teachers in developing the instrument for scoring learning through

clinical supervision, teachers in general mention that the reality in the field shows that they only use one or two techniques of scoring, namely written-test and assignment, while the possibilities of using other techniques are still considered to be limited so that the school inspectors need to conduct supervision and guidance through clinical supervisions. Therefore, in order to improve the teachers' ability in making the final-term exam, there is an urgent need to have a teacher workshop activity intended for every subject. Realities at schools show that the teachers' ability is still limited when asked to make a good and valid exam based on the basic competences taught in the classrooms. They mostly use the tests which have already been available and adjusted to the instructional materials. Besides, most teachers have not yet had a good competence in developing tests so that they often construct the tests based on the collections of test items which are ready to use.

Based on the above descriptions, it can be concluded that scoring is an important activity to be completed in every learning process. Furthermore, it is through an evaluation activity on learning outcomes that the success rate of a learning process can be determined. Also, the use of a valid evaluation which is made by the teachers themselves that is strongly proposed as the teachers are the ones who can know well the instructional materials which have been delivered to the students.

Facts which happen at schools in the Bangka-Belitung Islands (Ba-Bel henceforth) Province are that the teachers have not been quite competent in developing a good and valid test which is constructed based on the basic competences taught and learned. The kind of tests usually administered comprises tests which are already available and ready to be immediately selected and used in compliance with the instructional materials taught at the classroom. This phenomenon is common to occur in the Ba-Bel Province especially in the elementary schools so that there is a discrepancy between the tests made and the basic competences stated in the national curriculum. Most of the teachers have not yet had a good competence in developing a good and valid test so that most of the time they always look for the tests which are already made and ready to be used. In every administration of final-term exam, the test items are to be used again in the following final-term exams with the exactly the same set of questions. In respect to this situation, it can be concluded that the teachers have not yet the adequate competences in making a test as they have not ever tried to develop a test of their own. Therefore, it is significantly important to conduct this research study.

In essence, the research problems are formulated as follows: (1) what are the factors (obstacles) which cause the teachers to find difficulties in making their own final-term test?; (2) is there any correlation between the teachers' education level and their ability in making a final-term test?; (3) is there any correlation between the number of teaching years of the teachers and their ability in making a final-term test?; (4) what are the efforts which have already been taken by the Local Government to improve the teachers' ability in making a final-term test?; (5) what are the efforts which have already been taken by the Department of Education in determining the final-term tests made by the teachers in order that they can practically be used? (6) Is there any influence of the final-term tests made by the teachers on the students' learning achievement level?

By referring the above research problems, the research objectives of this study are to identify the following points: (1) factors or obstacles which influence the teachers to find difficulties in making their own final-term test; (2) a correlation between the teachers' education level and their ability in making a final-term test; (3) a correlation between the number of teaching years of the teachers and their ability in making a final-term test; (4) efforts which have been taken by the Local Government to help the teachers make their own final-term test; (5) efforts which have been taken by the Department of Education in determining the final-term tests made by the teachers in order that they can practically be used; and (6) influences of the final-term test made by the teachers on their students' learning achievement.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Hamalik (2001) mentions that, a teacher is said to have a professional competence if he has the knowledge and basic understanding of his knowledge field broadly and deeply, which includes the mastery of the related discipline learning materials which enables him to guide the students to master the pre-determined competences as stated in the national standard of education, master the enrichment materials and deeper understandings as well as applications of the related subject materials taught, manage the teaching and learning program, conduct classroom management, use various teaching media and resources, introduce and implement the basic principles, and concepts of education with various viewpoints (sociological, philosophical, historical, and psychological), manage the teaching and learning process using student-centered teaching and learning strategy, introduce and implement the scoring techniques of the students' learning achievement for the teaching importance, introduce the functions and programs of the counseling and guidance service

at school, deal with the teaching and learning, classroom, as well as school administrations, understand principles of conducting research studies, manage research problems, and interpret research findings in order to develop tasks for education and teaching, as well as maintain cooperation with the students' parents, professional organizations, and other organizations for educational purposes. Scoring is a process of collecting information or evidence through measuring, inferring, describing, and interpreting evidence from various kinds of measurements (Permendikbud, 2013). In particular, assessment is understood to be "broader in scope than measurement in that it involves the interpretation and representation of measurement data (Print, 1993 in Sanjaya, 2011: 242). The kind of pedagogical competence used in the Improvement and Measurement of the Teachers' Performance Level in the National Curriculum Implementation Framework (2016: 443) is the scoring or measurement as an important component in the learning process. This also shows that scoring is an important part in the educational system because it reflects the development or improvement of the results of education from time to time.

