



Bridging the Divide: Human Resource Challenges in the Education Sector of Developing Nation

Harmita*, Silvia Marniati, M Nasrudin, Muazza, Aprillitzavivayarti

Universitas Jambi, Indonesia

Email : mitaharmita0@gmail.com

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*Corresponding Author

ABSTRACT

Human resource (HR) management in Indonesia's education sector continues to face persistent challenges that directly influence the quality of national education. This study aims to analyze problems related to employment disparities between civil servant (PNS) and honorary teachers, unequal teacher distribution, recruitment quality, and welfare issues in educational institutions. Using a literature review method, the research synthesizes data from books, academic journals, and official government documents to identify key patterns and policy gaps. The results show that disparities in employment status create inequality in job security and motivation, while recruitment and placement often fail to reflect competency-based standards. Moreover, inadequate welfare and professional development opportunities significantly affect teacher satisfaction and performance. Therefore, this study emphasizes the need for comprehensive HR reforms in education to ensure equity, professionalism, and sustainable development among educators.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is universally recognized as a cornerstone for building high-quality, competitive human resources, especially in developing countries like Indonesia. Beyond curricula and facilities, the success of education is deeply dependent on teachers as frontline implementers of learning. Teachers do not merely deliver content—they shape the character, competence, and creativity of students who will become future citizens and leaders. Consequently, the quality and welfare of teachers are critical issues that affect not only the performance of educational institutions but also long-term national development. Global data and international benchmarks (e.g., OECD, 2021) consistently show that education systems with strong teacher support mechanisms perform better in student outcomes. Despite the centrality of teachers, their management as

human resources often remains under-analyzed, particularly in relation to employment systems, status disparities, and welfare gaps. In Indonesia, this issue is increasingly urgent given the large number of non-permanent or honorary teachers. This research aims to explore the systemic issues in teacher management to support more equitable and effective education delivery across the country.

A major structural issue in Indonesia's education sector lies in the dualism of teacher employment: the division between State Civil Apparatus (ASN) teachers and non-ASN (honorary) teachers. This segmentation results in unequal treatment, varying degrees of job security, and significant differences in professional development opportunities. While ASN teachers enjoy stable salaries, full employment rights, and clear career trajectories, honorary teachers face job uncertainty, minimal income, and limited access to training. This inequality creates a systemic imbalance within the educational workforce, leading to disparities not only in teacher welfare but also in the quality of education received by students. The situation undermines both equity and effectiveness in education, particularly in underserved regions. Despite policy efforts aimed at improving teacher status and distribution, such as the Government Employees with Work Agreements (PPPK) program, significant challenges persist in its implementation. These include inconsistent selection processes, regional budget limitations, and outdated teacher databases. These problems call for a comprehensive reassessment of Indonesia's teacher management policies from a human resource development perspective.

Field observations and reports reveal a stark contrast in conditions between civil servant and honorary teachers across Indonesia. Many honorary teachers have served in schools for over a decade without ever receiving formal employment status or access to essential benefits. Some are paid far below the minimum wage—ranging from Rp200,000 to Rp500,000 per month—despite working full-time teaching schedules. As a result, many are forced to take on additional jobs, such as tutoring or manual labor, to support their families. This economic pressure detracts from their focus on classroom teaching and undermines their professional commitment. On the other hand, ASN teachers are entitled to fixed salaries, allowances, and opportunities for promotion, creating a clear divide in morale, motivation, and teaching quality. Furthermore, teacher distribution remains highly uneven. Urban and central areas often have an oversupply of teachers, while rural and remote regions face chronic shortages. This unequal distribution exacerbates educational gaps and signals a failure in strategic human resource planning within the education sector.

Previous studies have examined various aspects of teacher quality,

motivation, and the implications of welfare policies. Mulyasa (2021) highlighted the essential role of improving teacher competence in achieving educational reform. Hasibuan (2020) discussed how occupational welfare—including financial compensation and non-financial support—affects employee performance, particularly in the public sector. Wahyuni (2023) explored the effects of welfare disparities on teacher motivation and student engagement. Armstrong (2014) offered a broader view of human resource management principles that can be applied to education systems. While these studies provide foundational knowledge, they often examine teacher welfare or recruitment in isolation, without connecting these elements to broader systemic challenges, such as status-based employment structures and geographic distribution. Furthermore, much of the literature is theoretical or policy-based, lacking grounded empirical studies that explore the real experiences of teachers in various regions of Indonesia. This disconnect limits the applicability of past research to inform comprehensive reform efforts at the national level.

