

## **Enhancing Indonesia's Education Quality: Identifying and Addressing Key Challenges**

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### **Abstract**

Education is an important effort in improving the quality of human resources. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the weaknesses in Indonesia's current education system. Education is recognized as a top priority in every country, and the quality of education is an important indicator of a nation's progress. This research adopts a descriptive qualitative approach and uses literature research as its method. The author collected information from sources considered valid and relevant. The results of this study show that the quality of education in Indonesia is still low. This is due to a number of educational problems that Indonesia faces, including macro issues such as a complex curriculum, educational inequality, costs, teacher placement and low teacher quality. Key issues also involve monotonous teaching methods, inadequate facilities and infrastructure, and unsatisfactory student learning outcomes. In the discussion, some solutions are suggested that are expected to overcome the problems of education in Indonesia and improve the quality of education, so that Indonesia can compete with or even surpass other countries. This paper aims to increase individual awareness in building a better and more advanced Indonesia, as well as preparing quality human resources.

**Keywords :** Education Problems; Quality of Indonesian Education.

## **1. Introduction**

Indonesia has shown great commitment to the provision of education. This is reflected in Article 31 Paragraphs 3 and 4 of the 1945 Constitution, which stipulates the government's obligation to promote national education in order to improve people's legal understanding. The law also stipulates an education budget allocation of at least 20% of the APBN and APBD (Sujanto 2021). Nevertheless, education in Indonesia is inseparable from a number of problems. According to Fajr, education problems can be divided into two areas, namely micro problems, such as the curriculum, and macro problems, including the inequality of education in various regions (Elvira 2021). These problems are the main cause of the low quality of education in Indonesia.

According to the PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) survey in 2018, Indonesia ranked 74th out of 79 countries in terms of education system. This is a very worrying position, considering the potential of existing human resources. Kurniawan highlighted that the success factors of the education system involve students, the role of teachers, economic conditions, infrastructure, and other factors (Fathurrochman et al. 2021). Indonesia is trying to improve the quality of education with the 2013 Curriculum, hoping to improve its competitiveness (Fajri and Afriansyah 2019).

## **2. Literatur review**

The national education system (sisdiknas) built so far is still not able to fully meet the needs and global challenges ahead. The reform era, which aims to rebuild the national education system, must also take into account the interests of the authorities. In addition, programs aimed at equity and improving the quality of education are still the main problems in education in Indonesia. Education is something very important in the life of an educated country, education is a strategic means to improve the quality of human resources. This makes education the most important factor in the continuity of development and progress of a country.

Studying curriculum differences is one way to explore various aspects related to the Indonesian education system and several countries, especially regarding the advantages and disadvantages of the education system (Nasution et al. 2022). Education is considered the most important thing in any country. The quality of a country's education is one of the factors that determine the country's development

. In other words, the progress of a nation or country can be seen from how the quality of education in the nation and country. The poor quality of education that exists will make the nation or country lag behind. According to Nandika, since 1972 UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) has emphasized that education has a function as a key to paving the way in building and improving the country (Nurhuda 2022).

## **3. Material and Method**

This research uses a qualitative approach. (Pahleviannur et al. 2022). Qualitative research is a research process that seeks to understand, utilizing certain research methodological traditions, by investigating social or humanitarian problems. Researchers create a complex and comprehensive

picture, analyze words, report informants' points of view in detail, and conduct research in naturalistic situations. Collect data and information using a literature review.

### a. Design Study

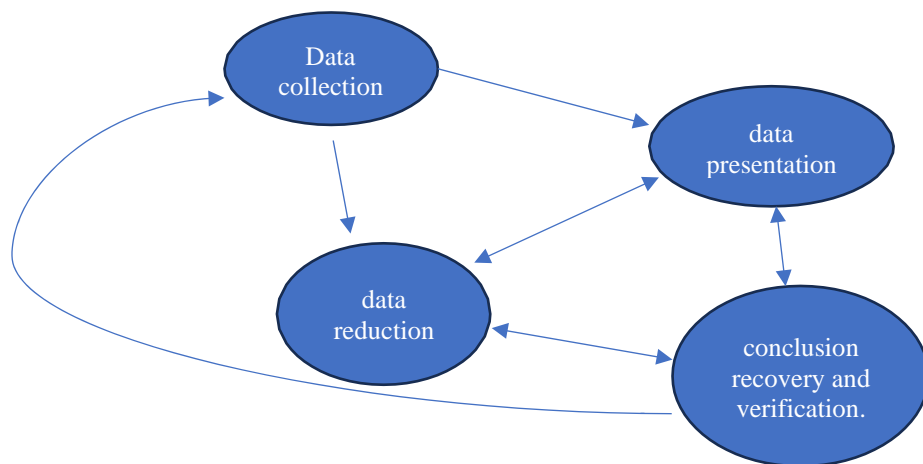
Literature review is a data collection tool to explore various theories related to the problems encountered or studied as documents to discuss research findings. Literature research is conducted by studying books related to the research problem, relevant journals and/or articles, printed and electronic newspapers (Siyoto and Sodik 2015). The process of data analysis in this study was carried out continuously from the beginning to the end of the research.