Furthermore, measurement is understood as a process of determining the width or quantity of a thing (Wondt, Edwin and G.W. Brown, 1957:1) and, in other words, measurement is an effort of identifying the factual circumstance of an object as it is and quantifying it; this can be completed using a test or other means. Measurement is defined as an activity of comparing the results of observation with the set criteria. It is formulated as a process of determining scores on an individual or his characteristics according to certain set rules (Ebel & Frisbie, 1986: 14). Allen & Yen (in Djemari Mardapi, 2000: 1) define measurement as the systematical determination of scores to state the individual's condition as the essence of measurement is quantification or determination of scores on the characteristics or situations of an individual based on particular rules. The situation of an individual can be cognitive, affective, or psychomotoric abilities (Source: <http://finaniswati.blogspot.co.id/2015/03/perbedaan-pengukuran-dan-penilaian.html>).

## RESEARCH METHOD

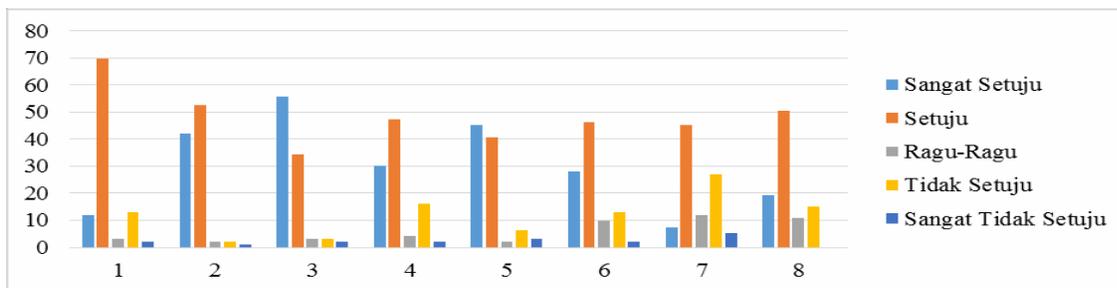
In conducting this descriptive qualitative study, a survey method through observations and interviews were completed. The information obtained in this research was then investigated deeper through conducting questionnaires and direct interviews with the elementary school teachers in the Ba-Bel islands. This qualitative research was intended for identifying the supporting factors and obstacles experienced by the elementary school teachers in constructing the final-term test.

The samples selected using purposive sampling technique were as many as 150 elementary school teachers from four different regional districts namely Belitung, East Belitung, Bangka, and South Bangka. Out of all the samples, as many as 122 people returned the questionnaires, and the other 28 people did not. Next, 30 out of the 122 people were studied whether they were ready to develop a test and implement it in the learning process in the classroom. The data collected in this research was analyzed and descriptively explained and the results of interviews were reported in order to complete the accuracy of the available data.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The questionnaires were distributed to 150 elementary school teachers in the Ba-Bel Islands Province. Out of the 150 respondents who were given the questionnaires, 122 people returned the filled questionnaires and the other 28 respondents did not.

### Factors which Support the Teacher’s Readiness in Making Final-Term Test



From the results of the data analysis, it was found that in writing a final-term test most of the teachers did not find any difficulties or obstacles because they have experienced joining a training on this; this was expressed by 82% of the teachers. Also, most of the headmasters have also motivated the teachers in composing the final-term test materials. This was stated by 95% of the headmasters. In fact, many of the headmasters have expected the teachers to make the final-term test together with the other subject teachers at school; 90% of the teacher respondents confirmed this statement. Furthermore, all of the handbook materials on every subject have been provided to be used as the references to construct the test by the headmasters; 77% of the teacher respondents confirmed this statement. 86% of the teachers further agreed that the handbooks of developing the final-term test were compulsory in preparing the final-term test. Then, 74% of the teacher respondents postulated that every time the teachers are about to write the final-term test or else the

school inspector or supervisor were ready to help. Meanwhile, some teachers felt less motivated because they were aware that it was only 50% of the test materials used for the final manuscript of the final-term test; 53% of the teachers expressed this disappointment. Furthermore, in regard to the test blueprint of the final-term exam, many of the teachers (70%) thought that they no longer had to make it since it is already made available in the Teacher’s Group.

