



**THE EFFECT OF EQUALIZING EDUCATION QUALITY ON STUDENT LEARNING
OUTCOMES IN FRONTIER, OUTERMOST, AND LEAST DEVELOPED AREAS (3T)**

Aminnatul Widyana*, Erfina Puspitasari, Nine Indah Kusumawati, Zeni Sutrisno
Universitas Gresik

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ABSTRACT

The implementation of education in facing various issues or new challenges requires the latest efforts and innovations in handling them. The equalization of educational quality, particularly in frontier, outermost, and least developed areas (known as the "3T" areas), the lack of qualified educators, uneven distribution of school equipment, low incentive funds, inadequate qualifications, and differences in educational institutions, lack of government support, poor access roads, and high education costs for residents in rural 3T communities are barriers to obtaining education in remote areas. The desire to attend school also remains a significant issue, indicating that communities in remote areas still do not consider education to be important. The method used in this article is analytical descriptive. The results obtained include: (1) the implementation and approach of learning aspects; (2) an ever-changing curriculum; (3) the need for experienced infrastructure; (4) improvement of educational programs, and; (5) improvement of learning motivation. The hope for addressing various educational challenges in remote areas is that all aspects of the community should be considered. However, there is a need for government and community involvement in overcoming all existing issues. All of these efforts are aimed at improving the equalization of educational quality in remote rural areas.

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: amiwidiana@gmail.com (Aminnatul Widyana)

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INTRODUCTION

Education is a viewpoint or set of beliefs about education articulated within a conceptual system. A particular group, which at minimum has unique interactions with one another and implied knowledge of education as a system, holds these beliefs (Syafaruddin, 2002). To achieve development in an ever-changing, unpredictable, and competitive environment, human resources with the ability to think rationally, analytically, methodically, critically, and creatively are necessary (Depdiknas, 2006: 9).

In line with Indonesia's national goals of achieving public welfare and promoting the intellectual advancement of its people, education has become an essential need for a progressive society. Despite the fact that not everyone requires the same degree or type of education, education is a necessity for everyone. One of the main objectives of the national development agenda is to develop education.

In modern times, there is a need to change the principle that education is essential for a better future. This is done to improve the standard of living of the Indonesian people. This issue is in line with the government's mandate based on the 1945 Constitution, which stipulates that education and national welfare must fulfill the right of every citizen to receive educational services.

In addition, residents of the frontier, outermost, and least developed regions are entitled to receive proper education. Furthermore, the government provides compulsory formal education for nine years free of charge to children from the age of seven to fifteen. According to Ministerial Regulation No. 23 of 2013 on the Minimum Service Standards for Basic Education, "Each primary school or Islamic elementary school provides six educators for each educational unit, while junior high schools provide one educator for each subject" (Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, 2013). This indicates that the available educators for basic education in Sintang Regency are sufficient. However, to make schools more effective, elementary and junior high schools also need to add three personnel who play the role of a school principal, a religious educator, and a sports educator. With the addition of these three personnel, schools in Sintang Regency still need additional educators to fulfill the minimum service standard indicators.

The implementation of educational equity in various regions of Indonesia has various obstacles in its implementation. These problems are caused by rural areas that are remote and far from urban areas in accessing education services that are still not evenly distributed (National Development Planning Agency, 2014). This indicates that there are

limitations and injustices due to the accessibility of education services that are not yet evenly distributed, limited educators, inadequate regional infrastructure, road infrastructure, and transportation facilities that have not been fulfilled.

In addition to limited access to education, financial constraints are also a major challenge to achieving education equity. As the level of education increases, so does the cost incurred by the students. One of the obstacles to education equity is the failure to achieve the compulsory education program implemented by the government. According to Hasanah and Jabar (2017:238), there are several barriers to the compulsory education program, including low community participation in education financing, lack of interest and awareness among parents and children about the importance of education for the future, school dropouts, inadequate socialization of the compulsory education program, and the inaccuracy of government subsidies related to the data collection of the poor population, which affects the distribution of education cards and the lack of cross-checking.