### b. Data Analysis

Miles and Huberman in (Harahap 2021) stated that:

There is no specific method that can be used as a guideline in a study, the method that can be suggested is to follow the following steps:

- 1) data reduction, 2) data presentation, 3) conclusion recovery and verification.



**Figure 1. Research Model**  
Components of data analysis (Harahap 2021)

## 4. Results And Discussion

Based on research methods taken from various magazines, articles and other books related to the problem of quality education in Indonesia, the following results were obtained: Abundant natural resources and technological advances will be of no use if human resources are insufficient or unable to manage them. Training superior human resources who are able to solve various social problems is very important for the progress of the country. The higher the quality of a country's education, the faster the country will be classified as a developed country. Education in Indonesia is still relatively low with the rapid progress of the times, the education of students must be balanced with efficiency, because it can be said that good education is education whose students and graduates are able to adapt to changing times. On the other hand,

Indonesia's problems will gradually be resolved if education can also create good human resources (Fitri 2021). Education is also a process that includes three dimensions: the individual, society and the entire content of reality. The content of reality, both material and spiritual, plays a role in determining the nature, form and fate of a person (Nasution 2016).

A person's character can be determined by the quality of his education to make him a better and more useful human being. Education occupies a good or strategic place in efforts to improve the quality and capacity of a person's life (Yulia and Suryani 2022). The definition of education is also mentioned in the Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System (UU SISDIKNAS). In pasal 1 paragraph (1) states that education is a conscious and planned effort to create an atmosphere and learning process, which aims to enable students to develop spiritual and religious potential, personality, self-control, intelligence, skills and noble ethics. Therefore, education is very important for the progress of a nation and is very important in making humans a better human being, beneficial for themselves, for others, for religion, for the nation and state (Nurfadli et al. 2021).

### **The low quality of education in Indonesia**

Quality is the degree of good or bad. The existence of quality is important to know whether something is successful or not. In addition to the quality of education, the quality of education is also needed to determine whether the implementation of education takes place according to the objectives or not. According to Ace Suryadi and H.A.R. Indeed, the quality of education is the ability of educational institutions to use educational resources to increase learning capacity as optimally as possible (Sujanto 2021). In the aspect of education, quality refers to the process of organizing education and educational outcomes. The quality of education in Indonesia is currently quite low compared to other countries in the world.

Based on the results of the 2018 world secondary education system survey published by PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) in 2019, Indonesia is in a low position, precisely ranked 74/79 other countries in the survey. In other words, Indonesia is at the bottom of the 6th position (Ansori 2021). Seeing the current reality, Indonesia must continue to make every effort to achieve education in accordance with the objectives of national education as stated in Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning Article 3 of the National Education System, especially education that can develop potential learners to become human beings who are devoted to God Almighty, knowledgeable, noble, creative, independent and able to become democratic citizens (Nurhuda 2022).

### **Education problems in Indonesia**

Various types of education problems in Indonesia are the biggest challenge in achieving quality education. These problems are the main cause of the poor quality of education in Indonesia today. This is certainly a special concern for the people of Indonesia. The reason is that the quality of human beings produced actually depends on the quality of education (Sujanto 2021).

These problems are:

### **a. Indonesian education problems in the macro scope**

#### **1) The curriculum is too complicated and difficult to understand**

The curriculum is a design or program provided by education providers to their students. In Indonesia, there have been 10 to 11 changes to the school curriculum since the country's independence. Of course, curriculum changes can cause confusion, especially for educators, students and even parents. According to Nasution, curriculum change can also be understood as a change in people, especially educators, education organizers, and all parties involved in education. This is why curriculum change is often considered a social change (Mardiana and Sumiyatun 2017).

In addition to program changes, program implementation in Indonesia is also quite complicated. This has a big impact on teachers and students. Students will be faced with a number of subjects that they must master. Therefore, it is difficult for students to choose and develop their potential according to their desires and abilities. In addition to students, educators are also affected. Teachers will be tasked with learning materials and teaching students various materials. Therefore, it is possible that teachers have not reached the optimal level in educating their students. Indonesia is currently implementing the 2013 curriculum which is considered an improvement on the previous curriculum. The implementation of the 2013 Curriculum is expected to be a good opportunity for Indonesia to improve the quality of education and increase competitiveness to be equal to other countries (Elvira 2021).