Based on the above findings, it can be described that the presence of test development trainings, motivation from the headmasters, cooperation between teachers, availability of sources of reference, availability of handbooks of writing a test, support and/or concern from the team of school supervisors, and availability of test collections altogether support the teacher’s readiness in making the final-term test items. Nevertheless, there were some of the teachers (53%) who agreed to the statement that “the teachers are less motivated to make their own version of final-term test due to the fact that at the end there was only 50% of the test manuscript made by them which will later be actually included in the final-term test manuscript”. This statement is contradictory with the professional work demand of a teacher. In regard to this, there were 27% of the teachers who disagreed with that statement. Act No. 12 Year 2005 mentions that every teacher is obliged to complete the primary tasks including planning their lessons, conducting teaching and learning activities, assessing the learning outcomes, guiding and training the students, as well as completing some additional tasks.

**Factors which Obstruct the Teacher’s Readiness in Making Final-Term Test**

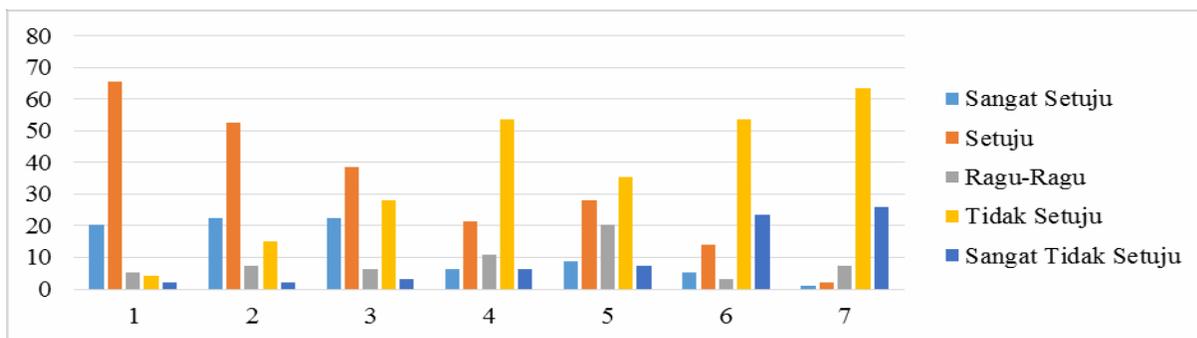


Figure 4.2.: Obstructing Factors on the Teacher’s Readiness in Making Final-Term Test

Many of the teacher respondents (86%) remarked that trainings on writing a test given by the Department of Education are still considered to be limited so that the final-term tests made by the

teacher still needs a lot to be improved. Before eventually being used, the final-term test manuscripts made by the teachers need to undergo some improvements over and over again; this statement was confirmed by 76% of the teacher respondents. Next, as many as 62% of the teacher respondents acknowledge that they felt afraid because one of the benchmarks of determining the teacher performance was the students' success rate in answering the final-term test made by the teachers. Some of the teachers (28%) regarded that the role of the supervisors/inspectors was considered to be not yet maximum in guiding the teachers to write the final term test and by the time the questionnaires were administered there were only 37% of the teacher respondents who were able to make test items at the level of C3 (application) so that they acknowledged that they always tried to avoid making test items at the level of C4 or above (analysis, synthesis, and evaluation). The final-term tests made by the teachers were mostly considered to be inadequate to be immediately used so that there were some feelings of lack of confidence and hesitant to start making the test again; this was expressed by 19% of the teachers. Moreover, 3% of the headmasters who responded to the questionnaire felt that they felt reluctant to believe that the result of the student evaluation when the kind of test used is that made by the teachers. The lack of opportunities of joining any trainings of making a test, lack of opportunities in improving the quality of the test over and over again, as well as the students' success rate in completing the test became the factors obstructing the teacher's readiness in making the final-term test. Meanwhile, the factor of minimum supervision from the school inspectors, teachers' lack of confidence, as well as lack of trust from the headmasters on the teachers' performance were considered to be not influential in the teacher's readiness in making the final-term test. However, on the statement "until now I am just able to make a test at the level of C3 (application) so that I always try to avoid making any test items at the level of C4 or above (analysis, synthesis, and evaluation)", there was 28% of the teacher respondents who stated that they agreed and 20% of them said that they were hesitant to say that it was considered to be an obstructing factor in making the final-term test. There were 35% of the teachers who said that they disagreed with the statement. In fact, supposedly, in regard to the understanding level of the teachers this should not be considered as an obstructing factor by a teacher in making the final-term test. A professional teacher needs to have a standard of competence which can be used as the benchmark of determining the success level of a teacher in teaching. The Act No. 14 Year 2005 about school teachers and university lecturers Section 10 of Article 1 explains that the teacher competences include pedagogical, personal, social, and professional competences which are obtained through a professional education.

