

# Teacher Recruitment Negotiations: A Form of Early Childhood Education Strategy in Indonesia

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## ABSTRACT

This paper aims to uncover the extent to which the recruitment of high-quality early childhood education teachers is still a challenge to date, especially in regions (villages/remote areas) in Indonesia. This article is based on the assumption that the professionalism of teachers is influenced by the teacher recruitment system at each institution. These researchers used a meta-analysis of research and previous literature on teacher recruitment for early childhood education. The findings of this article are expected to explain the extent to which early childhood education teacher recruitment campaigns overcome the challenges in recruiting. Selecting and hiring early childhood education staff by making the early childhood education sector an attractive choice.

**Keywords:** *Recruitment of early childhood education teachers, early childhood education.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Education is very important for human life, including the level of early childhood education (ECE). The government established the one village one ECE policy as stated in the Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation Number 18 of 2018 concerning early childhood education services in Indonesia. The ECE service policy was welcomed positively by various groups evidenced by those flocking to open ECE services and recruiting ECE teachers [1].

The number of early childhood education services is still a challenge today, especially in regions (villages / remote areas) in Indonesia. In some villages, managers accept anyone who wants to become an ECE teacher regardless of his background, qualifications, and competencies of prospective early childhood education teachers [2]. The most important aspect is that they are interested and willing to teach at a low salary regardless of the experience said prospective teachers, qualifications of prospective teachers or the competence of the teachers. Despite the fact that being a teacher is actually not an easy thing and they have to deal with early childhood students who are experiencing significant development [3].

Until now, there are still many teachers who have not met the expected professional competency standards [4]. This can be seen from the data obtained from basic data of educators from the national education

department, in 2020 showing that in Indonesia the number of non-formal ECE teachers with bachelor degrees is 80,481 people, 13,147 with diplomas, 138,008 with senior high school education, and 26,382 with only junior high school education. Meanwhile, the education qualifications of teachers in formal ECE with bachelor degrees are 186,697 people, 18,711 people with diplomas, 67,998 with senior high school education and 7,450 with junior high school education.

From these data, it can be seen that there are still many teachers who have high school education qualifications and others with even only junior high school education qualifications, and clearly not in accordance with the regulation of the Ministry of Education and Culture Number 137 of 2014 concerning early childhood education standards that the academic qualifications of early childhood education teachers must have a diploma four (IV) or bachelor degree in the field of early childhood education or psychology obtained from an accredited study program [5].

Meanwhile, teachers have a profession that requires academic qualifications, competencies, and teacher certificates in accordance with the requirements for each specific type and level of education [6]. A teacher will determine performance, goal achievement and behaviour to obtain effective learning in order to achieve positive results [7]. Thus, teachers as determinants of educational success need a recruitment mechanism that can produce professional educational

personnel candidates. Effective recruitment and selection will have a direct effect on teacher productivity and performance [8].

Based on the explanation above, the author intends to understand the extent of teacher recruitment in early childhood education as well as voicing the importance of good teacher recruitment, since effective selection will have a positive impact on educational institutions. This paper is based on literature research [9].

## **2. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### ***2.1. Early Childhood Teacher Problems***

The teacher is a factor that determines the quality of education because the teacher deals directly with students in the learning process. In the hands of the teacher, the quality and personality of students are formed. The teacher is a running curriculum, no matter how good the existing curriculum and education system are, without the support of the teacher's ability, everything will be in vain [10]. On the other hand, many ECE institutions urge ECE managers to look for teachers as teaching staff so that this urgent need makes the teacher recruitment system no longer selected by competitive examinations but is judged only by the ability to fulfil the teaching mission temporarily [11], such as a recruitment technique in schools that is based on kinship to fill the gaps or teacher vacancies. This will indirectly have an impact on the acquisition of teachers who are not in accordance with the needs of the school, such as teachers who are less competent and do not have high integrity [12].

In addition, the Indonesian culture that places great importance on spirituality and mutual cooperation raises the perception that being a teacher is one way to devote oneself to God [13]. Low income is not a barrier to becoming a teacher because they have the perception that a teacher is a profession that is respected by society and has a high professional status so they see teaching as an honourable career choice [14]. Based on this thought, it seems that the basis for the voluntary system to become a teacher is without seeing further the background of the prospective teacher.

In this regard, recruiting and retaining teachers is still a challenge for schools in rural areas because schools in rural areas have relatively inadequate facilities, and geographic positions can make it difficult to recruit and maintain qualified teaching staff. This can exacerbate existing disparities by allowing disadvantaged regions to fail to attract and recruit good candidates [11].

### ***2.2. Recruitment Urgency***

Recruitment is the process of finding, finding and attracting competent applicants to be employed in an organization [15]. The teacher admission mechanism should receive the main attention because at this stage of acceptance it can select prospective teachers according to the desired criteria for the ideals and goals of education to be achieved. Mistakes in teacher selection can have fateful consequences for the continuity of learning activities in relation to achieving the desired goals and ideals of graduates. Problems that occur in an educational institution are often due to the performance of teachers that is not as expected. This can be caused by inadequate teacher recruitment planning resulting in teachers who are not experts in their fields which is one of the obstacles in realizing the goals of education and the educational institution itself [16].

