

SCHOOL PRINCIPALS' RESPONSES AND CHALLENGES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF *PERMENDIKBUDRISTEK* NUMBER 40 OF 2021

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Abstract. This study aims to explore principals' responses and understandings related to the implementation of *Permendikbudristek* Number 40 of 2021 on the assignment of teachers as principals, as well as identify the challenges faced in implementing the policy. The research used qualitative methods involving observation, interviews, and documentation. The results show that the implementation of the policy has been carried out in stages and coordinated. However, in responding to the policy, there are several challenges faced. One of them is the lack of qualified teachers to become principals, which has an impact on the selection and assignment process. Thus, the implementation of *Permendikbudristek* Number 40 of 2021 has the potential to improve the quality of education in primary schools in Sukabumi district. To overcome the challenges, it is recommended that the government evaluate the burdensome articles. Good coordination between all relevant parties is

needed to reach a mutual agreement. This research contributes to the understanding of principals' responses to the implementation of the policy on teacher assignment as principals and identifies the challenges faced. The results of this study can be the basis for developing more effective policies and strategies in improving the quality of principal leadership and education in primary schools.

INTRODUCTION

Education is an essential aspect of the development of a country. Teachers have a key role in creating good quality education. In order to improve the quality of education, the implementation of the policy on the assignment of teachers as principals in primary schools in Sukabumi district, which is regulated by *Permendikbudristek* Number 40 of 2021, is a relevant and important research topic to study. Irwansyah (2021) stated that school quality is determined by several factors. They are school management, facilities of the school, financial resources, and human resources. School management is one of the essential elements in improving the quality of education. Improving the quality of education become a major goal in national education development (Virgo et al., 2018) & (Rindarti, 2021).

Based on a World Bank report in 2018, the quality of education in Indonesia is still low. The quality of education in Indonesia is still a problem due to the low level of professionalism of school principals as education managers at the field level. One of the factors for the low professionalism is the selection of school principals, which is still less based on professional ability and education. More often, the school principal's selection based on rank and experience as a teacher is in line with Mulyasa's (2003) view that the school principal's selection is not based on competence and professionalism but rather tends to prioritize appointments based on rank and experience as a teacher. Arifudin (2021) argues that success and conduciveness in the school environment can be influenced and determined by several factors, one of which is the role of the school principal. There is a connection between principals' management, teacher performance, and education quality. According to Tanjung et al. (2021), principals' managerial skills have an essential impact on teacher performance, and teacher performance will ultimately affect student achievement.

According to Wati et al. (2022), the Principal is a teacher who has an important role in leading a school. His main task is to supervise and organize the teaching and learning process between teachers and students so that learning can take place properly. Principals have a great responsibility to improve school quality. The principal is expected to be able to manage all existing resources effectively and efficiently. Meanwhile, according to *Permendikbudristek* Number 40 of 2021 concerning the assignment of teachers as principals, Article 1 paragraph 1, the definition of a Principal is a teacher who has the responsibility of leading the learning process and managing an education unit, which includes kindergarten, extraordinary kindergarten, elementary school, extraordinary elementary school, junior high school, extraordinary junior high school, senior high school, vocational high school, extraordinary senior high school, or Indonesian School Abroad (Tingkat, 2020).

Permendikbudristek Number 40 of 2021 regarding the teachers' appointment as school principals has introduced new requirements that are different from before. One of these changes is the requirement for a *penggerak* teacher certificate. In addition, this regulation also encourages a new spirit of educational transformation, innovation, regeneration, and consistency. This challenges creation in terms of adaptation, socialization, and reorientation, as is the case with other regulations. However, Ilham's (2020) research on the assignment of teachers as school principals shows that there are some challenges in implementing this policy, such as the lack of qualified teachers and differences in views between teachers, principals, and related parties. In a previous study, Mere (2021) stated that the assignment of teachers as principals can provide opportunities to develop leadership and managerial skills for teachers. This can have a positive impact on improving the quality of education in primary schools. However, the study did not specifically address the implementation of the policy in Sukabumi district, so there is a need to fill this gap.

Another study by Rohman et al. (2022) highlighted the issue of the lack of qualified teachers as principals in some areas. This can be an obstacle in selecting and assigning teachers as principals process. However, the study did not specifically examine the situation in Sukabumi district. Therefore, this study is expected to provide more detailed and relevant information related to this issue. The gap in previous research is the absence of research that focuses on the implementation of *Permendikbudristek* Number 40 of 2021 in Sukabumi District. Therefore, this research has its own advantages and uniqueness as it provides an in-depth understanding of the implementation of this policy in the area. Thus, this research will provide a valuable contribution to filling the knowledge gap. Based on this background, the formulation of the problem in this study is how the response and understanding of principals

in primary schools in Sukabumi District regarding the implementation of *Permendikbudristek* Number 40 of 2021 regulate the assignment of teachers as heads and what the challenges faced in its implementation.