In addition, while several researchers have discussed the PPPK scheme as a potential solution to status disparities between ASN and honorary teachers (e.g., Sutopo, 2022; Rivai, 2019), they rarely explore its practical implications or effectiveness from the perspective of the teachers themselves. Most of the existing literature focuses on administrative processes, such as quota allocation, legal frameworks, or budget constraints, rather than the lived realities of teachers who undergo these transitions. This research identifies a gap in understanding the intersection between employment status, welfare, recruitment practices, and education quality from a holistic, HRM-based lens. By integrating these elements, this study addresses a critical omission in the literature and provides a more comprehensive framework for evaluating and improving teacher management in Indonesia. This gap is significant because failure to resolve these issues may result in continued demoralization among educators, increasing turnover, and widening educational inequities—especially in rural and marginalized areas. Therefore, filling this gap is essential for formulating equitable, sustainable, and effective education policies.

This study presents a novel approach by examining teacher management in Indonesia through an integrated human resource management (HRM) framework, combining three interconnected dimensions: employment status disparities, recruitment and distribution quality, and teacher welfare. Unlike prior studies that often isolate these elements, this research emphasizes their systemic interactions and long-term effects on teacher motivation and student outcomes. It also incorporates perspectives from teachers themselves—particularly non-ASN educators—to understand how policy impacts are experienced at the ground level. By doing so, the research contributes both

practically and theoretically. Practically, it offers insights into policy design that is more responsive to field realities. Theoretically, it enhances HRM literature by applying it to the education sector in a developing country context. This combination of empirical focus, policy relevance, and conceptual integration represents a valuable addition to the existing body of research. The study's findings are expected to inform more equitable and effective governance strategies in teacher recruitment, deployment, and support systems.

Based on the issues outlined above, the core research problem addressed in this study is: How do disparities in teacher employment status and welfare affect professional performance, teacher motivation, and educational quality in Indonesian public schools? This question arises from the need to understand how systemic HRM practices either support or hinder educational equity and performance. The working argument of this research is that employment dualism and welfare inequality among teachers create structural inefficiencies that compromise the quality of education. When teachers face economic insecurity and professional stagnation, their ability to focus on student development and instructional innovation diminishes. Consequently, these disparities not only impact individual teachers but also affect institutional performance and broader education outcomes. Addressing this problem requires a shift from fragmented policies to a holistic HRM approach that emphasizes fair recruitment, equitable welfare, and targeted teacher deployment. This research argues for such an integrated approach as essential for achieving both teacher empowerment and improved student achievement in Indonesia.

This study contributes to the academic and policy discourse by offering an empirical, HRM-oriented analysis of teacher employment and welfare in the Indonesian education system. Its main objective is to bridge the gap between policy intent and implementation outcomes, focusing on how national teacher management frameworks affect the lived experiences of educators. The study proposes that long-term reform should prioritize equal employment opportunities, improved welfare schemes for non-ASN teachers, and data-driven recruitment policies that address regional disparities. By situating the analysis within both HRM theory and real-world educational practice, the study serves as a model for interdisciplinary research that integrates management science with public education reform. Additionally, the findings are expected to inform stakeholders—such as the Ministry of Education, local governments, and teacher unions—on effective strategies for reducing inequality and enhancing the quality of teaching nationwide. Ultimately, the research aims to support the development of an education system that is both

professionally empowering for teachers and academically enriching for students.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative descriptive literature review approach to deeply analyze the concepts and practices of human resource management in the educational context. The chosen type of research is a descriptive-analytical library study, in which the researcher conducts a systematic review of various scientific literature to identify patterns, trends, and knowledge gaps, and construct a comprehensive understanding framework for educational human resource management. The descriptive qualitative approach allows the researcher to describe phenomena holistically and contextually based on data available in the literature. The purpose of a literature review is to synthesize previous research findings to provide theoretical and practical contributions to the development of science (Creswell, 2021).

Data collection was conducted through literature searches from various credible primary and secondary sources relevant to the research topic. Primary data sources included scientific journal articles indexed in national databases such as Sinta (Science and Technology Index) and international databases such as Scopus, which were selected for their reputation for providing high-quality publications and having undergone a rigorous peer review process. In addition, researchers also used secondary data sources in the form of educational management textbooks, monographs, international conference proceedings, and official reports from government institutions and international organizations such as the National Civil Service Agency (BKN), the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek), and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The selection of these sources was based on the criteria of validity, reliability, topicality, and relevance to the research focus on educational human resource management.