Education, according to Chandra (2009:33), is defined as nurturing and educating. From these two expressions, it can be concluded that education is a process of self-maturation through teaching and training activities, as well as the process of changing an individual's attitudes and behaviors. This applies when the government is the center of everything or when there is centralization. The government regulates everything related to learning, from learning objectives to learning materials and techniques (Munirah, 2015).

METHOD

This research utilized a qualitative method through descriptive analysis. Based on various literatures presented, the researcher conducted a descriptive analysis on the influence of equalizing the quality of education on student learning outcomes in frontier, outermost, and least developed areas (3T).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Previously, a number of studies have addressed the issues in education in frontier, outermost, and least developed areas (3T). These issues include the quality of educators, uneven distribution of educators, and limited infrastructure. This study delves deeper to complement previous research, which has found that the quality of education is also influenced by the synergy between formal and informal education. Furthermore, the

ability of educators to communicate educational goals based on the interests and talents of children is also crucial in improving the quality of education, both intellectually and mentally.

Discussion

The Quality of the Indonesian Education System

The quality of human resources (HR) in a country determines the development and progress of education in Indonesia. Education is required to improve the quality of HR in a country so that it can compete with other countries. As long as the education system functions well and efficiently, Indonesia, which is essentially a developing country, has the potential to become a developed country.

However, in reality, the standard of education in Indonesia is at its lowest point compared to other countries and is even declining. There are several causes of poor education quality in Indonesia if we look at the issue as a whole. According to Edward Sallis (1984), there are several factors that may contribute to poor curriculum design, inadequate building management, unfavorable working environment, and inappropriate systems and processes. Additionally, insufficient study time management and lack of personnel recruitment are also factors (Syafaruddin, 2002: 14). Furthermore, the evaluation system is not designed from the curriculum system, which further contributes to the low quality of education (Soedijarto, 1991: 56).

The responsibility of the government in improving the education standards in Indonesia is to ensure its even distribution, so that each region obtains the same level of education as others. The uniqueness of each region in Indonesia should be the benchmark for achieving educational justice. Indonesia is expected to be at the forefront of organizing education that is based on international (global) and local wisdom. Children find it easier to understand lesson materials when learning is integrated with local materials (Asriati, 2012).

The principles of education organization are constructed in such a way as to enable the inclusion of local wisdom values in several fields (Kusuma, 2018). The implementation of the concept of educational autonomy management is required to improve the education standards in each region by using clear and effective plans (Suti, 2011). Essentially, education produces HR that is excellent with abilities that are in accordance with the educational goals. Consistency between prediction and actual outcomes is a measure of

education quality.

Factors Affecting the Quality of Education in 3T Areas

Difficult school placement and lack of facilities and entertainment in these areas, according to Berg (in Wawan, 2014), are two factors that cause a lack of progress for teachers to teach in remote areas. The absence of guidance and infrastructure in poor regions causes a problem, and teaching staff works hard to overcome it. Since the implementation of the Semester Final Exam graduation requirements, the subjects taught must conform to the government's regulations. For those who work as educators in rural areas and are expected to be responsible as educators, this becomes a burden on their lives. Academic credentials are crucial and must be fully met to be referred to as professional educators. According to the Educator Law, an educator must have at least a Bachelor's or Diploma IV degree, and it is a step towards achieving educator professionalism (Nugroho: 2014). The existing education system lags behind the demands of the developing world. Therefore, there is a mismatch between the current education system and rising social expectations. There must be reasons for some of the issues mentioned above. There are three reasons behind Indonesia's poor education standards, and these factors are as follows:

Firstly, the approach to learning and the failure of the schooling system are the root cause of every educational problem in Indonesian society, from the failure of education at home, in the community, and in schools, to all the aforementioned failures. Children will suffer if the factors mentioned above do not work together to educate them in the best possible way. There will be certain actions or perspectives that conflict with the goal of instruction.

