



The Role of the South Sumatra Provincial Government in Improving Teacher Professionalism

Arwan^{1*}, Abdul Hadi², Ade Akhmad Saputra³, Abdul Waris⁴

^{1,3}Manajemen Pendidikan Islam, Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Fatah, Palembang.

² Studi Hukum Pidana Islam, Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Fatah, Palembang.

³ Baku State University, Azarbaijan.

ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the role of the South Sumatra Provincial Government in enhancing teacher professionalism. A qualitative methodology was employed, utilizing interviews, observations and documentation for data collection. The data analysis process involved three stages: data reduction, data presentation and conclusion drawing and verification. The findings of the study indicate a strong commitment from the regional government to encourage teacher participation in the Teacher Professional Education Program (PPG), supported by scholarships from the South Sumatra Provincial Government. Participation numbers have shown a steady increase: 70 teachers in 2021, 70 teachers in 2022, 118 teachers in 2023, and an expected 144 teachers in 2024. Despite this progress, there remain 3,567 Islamic Education (PAI) teachers who have not participated in the PPG. The support provided by the South Sumatra Provincial Government to improve teacher welfare through the PPG is crucial for enhancing teaching skills. This support includes the adoption of innovative learning methods and models, as well as improvements in the welfare of teachers in Senior High Schools (SMA), Vocational High Schools (SMK), and Special Education Schools (SLB) within the province. In conclusion, the South Sumatra Provincial Government plays a significant role in promoting teacher professionalism through financial support and welfare improvements, although challenges remain in reaching all eligible teachers.

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis sejauh mana peran Pemerintah Provinsi Sumatera Selatan terhadap peningkatan profesionalisme. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif. Teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui wawancara, observasi dan dokumentasi. Teknik analisis data: 1) Reduksi data; 2) Penyajian data; 3) Kesimpulan/verifikasi data. Dari hasil penelitian ditemukan bahwa; Pertama, adanya komitmen dan keseriusan dari Pemerintah daerah yang mengikut sertakan para guru untuk mengikuti PPG dengan bantuan beasiswa dari Pemerintah Daerah Provinsi Sumatera Selatan yang menunjukkan pada 2021 terdapat 70 orang guru, tahun 2022 ada 70 orang guru, pada tahun 2023 terdapat 118 dan pada tahun 2024 terdapat 144 orang guru yang mengikuti PPG, namun masih terdapat 3.567 guru PAI yang belum mengikuti PPG. Kedua, dengan adanya dukungan Pemerintah Provinsi Sumatera Selatan terhadap peningkatan kesejahteraan guru melalui Pendidikan Profesi Guru, sangat penting dalam peningkatan keterampilan mengajar dengan menggunakan metode dan model pembelajaran yang lebih inovatif dan kesejahteraan guru di SMA, SMK dan SLB di Provinsi Sumatera Selatan.

KATA KUNCI

Guru, Profesionalisme Guru, Pemerintah Provinsi

INTRODUCTION

In Law Number 14 of 2005, it is stated that teachers are professional educators whose main tasks include educating, teaching, guiding, directing, training, assessing, and evaluating students in early childhood education through formal, basic, and secondary education. The role of teachers is crucial in determining the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process and the achievement of school goals (Aliyyah et al., 2020). As a result, teachers are required to perform at their best (Aimah & Purwanto, 2019).

In the field of education, teachers play an important role (Archana & Rani, 2017). Historically, teachers have had authority in both the education and teaching fields simultaneously. Therefore, they occupy a "high" social position in society. Teachers are not only respected and revered, but the educational ideas and concepts they develop are seen as truths, which are embraced and followed by others. This means that, historically, teachers have been considered one of the elite groups in society. Thus, with all their expertise, teachers have played a real role in maintaining social order. They are central figures in social life, and sometimes they even participate in the development of religious-cultural processes. For instance, Noer Ali considers teachers to be trustees. The title of "teacher" is thus given to someone because others place their trust in them, entrusting their children to be educated (Akbar, 2012).