The type of data used in this study is secondary data in the form of written documents, including qualitative data in the form of theoretical concepts, empirical findings, policies, and best practices in educational human resource management documented in scientific literature. The data collected includes information on human resource management functions such as planning, recruitment and selection, competency development, performance assessment, compensation and welfare, and career development of educators and education staff. The researcher limited the literature search to publications published within the last ten years to ensure the relevance and currency of the

information, although several classic references that are still relevant are still considered to provide a strong theoretical foundation.

The data analysis process was carried out through several systematic stages in accordance with the principles of content analysis and thematic analysis. The first stage was literature identification and selection, in which researchers conducted a search using relevant keywords such as "human resource management," "education," "human resource management," "educational management," and other keyword combinations. The obtained literature was then selected based on predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria, such as topic suitability, publication quality, and data completeness. The second stage was data extraction, which identified and recorded important information from each literature, including key concepts, research findings, methodologies used, as well as conclusions and recommendations.

The third stage is categorization and codification, where the extracted data is grouped into specific themes or categories based on conceptual similarities and contexts. This process helps researchers identify emerging patterns, similarities and differences of opinion among researchers, and gaps in the existing literature. The fourth stage is synthesis and interpretation, which integrates findings from various sources to construct a coherent and comprehensive narrative regarding educational human resource management. At this stage, researchers conduct a critical analysis of the literature by comparing various theoretical perspectives and empirical findings, and connecting them to the practical context of educational institution management.

To ensure the quality and credibility of the research results, the researcher applied the principles of source triangulation by comparing information from various different literatures. Furthermore, the researcher also validated the content by ensuring that the interpretations made were in line with the meaning intended by the original authors and supported by sufficient evidence from the literature. The analysis process was carried out iteratively to ensure that no important information was missed and to deepen understanding of the phenomena studied. The final results of this analysis are presented in the form of a systematic, logical, and easy-to-understand narrative description, accompanied by a discussion that links the research findings to relevant theories and practical implications for the development of human resource management in educational institutions.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Employment Status Disparities and Educator Welfare

One of the most consistently recurring findings across the literature is the significant disparity between educators with civil servant (PNS) status and

those who are non-civil servants or honorary staff. Honorary teachers in Indonesia often carry workloads equal to or even greater than those of PNS teachers, yet they receive far lower welfare benefits and career security. This situation creates structural inequality that negatively affects work motivation, organizational loyalty, and ultimately, the quality of learning provided to students (Suryani, 2022).

Similarly, honorary teachers often face delayed salary payments, limited access to continuous professional development, and minimal opportunities for promotion or career advancement (Handayani, 2021).

Regulatorily, Law No. 14 of 2005 on Teachers and Lecturers guarantees all teachers the right to a decent income and professional protection regardless of employment status. However, its implementation still faces challenges such as limited regional budgets and bureaucratic complexity (Kemendikbudristek, 2023). This disparity reflects the weakness of an equitable educational HRM system that has yet to fully apply merit-based and professional management principles (Tilaar, 2020).

A similar phenomenon occurs in higher education, where contract lecturers or non-civil servant lecturers face higher administrative workloads but receive limited compensation and career development opportunities. This condition significantly affects motivation and research (Hidayat, 2020). Data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) (2023) shows that more than 40 percent of teaching staff in Indonesia are still non-civil servants, indicating that this disparity is not merely individual but has become a systemic issue requiring serious attention from policymakers.

Recruitment, Selection, and Distribution Challenges of Educators

Data from the National Civil Service Agency (BKN) (2023) Another major issue concerns the quality of recruitment processes and the unequal distribution of educators in Indonesia. The recruitment of teachers and lecturers still lacks transparency and merit-based assessment, particularly at the local level. This often results in educators who lack adequate pedagogical and professional competencies.

Geographical distribution is also highly unequal. Urban areas tend to have a surplus of teachers, while remote, frontier, and outermost (3T) regions face severe shortages. The inequality appears not only in quantity but also in the quality of teachers' competencies (Prasetyo, 2021). This geographical gap has been identified as one of the key factors behind the low quality of education in disadvantaged areas (UNESCO, 2022).

Non-competency-based recruitment contributes to low levels of professionalism among teachers, as many are hired without rigorous selection processes to assess pedagogical, personal, social, and professional competencies

(Mulyasa, 2021). The government has sought to address this through the ASN PPPK Teacher Recruitment Program, but administrative and technical barriers persist in implementation, especially in areas with weak bureaucratic capacity (Kemendikbudristek, 2023).