**Efforts in Making the Final-term Test**

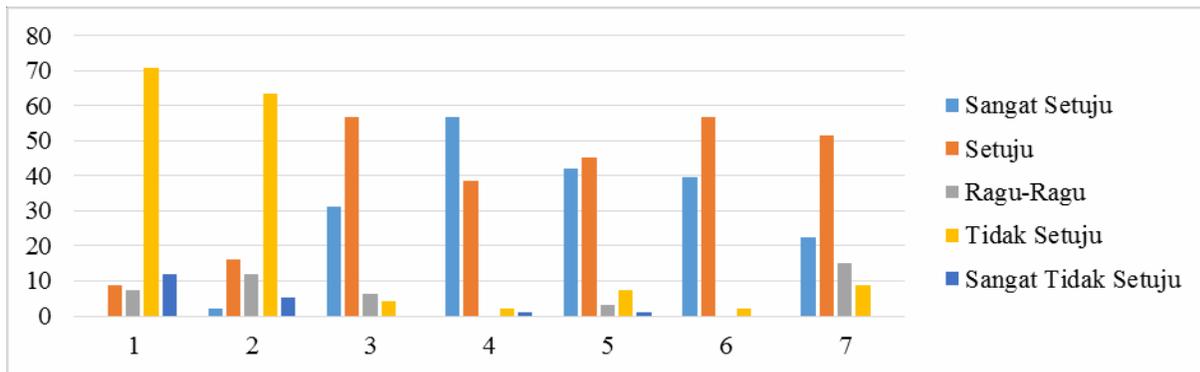


Figure 3. Efforts Given by the Teachers in Making the Final-term Test

The efforts given by the teachers in relation to their readiness in making the final-term test consist of reading the handbook and various references to compose the test items, asking for guidance from the supervisor/inspector and other experts in their respective fields, initiating cooperation between teachers, as well as growing a high level of confidence in providing a good quality in relation to the final term test arranged by the teachers. Mangkunegara (2001) posits that there is a positive correlation between achievement motives and work performance. The motives to have a high level of achievement are related to the work performance in such a way that the motives are considered to be impulses inside an individual to complete an activity or task well in order that they are able to have a high level of achievement at work performance with distinction.