Thus, according to Warsiah (2021), the teacher's task is to carry out scientific education, because science has a great influence on the formation of personality and the emancipation of human dignity. "Not only that, but teachers are the most important element in an education system. They are the spearhead. The teaching and learning process is greatly influenced by how students perceive their teachers." (Halsall, 2014). The teacher's personality, such as being attentive, warm, and supportive (providing encouragement), is believed to motivate students, which in turn increases student achievement (Aliyyah et al., 2020). Therefore, according to Troisi, as quoted by Jamaluddin, teachers need to build a positive image of themselves if they want their students to respond and cooperate effectively in the learning process. (Department of Religion, 2002) Furthermore, he continued, the respect and affection shown by a teacher are key factors in student success (Josephine, 2023). Just as with adults, addressing psychological needs encourages students to demonstrate their best abilities, which in turn naturally leads to increased achievements (Department of Religion, 2002).

Teacher behavior not only determines the success or failure of a curriculum (Gao, 2024), but also independently influences the overall effectiveness of a school. In particular, teachers should ask questions as often as possible, taking into account the diverse abilities of students and ensuring that learning remains focused on the key aspects being discussed (Department of Religion, 2002).

According to Malawi & Kadarwati (2018), one fundamental point is that teachers are key to determining the quality of education. If there are no qualified teachers, even the most advanced educational innovations, with all their luxurious laboratories and other learning facilities, will be in vain. This can be understood in simple terms: a teacher's role is to guide and direct students so that their knowledge increases, their skills become more proficient, and their potential is continually developed. At the same time, teachers have two main responsibilities: one as an educator and the other as a teacher. Educating is not as straightforward as teaching. To educate properly, a teacher must not only master the content they teach, but also understand the values that can be conveyed through the material (Abudin, 2013).

In addition to their primary role of providing guidance and teaching, Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers in public schools also have the equally important task of instilling moral values and noble character through religious knowledge. Furthermore, Hanun (Hanun, 2021) asserts that in order to realize professional teachers, participation in the Teacher Professional Education (PPG) program is essential. Successful implementation of this program also requires support from local governments. Data from 2024 indicates that not all IRE teachers have had the opportunity to participate in PPG activities. According to the Ministry of Religion of South Sumatra Province, 2,617 teachers have participated in the program, while 3,567 have not. This data highlights that a significant number of Islamic Religious Education teachers have yet to take part in the PPG.

The Regional Government is obligated to provide funding for professional education for teachers, in accordance with Law Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers. Article 13, paragraphs (1) and (2), stipulate that both the Government and Regional Governments must allocate a budget for improving teachers' academic qualifications and certification. This applies to teachers appointed by educational units organized by the Government, regional governments, and the community (National, 2005). However, this obligation has not been fully implemented by the Regional Government. Data from the South Sumatra Provincial Ministry of Religion Office indicates that there are currently 3,567 Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in elementary, middle, high, and vocational schools who have not yet been certified.

Education policies and programs fall under concurrent government affairs, which are divided between the central government and regional governments (provincial, district, or city governments). In this framework, education is one of the mandatory affairs managed by the regional government, as outlined

in Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 23 of 2014 on Regional Government. This law, along with its amendments, details change in the composition of regional government authority. According to the law, the structure of government includes the provincial government, district or city government, and the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD). The regional government consists of the regional head and the DPRD, supported by regional apparatus.

The provincial government consists of both the provincial executive and the provincial legislature. Similarly, district or city governments are made up of local governing bodies within those regions. Local governments, particularly those responsible for education, must also undergo a process of debureaucratization by positioning themselves more creatively and innovatively, so they are not entirely reliant on the rules set by the central government. They must be critical, corrective, creative, and innovative in shaping their activities, aligning them with the perceived needs of the people in their regions. A centralized, 'top-down' approach has left local governments with limited autonomy. Decisions made by the central government often leave little room for local governments to determine their own path, despite the significant differences between regions. This creates a situation where the concept of 'good governance' may be efficient and effective in one region, but not in another, due to varying local conditions and realities (Arwan, 2022).

Several previous studies have raised themes related to Teacher Professional Education (PPG) and the role of local government, but each has a different focus and has not specifically addressed the aspects of professionalism and welfare of PAI teachers. Hanun (2021) highlights the implementation of PPG for PAI teachers at LPTK UIN Serang Banten, with the main focus on the implementation of the programme. While emphasising the importance of the PPG programme in creating professional teachers, the study did not discuss the concrete role of the local government in supporting the programme, especially in terms of financing or teacher welfare. Meanwhile, Rambitan & Hardoko (2016), discussed the management design in the implementation of PPG in the border areas of East and North Kalimantan, but also did not discuss in detail the direct support or initiatives from local governments in improving teacher welfare.