Moreover, unequal distribution is also influenced by inadequate incentives and welfare for teachers working in remote areas. Many teachers choose to relocate or leave the profession due to insufficient allowances, poor facilities, and unclear career paths (Nurdin, 2021).

Welfare as a Determinant of Teacher Performance and Job Satisfaction

Teacher welfare has a strong relationship with work performance, motivation, and job satisfaction. Based on Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, job satisfaction is influenced by motivator factors such as recognition and responsibility, and hygiene factors such as salary and working conditions (Siagian, 2018). In Indonesia, low welfare levels such as inadequate salaries, delayed honoraria, and lack of social security remain major causes of reduced teacher motivation (Hafifuddin & Lawal, 2024).

Empirical research shows that welfare significantly influences teacher productivity, where 67 percent of the variation in work productivity is explained by welfare variables (Wibowo, 2022). Teachers with better welfare demonstrate higher discipline, greater involvement in school development activities, and stronger professional commitment.

The welfare gap between PNS and non-PNS teachers also negatively impacts school organizational culture by creating latent conflicts, reducing team cohesion, and hindering collaborative innovation (Susanto, 2021).

In higher education, contract lecturers with better welfare tend to demonstrate higher teaching quality and research productivity (Riduan & Zamroni, 2024). Fair and sustainable compensation systems are thus not only a matter of social justice but also a strategic investment to enhance the quality of higher education's Tri Dharma (Rahmawati, 2022).

Data from a teacher satisfaction survey conducted by the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) (2023) of 5,000 teacher respondents in 34 provinces showed that only 42 percent of teachers were satisfied with their welfare, while 58 percent stated that their income was insufficient to meet a decent living (Husna & Andayani, 2024). These figures demonstrate that teacher welfare remains a major challenge that must be addressed through comprehensive and sustainable policies.

Policy Implications and the Urgency of Educational HRM Reform

From the preceding findings, it is clear that comprehensive reform of the educational HRM system is an urgent necessity. Such reform must be grounded in competence, equity, and professionalism. Effective HRM requires merit-

based recruitment policies, structured professional development systems, and fair, competitive, and transparent compensation mechanisms (Armstrong, 2020).

The Merdeka Belajar policy introduced by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) represents a positive step toward improving teacher capacity through initiatives such as the Guru Penggerak program, the Merdeka Mengajar Platform, and Teacher Competency Certification. However, these programs have not yet reached all teachers equally, especially those in remote areas with limited infrastructure access (Wahyudi, 2023).

Educational HR development must also address emotional and social competencies in addition to technical and pedagogical skills. Teachers with high emotional intelligence can foster meaningful learning, build positive relationships with students, and create conducive classroom environments (Goleman, 2020).

To improve educational HRM, several strategic measures are recommended: providing career security for honorary teachers through a fair PPPK pathway, improving remuneration systems with decent minimum standards and special allowances for teachers in 3T areas, strengthening competency-based recruitment systems, developing performance-based management systems, and integrating professional development with performance appraisal mechanisms (Fadli, 2023).

Additionally, UNESCO emphasizes the importance of adequate investment in educational human resources as part of efforts to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 4 on quality education. Indonesia needs to increase budget allocations and promote collaboration with the private sector and philanthropic institutions to support teacher welfare and development (UNESCO, 2022).

Overall, the literature confirms that Indonesia's educational HRM still faces multidimensional challenges that require comprehensive and systemic solutions. Employment status inequality, recruitment and distribution issues, low welfare, and weak professional development are interlinked problems that must be addressed through an integrated policy approach. Reforming HRM in education is not merely a technical policy issue but a paradigm shift—from bureaucratic management toward data-driven, competency-based, and quality-oriented systems. Only with strong commitment and concrete actions from all stakeholders can Indonesia realize its vision of equitable and high-quality education for all.

CONCLUSION

This literature research identified four crucial findings in human resource management in education in Indonesia that are systemically interrelated. First, there is a significant structural gap between civil servant and non-civil servant educators, where more than 40 percent of educators still have non-civil servant status with significantly lower welfare and career security despite having an equal workload. Second, the recruitment and distribution system of educators faces serious problems in the form of minimal transparency and objectivity in selection, as well as extreme geographic disparities between urban areas with a surplus and 3T areas experiencing a shortage of qualified teachers. Third, welfare has been proven to be a strong determinant of performance and job satisfaction, where only 42 percent of teachers are satisfied with their level of welfare, and welfare explains 67 percent of the variation in teacher work productivity. Fourth, reform of human resource management in education is inevitable through strengthening a system based on competency, equity, and professionalism integrated with a sustainable development program.

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