#### **2) Education Inequality**

Indonesia is a developing country that is still experiencing various development processes, especially in the field of education. Therefore, the implementation of the education process still faces various challenges in developing countries, such as the uneven distribution of education, especially in underdeveloped areas. This inequality is often experienced by the poor layers of society. As we know, the higher the education, the more expensive it is. So, it is not uncommon for many people to choose not to go to school rather than having to pay a lot of money (Maulana 2022).

#### **3) Teacher Placement Problems**

In some cases of education in Indonesia, the problem of teacher placement is still common, especially the placement of teachers in subject areas that are not in accordance with their placement or expertise.

Especially the placement of subject teachers who are not in accordance with their placement or expertise. This can cause teachers to not be optimal in teaching. According to Jakaria, teacher ineligibility can be caused by many factors, one of which is the mismatch between the field of study taught and the teacher's educational background (Yulaini 2017). This teacher placement problem usually occurs due to a shortage of teachers in a particular area. This means that in-service teachers must be able to teach in other subject areas to meet the needs of their students.

This teacher shortage often occurs in remote areas, due to the uneven distribution of teachers in these areas.

#### 4) Low teacher quality

Teachers are guides who convey knowledge to students. The role of the teacher is very important in the success of education. Being a teacher is not easy, there are many responsibilities. However, in fact, there are still many teachers who see their work as easy and only do their job just to get an income (Yulaini 2017). Currently, there is a false paradigm about the understanding of the teaching profession, which includes:

(1) Creating people who are ready to work; (2) Thinking that educating is an easy job and can be done by anyone; and (3) Having the main goal of earning income.

In fact, Indonesia needs qualified and professional teachers (Leonard 2016). As an educator or teacher must be able to carry out their obligations as they should, teachers have an obligation to educate, teach, guide, train, and assess their students. The duties of teachers according to Law Number 20 of 2003 are teachers in charge of planning

and compiling learning, implement learning, assess the results of learning, guide, train, research, and serve the community. By carrying out their teaching duties, teachers are expected to educate and guide their students to become human beings who are in line with the goals of national education (Yulia and Suryani 2022).

#### 5) The high cost of education

Nowadays, people often know that "the higher the education, the higher the cost". This should be a concern for the government because many people are affected by the high cost of education. The high cost of education has a huge impact on the Indonesian people, most of whom are middle class. Few people would rather not go to school than pay a large sum of money. There are also children who want to go to school but are constrained by the cost so they have to drop out. It should be noted that the high cost of education will create an unequal distribution of education in Indonesia and have a negative impact on various aspects of life.

According to Idris, this education problem will have an impact on all aspects of life, leading to widespread unemployment, rampant crime, increasing poverty, and many more. (Yulia and Suryani 2022).

#### b. Education problems in Indonesia at the micro level

##### 1) Monotonous learning methods

This monotonous learning method means that there is no change or innovation, in other words, this method is carried out in such a way that there is no difference in the way the material is delivered. In fact, the learning method used is very influential on student learning outcomes. Because the learning process is an educational activity, where there is interaction between students and teachers. Interaction in the process of learning activities has educational value because students are directed to achieve certain learning goals that have been previously compiled, these goals

expect students to understand and understand the material presented (Fajri and Afriansyah 2019). Therefore, in learning activities, teachers or educators need to apply creative and innovative methods to attract the attention of students who can then achieve the expected learning outcomes.

## 2) Inadequate facilities and infrastructure

Indonesia as a developing country still has a lot to develop and improve. This includes improving physical facilities and educational infrastructure. Until now, we often see inadequate or even non-existent infrastructure in some schools in the region... The problem of poor quality educational facilities and infrastructure can be caused by many factors, such as difficulty in allocating capital, misuse of school funds, poor maintenance of facilities and infrastructure, indifference to supervision of school facilities and infrastructure, and other factors (Agustang, Mutiara and Asrifan 2021). As a result, many students are unable to utilize school facilities. In fact, the existence of adequate educational facilities and infrastructure can improve student learning outcomes. According to Yustikia, facilities and infrastructure have an important relationship with learning. The learning process that does not use good facilities and infrastructure will have a negative impact on the learning process. The learning process is considered less meaningful (Sri Yustikia 2019).

## 3) Low student achievement

The essence of education is the learning process. The learning process certainly has a major influence on student success. The learning process is carried out to develop and explore the potential that exists in students and realize the results expected by students. According to Putri and Neviarni, success is the culmination of the learning process which shows the academic success of students (Nasri et al. 2022). But unfortunately, low student achievement is still a big challenge in realizing the hopes of Indonesian education. Many factors explain the low quality of student learning outcomes.

### a) Internal factors

- Physical factors:  
inattention to food, physical illness
- Psychic factors:  
lack of motivation, both from oneself and others
- Fatigue

### b) External factors

- Low teacher quality
- Inadequate facilities and infrastructure
- Family factors, such as conflicts within the family
- Environmental factors, such as indifference of people around, poor education, companies, etc. (Yulaini 2017).