Lailatussaadah et al., (2020) research focuses more on the technical and social constraints in the implementation of online PPG in Aceh, especially those faced by female teachers. Their focus is more on the technical implementation aspects of online learning, not on local government policies or strategies in improving teacher quality and welfare. Rahmat & Gunawan (2022) raised the barriers faced by teachers in rural areas in participating in the PPG programme. This research reveals geographical and accessibility constraints, but has not discussed in depth policy solutions or the active role of local governments in overcoming these challenges. On the other hand, Iyonu et al., (2024) examined the factors that influence students' decision to continue with the PPG programme, focusing on psychological and motivational aspects, without touching on the structural context or the role of support from local governments.

In contrast to previous studies, this study specifically and deeply analyses the role of the South Sumatra Provincial Government in supporting the improvement of professionalism and welfare of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers. This study not only discusses the number of teachers who have attended PPG, but also describes the real support in the form of budget allocations from provincial and district/city governments in South Sumatra. The data presented includes the number of PPG participants from 2021 to 2024, the APBD funds allocated, and the actual condition of uncertified PAI teachers in various districts/cities. Thus, this study presents a more comprehensive and data-based picture of local government involvement in supporting teacher professionalism and welfare.

The novelty of this study lies in its comprehensive and contextual approach. This study specifically highlights PAI teachers in South Sumatra, a focus that has rarely been touched upon in depth in previous studies. In addition, this study links the improvement of teacher professionalism through PPG with the improvement of welfare through certification allowances, showing the reciprocal relationship between teacher quality and motivation. The approach used in this study involves a triangulation of qualitative methods, including interviews, observation and documentation, which provides a thorough understanding of the phenomena in the field. In addition to being an evaluative study of the effectiveness of local policies, this research also provides a practical contribution as a model that can be replicated by other local governments in their efforts to improve the quality of education.

METHODS

This research was conducted at the South Sumatra Provincial Education Office and the PPG FITK UIN Raden Fatah Palembang Study Program. The research is qualitative in nature, aiming to obtain an in-depth understanding and interpretation of the meaning of phenomena in the field. A qualitative approach involves a research process based on a methodology that investigates social phenomena and human issues. According to Sugiyono, the qualitative research method is based on the philosophy of post positivism and is used for research that focuses on the natural conditions of objects. Additionally, this study employs data collection techniques with triangulation (combination) and inductive or qualitative analysis (Noor, 2011).

While the nature of this study is an evaluation study using field study methodology (e.g., lap studies), field studies aim to: 1) produce detailed descriptions of a phenomenon in the field; 2) develop explanations based on field observations; and 3) evaluate phenomena (Moleong, 2018).

The research method used as a guideline in this study is qualitative research. Qualitative research methods are often referred to as naturalistic research methods because the research is conducted in natural conditions (natural settings). They are also called ethnographic methods, as this approach was initially used more for research in the field of cultural anthropology, and referred to as qualitative methods, because the data collected and analyzed are more qualitative in nature (Moeleng, 2011). This research explores and deepens an understanding of a social phenomenon or social environment consisting of actors, events, places, and times. Research activities were conducted from April 2024 to June 2024. This study is a field study, meaning that the desired data can only be obtained from the field, the research location.

The data collection technique was purposive, i.e. the selection of informants based on certain criteria relevant to the research objectives. The main informants consisted of officials from the Provincial Education Office, PPG managers at UIN Raden Fatah Palembang, school principals, and PAI teachers who have and have not participated in PPG. The informant criteria included those who had a direct understanding of the PPG policy and its implementation in the field. The data collection process was conducted until it reached the point of data saturation, that is, when the data obtained from interviews no longer provided new or significant information on the research focus.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, direct observation, and documentation studies. Triangulation was used to increase data validity. Source triangulation was done by comparing data from various informants (e.g. teachers, agency officials and academics). Technical triangulation was done by matching interview results with field observations (such as observations of PPG training implementation) and official documents (such as Dapodik data, PPG participant decision letters, and budget allocations). This approach allows researchers to verify the truth of data from various perspectives and methods.