Secondly, the set curriculum also changes every time the government cabinet members, particularly the Minister of Education, change. This is the root cause of poor educational standards in Indonesia. Frequent curriculum changes may not guarantee high-quality teaching because the educational foundation may not have the proper preparation. If the curriculum is frequently modified, the quality of teaching, which functions as the basis for educators in the classroom, will decrease.

Thirdly, experienced instructors are needed to provide further instruction. This implies that all educators must have a thorough understanding of the content they teach. One of the challenges is the scarcity of instructors in rural areas who possess the necessary

skills.

The solution to the aforementioned problems that can improve the educational standards in Indonesia is to shift Indonesian education in a different direction. In other words, an educator must emphasize the growth of their students alongside the subjects they teach. The ability to balance a student's intellectual and psychological growth is a skill that educators need. The next step is to increase the standards of current educators. The most important step is to choose an appropriate program and curriculum that will serve as the foundation for the educational material provided to students.

Solutions to Educational Problems in 3T Areas

Several efforts to improve the education level can be undertaken not only by professionals but also by the general public (Tilaar, 1990:187). This is necessary due to the poor quality of education in rural areas. Although the government has made efforts to improve education, it has not yet been fully realized. Therefore, attention to education should be continuously given. This can be done through training professionals in remote villages and improving the quality of educators to promote education deeply in rural areas (Zamroni, 2001:51).

Educators in remote villages must develop communication skills and strengthen interpersonal relationships to promote students interest in learning and to achieve educational goals and equality. Students tend to repeat behaviors based on their interests and talents from an early age. Therefore, the key component of students' learning performance is their interest in the subject matter (Asmawi and Mufidah, 2017:2).

The education development and equalization program is part of the community development program in rural areas. The government and the community can work together to improve the quality and equality of education. The activities that should be undertaken include: (1) building suitable elementary schools; (2) providing facilities for children in remote and inaccessible areas; (3) renovating school buildings; (4) providing textbooks; (5) improving the quality of educational infrastructure; (6) improving the standards and credentials of instructors; (7) mandatory nine-year education, both through formal and informal pathways, and (8) coordinating functional literacy learning to accelerate the eradication of illiteracy.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusions

Building a nation starts with education. In remote rural communities, inadequate facilities and infrastructure, a lack of qualified educators, insufficient government support, poor road access, and high education costs are barriers to accessing education.

The provision of basic and secondary elements of life should be supported by efforts to improve the quality of education. Efforts to improve education quality include: (1) top-down planning, which is a method of organizing projects from the top to the bottom. This strategy is important, especially in examining policies related to remote or rural villages; (2) planning ideas from the bottom up, which is where ambitions emerge from the bottom up. Especially in determining the characteristics of issues and opportunities in each place, a bottom-up approach should be used. Consequently, the characteristics described are accurate and reliable results that are consistent with the aspirations of the community.

The government must pay greater attention to schools, teachers, and students. All buildings and infrastructure need to be improved, not only educational infrastructure but also the surrounding regional infrastructure to overcome the various educational challenges faced by remote villages where rural children pursue their education.

Suggestions

Based on the conclusions described above, the government has implemented a bottom-up planning strategy and a top-down strategy to improve the quality of education. The researcher has several recommendations outlined below:

The researcher recommends that the government pay greater attention to schools, teachers, and students, particularly in improving infrastructure to enhance education in frontier, outermost, and least developed areas (3T).

The researcher advises teachers to continue improving education wherever they are, especially in frontier, outermost, and least developed areas (3T) to promote more equitable education.

The researcher suggests that the government and society increase synergy and collaboration to improve the quality and equal distribution of education, especially in frontier, outermost, and least developed areas (3T).

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