**The Influence of Certification Factor on the Teacher’s Readiness in Making Final-term Test**

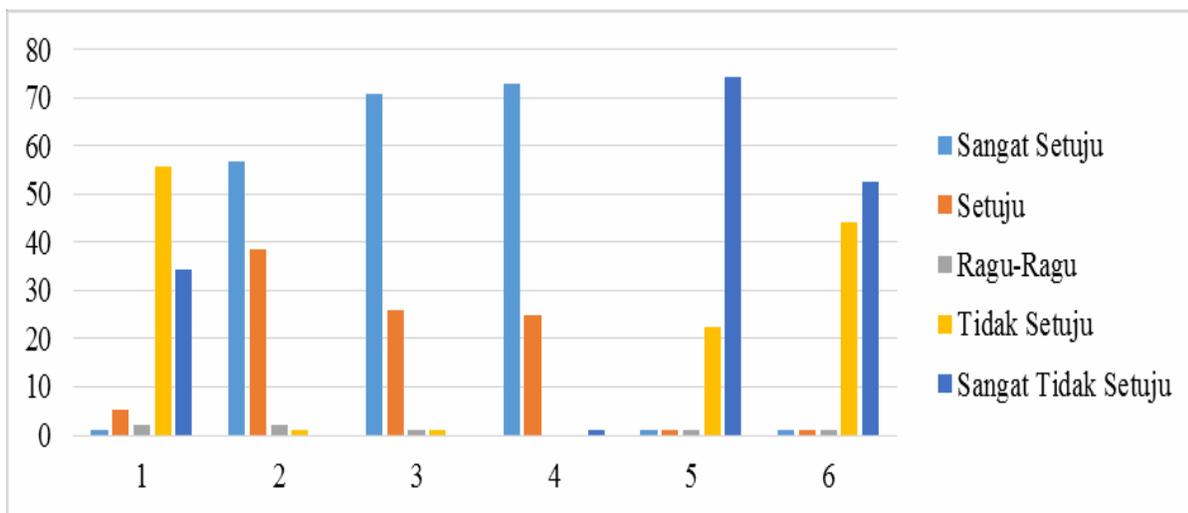


Figure 4. Certification Factor in Making Final-term Test

For teachers, making the lesson plans and final-term test items are considered to be equally difficult and burdening, therefore the teachers are less interested in completing these tasks; this was expressed by 6% of the teacher respondents. Even though making the final-term test is part of the primary tasks and unpaid obligations, the teachers need to do that by giving their best; this statement was agreed by 96% of the teacher respondents. Next, 97% of the teachers expressed that they would be happy if the evaluation result of the tests originally made by the teachers themselves reached the Minimum Passing Grade Criteria. Also, 98% of the teacher respondents agreed that they had to make the lesson plans, teach, develop tests, provide evaluation and check the result of the students' test or evaluation as they are the obligations which should be well completed by the teachers. Next, providing corrections on the students' test results especially essays is an exasperating and tiring task. Therefore, some of the students' work evaluation result was intentionally made up by the teachers as many as 2%. 2% of the teachers said that the workload as a teacher became bigger when they are asked to create a new test every time the final term ends. The demand of fulfilling the primary tasks well and teacher's sincerity are highly required. From the research findings, 73% of the teachers stated that they strongly agreed that in making lesson plans, conducting teaching and learning activities, making tests, providing evaluation as well as checking the students test results or evaluations the teachers have to be sincere and complete them all well without taking into account the workload of the teachers who have held the national certificate. The Ministry of National Education Regulation No. 41 Year 2007 provides an understanding that the teacher performance is the achievement in teaching which is resulted from the activities completed by the teacher regarding his primary tasks and functions in a concrete realization is the logical consequence of his role as a professional in the educational field. The Act No. 14 Year 2005 has provided a clear image that the teacher's main job is conducting the primary tasks and other workloads, as well as putting into reality the competences in delivering educational values which are put on their shoulders.