Data were analyzed through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification. Analysis was inductive, by compiling thematic categories from field data which were then interpreted based on existing theories and social context. Data validity was maintained through member checking techniques and discussion between researchers to avoid interpretative bias.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. South Sumatra Provincial Government Support for Teachers

In the Basic Education Data (Dapodik) at the South Sumatra Provincial Education Office, the condition of educators and education personnel at secondary schools (SMA/SMK and SLB) over the past four years is presented in the following table:

Table 1. Conditions of Educators and Education Personnel SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Year	Educator	Undergraduate Qualification	Certification	Amount Educational Staff
2020	13,448	13,152	5,285	2,628
2021	13,704	12,553	5,523	2,665
2022	14,033	13,837	4,883	2,910
2023	15,280	15,280	4,729	4,122

Source: Pusdatin Verification Data 2019-2021, Dapodik 2023

Table 2. Conditions of Educators and Education Personnel in Vocational High Schools

Year	Educator	Undergraduate Qualification	Certification	Amount Educational Staff
2020	7,000	6,573	1,939	1,939
2021	7,452	6,602	2,169	1,400
2022	7,952	7,554	1,924	1,642
2023	8,813	8,813	1,835	2,304

Source: Pusdatin Verification Data 2019-2021, Dapodik 2023

Table 3. Conditions of Educators and Education Personnel at SLB

Year	Educator	Undergraduate Qualification	Certification	Amount Educational Staff
2020	423	389	117	47

2021	441	389	152	52
2022	429	401	117	64
2023	470	412	129	153

Source: Pusdatin Verification Data 2019-2021, Dapodik 2023.

The data in Tables 1, 2, and 3 show that, from year to year, there has been an increase in the number of educators and education personnel at the South Sumatra Provincial Education Office. This is understandable, as there has been a rise in the number of students at each level of education. The increase in students must also be accompanied by a corresponding increase in the number of educators and education personnel

Budget support for participants taking part in PPG can be seen in the following table:

Table 4. Number of PPG Participants per Year

No		Amount	Budget	Information
1	2021	70	Rp. 350,000,000	Provincial Budget
2	2022	70	Rp. 350,000,000	Provincial Budget
3	2023	118	Rp. 590,000,000	Provincial Budget
4	2024	144	Rp. 720,000,000	Provincial Budget

Source: Data from the South Sumatra Provincial Education Office.

Table 4 shows the support for financing teachers who participate in PPG, particularly Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers. The increase in the number of PPG participants automatically leads to a corresponding increase in the budget allocated by the South Sumatra Provincial Education Office.

Furthermore, the following table presents the status of Islamic Religious Education teachers in South Sumatra Province who have not participated in PPG, as shown below:

Table 5. PAI Teachers Who Have Not Participated in PPG

No	Regency/City	Amount
1	Palembang	509
2	Ogan Ilir	181
3	Banyuasin	146
4	Prabumulih	120
5	Ogan Komering Ilir	265
6	The Abab Lematang Ilir River	102
7	Muara Enim	248
8	Lahat	271
9	The Peaceful	30
10	Four Gates	125
11	Ogan Komering Ulu	257
12	East Ogan Komering Ulu	281
13	South Ogan Komering Ulu	211
14	Musi Banyuasin	191
15	Linggau Basin	84
16	Musi Rawas	163
17	North Musi Rawas	19
18	Province	364
	Amount	3,567

Source: Data from the Ministry of Religion Office of South Sumatra Province in 2024

From the data above, it shows that there are still 3,567 PAI teachers who have not participated in PPG. This certainly impacts the teacher certification process. In addition to the South Sumatra Provincial Government, budget support is also provided by the Regency/City Governments in South Sumatra, as seen in the following table:

Table 6. Budget Support for PPG activities for PAI Teachers.

No	Regency/City	2023		2024	
		Number of Teachers	Budget	Number of Teachers	Budget
1	Banyuasin	244	1,230,000,000	-	-
2	Palembang	120	600,000,000	33	165,000,000
3	PALI	70	385,000,000	70	385,000,000
4	Muara Enim	80	400,000,000	107	572,000,000
5	Four Gates	30	150,000,000	-	-
6	North Musi Rawas	100	561,640,000	-	-
7	Natural Fence	-	-	30	165,000,000
8	South Sumatra Provincial Government	120	600,000,000	134	715,500,000
	Amount	764	3,926,640,000	374	2,002,500,000

Source: Data from the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religion of South Sumatra Province

The budget support provides an opportunity for PAI teachers to participate in PPG activities, which in itself will earn them a teacher certificate. By getting a teacher certificate, of course they can propose to get a certification allowance.