Recruitment has a positive and significant effect on performance. Thus, the better the implementation of the recruitment system, the higher the performance. A comprehensive teacher selection system does require a lot of money, but research shows that these costs are relatively small compared to the possible benefits [17]. A good recruitment system will benefit all including students, institutions and teachers themselves. Recruitment is an important step in selecting teachers with the desired profile according to a professional frame of reference. Below are 4 stages in preparing teacher recruitment according to Tournier [11] : 1) Identification of needs, at this early stage the manager determines the needs of teachers in schools, what kind of teacher and what teachers wants; 2) decide the profile, which is done at this stage, namely identifying skills, experience and knowledge, and the academic level; 3) the next stage, namely selection, at this stage the manager ensures that a teacher must have important aspects, namely the quality of social relationships, behaviour and attitudes, motivation and cognitive abilities. At this stage, competitive tests, interview tests and teaching practice can be used; 4) and the last stage, namely recruiting teachers.

### ***2.3. Active Campaigns as a Recruitment Strategy***

Active campaigns are often carried out to achieve the desired goals, including the process of recruiting early childhood education teachers. This active campaign is carried out in attracting prospective teachers so that they desire to become ECE teachers who are balanced with qualified abilities. Such is the case especially in ECE service institutions located in remote areas. By making early childhood education an attractive career choice, it is the key to the emergence of motivation to be in this field [18].

The strategy that can be taken to make ECE an attractive career choice is to offer financial benefits [19], [20], [3], [21], scholarships for education/ training [22], [23], [24] and media campaigns to raise public awareness [25], [26], [27].

### *2.3.1. Improving the Social Status of the Early Childhood Teacher Profession by Offering Financial Benefits*

Financial benefits can allow them to stay in choosing their profession. Many studies have shown that teacher salaries can affect teacher supply in terms of quality and quantity [28], [29], [30].

Kilgallon, Maloney, Lock [30] revealed that financial gain / salary is a key factor in difficulties in recruiting staff due to a shortage of applicants [31]. The shortage of applicants is due to services being paid at low wages and poor conditions [32]. In addition, the main reasons for teachers to leave the profession are lack of comparative promotion prospects, low status, and unfavourable employment [33].

Other studies have shown that improving teacher quality is not only through education and training, but working conditions are also an important factor affecting teacher behaviour and performance [34], [35], [36], [37]. These working conditions include salary and benefits related to work [38]. Salaries and allowances are extrinsic factors that affect teacher career choices, which are to generate great motivation to work and increase their professionalism [3] and increase their support in teaching [31].

Teachers tend to choose to quit when they are working for low wages. This is what affects the reduction in interest in becoming a teacher [30], [29], [39], [40] so that with increased financial gain / salary earned can increase attractiveness as a career choice for early childhood teachers [21].

### *2.3.2. Funding Teacher Education and Training Programs (Scholarships)*

Education and training programs for teachers or prospective teachers that are fully or partially funded, and lowering costs for education can increase the attractiveness of teaching and teacher professional programs [26]. Podolsky & Kini [40] revealed that providing scholarships is an effective strategy in attracting and preparing candidates' abilities and recruiting them to the place or field where they are needed [41].

In line with this, based on Ackerman study found that assistance / scholarships given to teachers can increase their credibility and professionalism [24]. Without financial assistance / scholarships for ECE educators, teachers will find it difficult to increase their

credibility due to the low salary they receive [22]. They are prevented from participating in training because of the costs involved [42]; so that support specifically related to quality improvement in the ECE sector is urgently needed. Scholarships are also proven to be able to improve the learning achievement of students from lower socioeconomic classes so that they can catch up with students from middle socioeconomic class [43], [44], [45].

Thus, the initial education program, which is fully or partially funded, can increase the attractiveness of teaching programs, including the teaching profession.

### *2.3.3. Media Campaigns to Raise Public Awareness*

The media is a tool to attract staff and increase public awareness about early childhood education by providing information regarding ECE services, promoting that ECE at the early years of life has an important role to play, and offers a means of sharing the fun experiences of being an ECE teacher [26]. One effective way is inviting prospective teachers to school to attend workshops, exhibitions or competitions [14].

In the UK, on a website, "Getting into Teaching" was created specifically to attract staff. The site provides information on how to register for teaching and professional programs and emphasizes the importance of teaching. Through the information obtained, one can change his/her career choices, namely self-confidence, an attitude of wanting to learn and a willingness to enter the teaching profession [27], [20].

## **3. CONCLUSION**

Coordinated recruitment is an essential condition for the provision of quality education. The campaign to recruit ECE teachers is to make the early childhood education sector an attractive option. However, carrying out teacher recruitment is not easy, it requires a variety of careful preparations so that the recruitment process is carried out effectively. The teacher recruitment system requires a good strategy, the better the recruitment process, the more likely it is to get the right teacher.

## **4. RECOMMENDATION**

When the teacher has undergone a series of selections and the demands are met, such as qualifications and favourable test results, the government should help recruitment agencies and teachers by making it easy for teachers to obtain financial allowances, one of which is certification costs. From the author's experience as a teacher, it is quite difficult for teachers to find because they have to meet several stages starting from getting teacher identification number after at least 2 years of teaching, then after

getting this teacher identification number, new teachers can take part in the pretest selection which is not easy (pass/fail). If the teacher passes the pretest the teacher can continue to the next stage, namely Professional Teacher Program. Then if the teacher does not pass, the teacher must return to the selection next year and will continue to repeat this process until the teacher passes. This is usually a frightening aspect and deterrence for prospective teachers to be interested in working in the ECE teacher sector.

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