### Teacher Readiness in Making Final-term Test

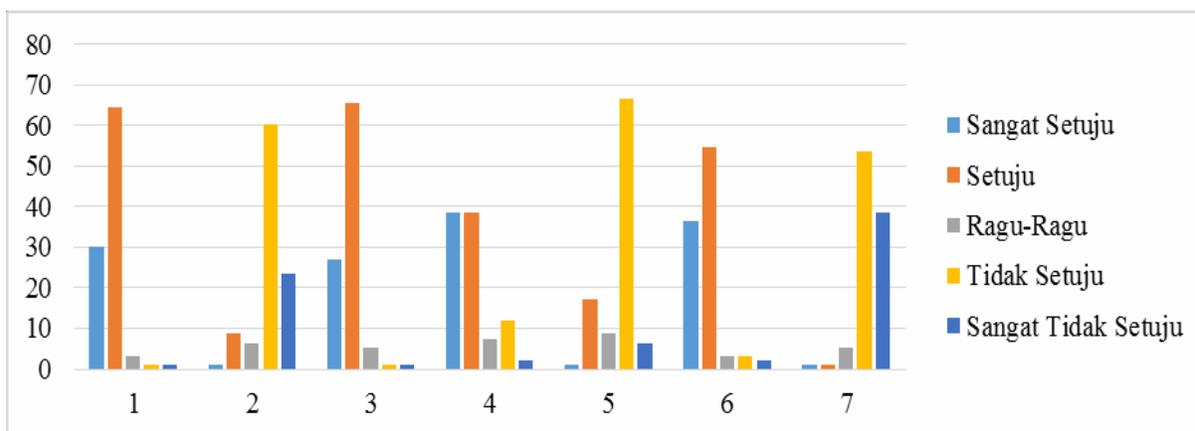


Figure 5. Teacher Readiness in Making Final-term Test

Before composing the test items for the final-term test, most of the teachers (95%) said that they have prepared various books for references in making a good test. Meanwhile, 10% of the teachers said that he would only start writing the test if there was a school supervisor/inspector who would help them make the test. In order that the results of the final-term test made by the teachers can actually measure the students' competence level, the teachers need to study the curriculum materials set by the government beforehand and this was acknowledged by 93% of the teacher respondents. In developing the test items, 78% of the teachers preferred to have the blueprints written by the experts in the respective subject field. Then, in order to get the final-term test questions to be readily given to the students, 18% of the students wanted to just copy from the collection of questions that they had in a book. Furthermore, every time the teachers are asked to write various test items, 92% of the teachers agreed to write the blueprints beforehand and when asked by the headmasters or school inspectors to compose the test items, 2% of the teacher respondents felt anxious and had a lack of confidence. The activity of preparing and following the guidance from the test writing handbooks and reference books or curriculum documents, making the test blueprint, counseling with the subject field experts and having a high level of confidence are the sequence of activities which have been planned and completed by the teachers in their preparation of making the final-term test without waiting for any help from the team of school inspectors from the Department of Education. Isjoni (2004) remarks that the capacity of the teacher performance can be seen from their responsibility in conducting the orders, as well as professional

and moral responsibilities put on their shoulder. All of these can be seen from their obedience and loyalty in fulfilling their responsibilities as a teacher inside and outside of the classroom.

### **Conclusion and Suggestions**

Based on the discussion of the research findings above, it can be concluded that:

1. The factors which supported the elementary teacher readiness in making the final-term test consisted of: (a) their experience in joining trainings of developing final-term test; (b) the motivation from the headmasters in which the teachers work; (c) the availability of books as the referential resources in writing test materials, which should have been well prepared by the headmasters; (d) the support from the school inspectors/supervisors; and (e) the availability of test blueprints for the final-term test.
2. The obstacles which were experienced by the elementary school teachers in making the final-term test items comprised: (a) the lack of motivation to write the final-term test because there were only 50% of the test items made by the teachers would be included in the final-term test; (b) the lack of trainings in making the test items and lack of opportunities for improving the quality of the tests made over and over again; and (c) the level of the students' success in answering the test items.
3. The efforts made by the teacher in order that they had a good level of readiness in making the final-term test included: (a) reading the handbooks and various references to write the test; (b) asking for counseling with the school inspectors/supervisors or guidance from the subject field experts; (c) working together with the other elementary school teachers; and (d) improving the self-confidence level in regard to the good quality of the final-term test made by the teachers.
4. The fulfillment of completing the primary tasks and sincerity of a teacher were strongly needed in order that good teaching and learning practices could be done, including making the final-term test. This applied as well in the case of making the lesson plans, conducting the teaching and learning activities, writing the test questions, providing evaluations as well as checking the students' test results or evaluations; all should be appropriately completed and with a good level of sincerity regardless the burdens had by the teachers who have been nationally certified by the government.

5. The elementary school teachers were considered to be ready in making the final-term test, although they could not maximally complete the task yet. The activity of preparing and studying the guidebooks and various sources of reference such as curriculum documents, making the final-term test, counseling with the subject field experts as well as improving the confidence level were the sequence of activities which were already planned and completed by the teachers in regard to their readiness in making the final-term test without waiting for any help from the team of supervisors or inspectors from the Department of Education.
6. It was indicated that there was a correlation between the teachers; education level and their ability in developing the final-term test. This applies as well to the number of teaching years of the teachers and their ability in making the final-term test. Nevertheless, this research study still needs to be further examined with more empirical research data evidence.

### **Suggestions**

Based on the above conclusion, the following points are suggested.

1. The elementary teachers' ability in developing the final-term test are still various, therefore there is still an urgent need of providing sufficient opportunities of training in order to write a good final-term test.
2. There is a need to support the conclusion of this research study with more empirical research evidence especially in regard to the correlation between the teachers' certification and number of teaching years variables with the teachers' ability in making the final-term test.
3. This research employed 122 teacher respondents consisting of the elementary school teachers in the Bangka Belitung Islands Province. In respect to that, there is a suggestion of conducting a research study with more comprehensive data evidence as well as number of respondents.

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