Discussion

A. South Sumatra Provincial Government Support for Teachers

The support of the South Sumatra Provincial Government in improving teacher qualifications and welfare is crucial for creating better-quality education. According to data from the South Sumatra Provincial Education Office, it is evident that the government's efforts to enhance teacher quality have been demonstrated by increasing the number of educators and education personnel at all school levels, including SMA, SMK, and SLB, over the past four years.

1. Conditions of Educators and Education Personnel in Secondary Schools

Tables 1, 2, and 3 show the increase in the number of educators and education personnel within the South Sumatra Provincial Education Office from 2020 to 2023. This increase aligns with the growing number of students, highlighting the government's priority to meet the demand for competent education personnel.

The government's efforts to increase the number of certified teachers at each level of education (Safarah & Wibowo, 2018); (Alfath & Huliatusunisa, 2021), as illustrated in the tables, show a commitment to addressing the shortage of certified teachers. This is in accordance with the strategic role of teachers explained in the research of Mulyana and Widaningsih, (2023), which states that teachers with adequate qualifications tend to be able to create an effective learning process and motivate students to achieve optimal learning outcomes.

2. Budget Support for Teacher Professional Education Program (PPG)

The South Sumatra Provincial Government also provides budgetary support for the implementation of the Teacher Professional Education Program (PPG). According to data from the South Sumatra Provincial Education Office, the budget allocated for PPG has increased, with more participants from 2021 to 2024 (Table 4). In 2024, the number of PPG participants reached 144 teachers, with a budget of IDR 720,000,000. This support demonstrates the government's commitment to teacher welfare through the enhancement of qualifications, which is expected to improve the quality of teaching and, ultimately, the quality of education in the region.

This support aligns with Law Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers, which mandates that regional governments provide a budget to improve the qualifications and certification of teachers in their areas (National, 2005). This effort aims to ensure that all teachers, particularly Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers, can obtain certification, which will have a positive impact on their welfare.

3. Condition of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) Teachers Who Have Not Participated in PPG

Based on data from the South Sumatra Provincial Ministry of Religion Office in 2024, there are still 3,567 PAI teachers who have not participated in the PPG program (Table 5). This situation presents a challenge for the local government because, without certification, teachers cannot meet the requirements to receive professional allowances, which would improve their welfare. This shortage highlights the urgent need to expand the scope of the PPG program so that more PAI teachers can become certified.

Previous research by Hanun, (2021) and Iyonu et al. (2024) emphasized that local government involvement in the PPG program is crucial to ensure that all teachers, especially those

in rural areas, have equal opportunities to improve their professional qualifications. This government support can help reduce the quality gap between teachers in urban and rural areas.

4. Budget Support from District/City Government in PPG Program for Islamic Religious Education Teachers

In addition to the provincial government, district and city governments in South Sumatra also provide budget support for the implementation of the PPG program for PAI teachers. The data in Table 6 shows the budget allocations from several districts and cities, such as Banyuasin, Palembang, and Muara Enim, to fund the PPG program. This varied budget support highlights the role of local governments in encouraging improvements in teacher qualifications and welfare.

This support is crucial, considering the need for quality teachers in every district and city in South Sumatra. As expressed by Sa'Diyah, (2023) and Mushthofa et al., (2022) quality teachers are the key to success in education. Joint efforts from the provincial and district/city governments to support the PPG program can help realize the vision of improving both the welfare and the quality of education in this region (Wijaya, 2018).

Overall, the support provided by the South Sumatra Provincial Government, together with the district and city governments, demonstrates a strong commitment to enhancing the quality of teachers and their welfare through the PPG program. This effort is not only aimed at improving the professional abilities of teachers but also serves as part of a broader strategy to elevate the quality of education, which will positively impact the quality of graduates at every level of education in South Sumatra Province.