## **Possible solutions**

The quality of education in Indonesia is still low compared to other countries... In fact, education is an important thing in life. The whole country has high hopes for the progress of Indonesia from the students... However, it should be noted that education plays an important role in creating a quality society (Tanuwijaya and Tambunan 2021). Therefore, we must strive and have solutions so that education is in line with the goals of national education, of course, to create quality human beings. There are several solutions to these problems as follows.

a. Science and technology.

The improvement and development of human resources and technology to prepare the next generation of the nation is carried out through education (Saptono, 2016) The exploration of new technologies in the world of education requires Indonesia to carry out reforms in the field of education. Carrying out reforms is not easy; it requires the willingness of Indonesian human resources to carry it out.

b. Population growth rate.

Too rapid a growth rate will impact on issues of equity and the quality and relevance of education. Population growth will impact on the number of students. The stronger the population growth, the more schools are needed to accommodate it. If schools do not have enough capacity, many students are displaced or do not attend school.

However, if there is pressure on the number and capacity of a school, there will be an imbalance between teachers and student. If this situation continues, the quality and relevance of education will not be as expected. Implementing Education Equity The issue of education inequality in Indonesia is familiar to everyone. It is often the case that certain areas of education receive less attention. There are several ways to address the problem of educational inequality. According to Kurniawan, possible solutions include:

(1) Construction of student buildings or classrooms in each region; (2) Realizing mutual cooperation between residents in the maintenance and upkeep of school facilities provided; (3) sending professional teachers to remote areas; (4) Having a program to reach out to residents or make them aware of the importance of education (visiting residents' homes); (Suparya, Suastra and Arnyana 2022). Cost is also a barrier to equitable distribution of education. Therefore, the government must pay attention to allocating funds to underprivileged communities so that children can attend school. In addition to the government, the community can work together to meet the educational needs of those in need.

c. Improving Teacher Welfare

As stated earlier, education in Indonesia is in dire need of teachers who can carry out their duties and functions properly in accordance with Law Number 20 of 2003. To achieve this, all of this must be accompanied by teacher health insurance. Teacher happiness and professionalism are interrelated. According to Kulla, the impact of low teacher welfare can be seen from the large number of teachers who work on the side, such as



trading or raising livestock (Cecept et al.. 2021).... This affects teacher performance when teaching. It is not uncommon for teachers to focus too much on secondary tasks, making the teaching process less optimal.

#### d. Improving the Quality of Education

The quality of Indonesian education needs to be further improved to achieve the expected educational goals ..... According to Aziz, quality education is education that can meet the expectations, needs and desires of the community (Mulyati 2022)..... Improving the quality of education can be done by:

(1) Determining the curriculum according to needs (adjusting it to the conditions of students, society, and the country); (2) Meeting the needs of facilities and infrastructure; (3) Organizing simple activities such as classes, literacy programs, establishing relationships with parents, etc.

#### e. Improving student learning outcomes

Currently, low student academic achievement is still a challenge for Indonesian education. This fact is very unfortunate, because it proves the failure of education in Indonesia. Therefore, there is a need for efforts or efforts that can overcome these problems, including:

(1) Teachers make the learning process more interesting and effective, not monotonous; (2) Students must be active in learning activities so that they become the center of learning, not just listeners; (3) The role of parents in encouraging their children to learn is very necessary; and (4) The community facilitates the learning process of students by creating a good and comfortable environment.

### 5. Discussion

Various types of education problems in Indonesia are the biggest challenge in achieving quality education. These problems are the main cause of the poor quality of education in Indonesia today. This is certainly a special concern for the people of Indonesia. The reason is that the quality of human beings produced actually depends on the quality of education (Sujanto 2021). Indonesian education problems in the macro scope and micro scope

### 6. Conclusion, Implication, and Recommendation

Education is the spearhead of a country's progress. Indonesia has a lot of natural resources, this is inversely proportional to its education. You may not be able to do this right. Indonesia itself is a country that is very concerned about the implementation of education. However, education is never free from various problems that hinder Indonesian education in achieving its goals and expectations.

There are two kinds of education problems, namely macro scope problems and micro scope problems. Macro problems include:

a. The curriculum is confusing and too complicated b. Unequal education c. Teacher placement problems d. Low teacher quality e. The cost of education is high while the cost of education at

the micro level includes: a. Monotonous learning methods b. Inadequate facilities and infrastructure c. Possible solutions to low student achievement are:

a. Achieving educational equality b. Improving teacher welfare c. Improve the quality of education d. Improving Student Learning Outcomes The above description shows that the situation of education in Indonesia is quite worrying. Therefore, every individual must realize the need to build a better and more advanced Indonesia, such as through education.

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