In addition, the results showed that the Government of South Sumatra Province showed a strong commitment in improving the professionalism and welfare of PAI teachers through the Teacher Professional Education (PPG) programme. This is indicated by the increase in the number of PAI teachers facilitated to take part in PPG from year to year, as well as the amount of budget allocation from the provincial APBD and several district/city governments. This finding is in line with Hanun's research (2021), which asserts that local government support is an important factor in the successful implementation of PPG. However, compared to studies in other regions such as Kalimantan (Rambitan & Hardoko, 2016), support in South Sumatra appears more structured and consistent in terms of financing, but still faces the obstacle of uneven distribution.

A contextual factor that distinguishes South Sumatra from other regions is the relatively strong synergy between the provincial government and several districts/cities in funding the PPG programme. However, disparities between regions are also evident, as some districts such as North Musi Rawas and South Ogan Komering Ulu have yet to demonstrate concrete financial support. These differences reflect variations in fiscal capacity, policy priorities, and bureaucratic dynamics between regions. In addition, the social and geographical structure of South Sumatra, which spans from urban to remote areas, influences teachers' access to information and training opportunities.

The findings also indicate that PPG has a positive impact on improving teachers' teaching competence and welfare. However, these perceptions are largely sourced from informants' subjective reports, so there is a possibility of bias in reporting. Some teachers expressed administrative burdens during PPG that have not been fully addressed, as well as feelings of unfairness in the selection of participants. This suggests a need to strike a balance between policy strengthening and technical implementation in the field.

While this study shows relative success in South Sumatra due to the synergy between the provincial government and several districts/cities in funding PPG, this is not necessarily replicable in other regions. This is because local fiscal capacity, policy commitment and bureaucratic structure vary widely across regions in Indonesia. In regions with lower education budget capacity or more complex bureaucracies, support for PPG may not be as strong or efficient as in South Sumatra.

Thus, the findings in this study are contextual and not fully generalisable to all regions in Indonesia without considering the differences in regional characteristics. To increase external validity, similar studies should be conducted in different provinces with different social, geographical and policy settings.

B. Improving Teacher Professionalism

The development of teacher professionalism requires the availability of educators, which is crucial for the learning process. Shulman (1987) argues that teacher professionalism lies in the mastery of deep knowledge, pedagogical ability, reflection skills, and moral responsibility. A professional teacher does not just deliver material, but transforms knowledge into meaningful learning experiences for students. Currently, the shortage of civil servant educators is deeply felt due to restrictions on educator recruitment. However, efforts are being made to address this issue through the P3K pathway, and it is also necessary to focus on equalizing the distribution of educators. Furthermore, it is essential to improve the quality of

educators by strengthening the teacher training mechanisms and refining teacher competency standards through the concept of "moving teachers."

A "Moving Teacher" is a learning leader who fosters holistic student growth and development. They are active and proactive in helping other educators implement student-centered learning and serve as role models and agents of transformation in the education ecosystem, working toward realizing the profile of Pancasila Students. The "Moving Teacher" program is designed to enhance educators' competence as leaders in student-centered learning. This program enables educators to improve their performance and become teachers who truly focus on their students. Currently, there are only 354 certified moving teachers: 8 special school teachers, 261 high school teachers, and 85 vocational high school teachers.

The Independent Curriculum (Independent Learning, Independent Change, and Independent Sharing) is aimed at strengthening the priority of Pancasila student profiles. At the vocational high school level, 101 public and private schools have implemented the Independent Curriculum. These include 54 public vocational high schools and 47 private schools. At the high school level, 277 schools have adopted the Independent Curriculum. Regarding the qualifications of educators at the high school, vocational high school, and special needs school levels, it is expected that by 2024, 98% will have met the required qualifications. Additionally, there are plans to have 270 high school driving teachers, 95 vocational high school driving teachers, and 10 special needs school driving teachers.

The Teacher Leader Program is a continuous teacher professional development initiative through training activities and collaborative teacher endeavors. The goal of this program is to provide teachers with foundational knowledge, including leadership skills in learning and pedagogy, so that they are equipped to influence the entire learning environment both inside and outside the school. Teacher leaders must be able to teach and manage learning effectively using available technology, speak English to enhance the quality of education, and engage in continuous reflection to improve their teaching practices. (Damayanti & Asbari, 2024).

Although the Teacher Mover program has been introduced, its implementation and impact on teacher professionalism have not been studied in depth. Many teachers still face challenges in improving their competence and professionalism. These challenges include a lack of support, limited training opportunities, and resistance to change (Tahajudin et al., 2023). In addition, there remains a gap between the policies implemented and the reality on the ground, as not all teachers have equal access to the Teacher Mover program (Kusumaningtyas, 2024).

C. Increasing Educator Welfare

The availability of educators is crucial in the learning process. Currently, the shortage of civil servant educators in the South Sumatra Provincial Government is strongly felt, primarily due to the limited recruitment of educators. Efforts have been made to address this issue through the P3K pathway, while also considering the need for equitable distribution of educators. Furthermore, there is a need to improve the quality of educators by strengthening teacher training mechanisms and enhancing teacher competency standards through teacher mobility programs. Other challenges faced by educators in South Sumatra include improving qualifications, certification, and, of course, welfare.

The main benefits of teacher certification are as follows: (1) Protecting the teaching profession from practices that undermine its image. Educators who hold a teacher certificate are expected to implement the learning process in the classroom based on proven theories and practices; (2) Safeguarding the community from unqualified and unprofessional educational practices. Schools that offer high-quality education are determined by the quality of educators and the effectiveness of the learning process in the classroom; and (3) Improving the economic welfare of educators. Certification outcomes can serve as a basis for determining rewards based on educators' achievements, such as professional allowances. (Saputra, 2022).

The welfare of educators is an inseparable part of their work process. It also serves as a key motivation for educators. Work motivation significantly impacts teacher performance, and good teacher performance, in turn, leads to psychological and financial incentives. These incentives have a positive effect on teachers' welfare. Teacher certification, with its logical, administrative, and legal implications, including professional allowances equal to one basic salary, will undoubtedly have a positive impact on teacher welfare. Furthermore, improved welfare will boost motivation, which in turn enhances performance. This improved performance will be linked to the incentives educators receive, ultimately improving their welfare (Zulkifli et al., 2014).

A professional educator needs recognition from various parties, not only social recognition in society but also recognition from the government. With this recognition, professional educators can contribute significantly to the education sector, particularly in teaching. Thus, the issue of educators' welfare is no longer a taboo subject but has become an obligation to be provided to educators in the digital era. Welfare for educators is crucial and fundamental in realizing national education, as everything related to education is tied to human resources, specifically educators (Mansir, 2020).

The level of teacher welfare greatly influences the quality of education. It can be explained that low educator welfare leads to low teacher motivation and discipline, which, in turn, negatively affects the teaching process. This causes the learning process in the classroom to become ineffective and inefficient. Consequently, it is not surprising that student learning achievements, including national exam results, fall short of the set targets, ultimately impacting the overall quality of education (Kelana, 2021).

The efforts of the South Sumatra Provincial Education Office to improve the quality of PAI teachers and provide substantial financial support for PAI teachers participating in PPG are key components of enhancing teacher welfare. Teachers who have participated in certification receive additional income. The provision of teacher certification allowances is based on the teacher's status and class. The amount of the teacher certification allowance is equal to one month's basic salary, in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. Meanwhile, the certification or PPPK teacher profession allowance is also one month's basic salary, in line with the appointment decree. Provisions regarding the PPPK teacher professional allowance are outlined in the Presidential Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia Number 11 of 2024.

As for the professional allowance for non-PNS teachers, it is divided into two categories: teachers who already have an 'inpassing' or equivalency SK and teachers who do not yet have an 'inpassing SK'. For teachers with an 'inpassing SK', they will receive a professional allowance equivalent to the basic salary of PNS teachers according to their class and rank.

CONCLUSION

This study found that commitment has been demonstrated South Sumatra Provincial Government to improving the professionalism and welfare of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers. This commitment is evidenced by the gradual financing of the Teacher Professional Education Programme (PPG), with an increasing number of participants and budget allocations each year. Data collected from the Education Office and the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of South Sumatra Province indicate that, despite the rise in teacher participation in PPG, a significant number of PAI teachers remain uncertified. Support for this initiative extends beyond the provincial level, with districts and cities also allocating budgets to expand teachers' access to PPG.

In addition to qualification improvement through PPG, other programs such as the development of Teacher Activators, the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, and efforts to equalize educators are part of the local government's strategy to enhance teachers' competencies and improve their welfare through professional allowances. With this continuous support, the South Sumatra Provincial Government aims to improve the quality of education by increasing the capacity of teachers and the welfare of educators, particularly at the high school, vocational, and special school levels.

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