The aim of this study is to explore principals' responses and understanding of the implementation of *Permendikbudristek* Number 40 of 2021, which regulates the assignment of teachers as principals, and to identify the challenges faced in implementing the policy. In addition, this study also aims to provide recommendations to overcome the challenges and improve the implementation of this policy. The policy implementation has been done by considering the competence and experience of the teachers concerned. The hypothesis of this study is that the implementation of *Permendikbudristek* Number 40 of 2021 in Sukabumi District has been carried out in a gradual and coordinated manner, but still faces several challenges. In addition, it is expected that the implementation of this policy has had a positive impact on developing teachers' leadership and managerial skills and improving the quality of education in primary schools. Based on previous research, there is a knowledge gap regarding the implementation of the policy on assigning teachers as principals in Sukabumi district. Therefore, this research will make an important contribution to understanding and solving this problem. The recommendations generated from this research are expected to be used by local governments and related institutions to improve policy implementation and achieve better results in developing the quality of education.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative research design that allows researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of individual perspectives and experiences, in this case, principals. Researchers will explore differences and variations in school principals' responses, their policies understanding, and the challenges faced in *Permendikbudristek* Number 40 of 2021 implementation. This method provides space for researchers to gain deep insight into the factors that influence attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions of principals related to the policies understanding. Several elementary schools located in Sukabumi district, West Java, were chosen as research sites by considering variations in the background of school principals, and the level of implementation of *Permendikbudristek* Number 40 of 2021. The subjects of the study consisted of principals in elementary schools located in Sukabumi Regency. The number of research subjects was determined through a purposive sampling approach, taking into account variables such as the principal's experience, educational background, and the level of implementation of *Permendikbudristek* Number 40 of 2021 in their respective schools.

Data collection is carried out through several methods. First, semi-structured interviews were conducted with school principals to gain their perspectives on the implementation of *Permendikbudristek* Number 40 of 2021 and the challenges faced. Interviews are recorded to ensure the accuracy of the data. In addition, observations are also made to observe the activities in schools related to policy implementation, such as school meetings or teacher training. Observation records situations, interactions, and environmental factors that influence the principal's response. The Data was collected from the documents such as school policies, *Permendikbudristek* document Number 40 of 2021, school activity reports, and related training materials. The collected data will be analyzed using content analysis. Interview transcriptions will be validated with original recordings to ensure data accuracy. The content analysis will be conducted to identify key themes emerging from the principal's response and understanding as well as implementation challenges faced ([Esterberg, 2018](#)).

Data triangulation will be carried out by comparing findings from interviews, observations, and documents to increase the validity of the study. The analysis will be presented in the form of a detailed narrative. In addition, researchers also involve themselves in participatory observations to ensure the validity of the observations. The research findings are presented in the form of an analysis that supports the conclusion of the study. Through direct presence during the research process, researchers can build a good relationship with the research subject and gain a deeper understanding of the research context.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Since 2021, there has been a change in the requirements to become a candidate for principal. This change occurred after the enactment of *Permendikbudristek* Number 40 of 2021 which regulates the assignment of teachers as school principals. This regulation has been stipulated by the Minister of Education and Culture and Technology on December 17, 2021. When viewed more deeply, the changes that occur focus more on adding and strengthening the substance, without losing it that has existed before. Before the issuance of *Permendikbudristek* Number 40, there were regulations governing the process, procedure, and mechanism for nominating school principals. Examples are *Permendiknas* Number 28 of 2010 concerning the assignment of teachers as principals of schools/Madrasah, and *Permendikbud RI* Number 6 of 2018 concerning the assignment of teachers as principals. Although these three regulations have similarities, there are differences in terms of strengthening principles and adding criteria that are by the challenges and demands of the times and existing conditions (Fauziah et al., 2021).

Article 2 in paragraph 1 of *Permendikbudristek* Number 40 stated that one of the requirements to become a school principal is to have a *penggerak* teacher certificate. The Mover Teacher Certificate is given to teachers who have completed the Mover Teacher education and are declared graduates. For teachers who currently have the title of mobilizing teacher exciting news, because they have the opportunity to become principals. This requirement is new because, in the previous regulation governing the assignment of teachers as principals, this requirement did not yet exist. Another novelty is that the opportunity to become a principal is not only limited to teachers with civil servant status but also given to teachers with *PPPK* status. The government is currently conducting a selection for *PPPK* teachers, namely Government Employees with Work Agreements. Law Number 5 of 2014 about *Aparatur Sipil Negara* (ASN) explained that *ASN* includes civil servants and government employees with work agreements who work in government agencies. Therefore, both civil servants and *PPPK* teachers have the same opportunity to become principals. Another change is that the rank, class, and space requirements to become a principal have been downgraded by one level based on previous regulations. Previously, the requirement to become a principal was a minimum of *Penata*, class III/c. However, in the new Minister of Education Regulation, the requirement is to have the rank of *Penata Muda* Level I, III/b. This change aims to accelerate leadership regeneration in education units. Amon et al. (2022) in their research argue that young teachers who have good potential, energy, motivation, and leadership are considered worthy of the opportunity to lead in education units without being hampered by seniority which often occurs before.

The results of this study indicate that the implementation of *Permendikbudristek* Number 40 of 2021 in elementary schools in Sukabumi district is carried out in a gradual and coordinated manner. The process of assigning teachers as school principals was carried out by considering the competence and experience of the teachers concerned. It indicates an effort to implement the policy in a careful and planned manner. Principals are required to

have quality management and leadership skills to improve school quality through appropriate decision-making and initiative (Handoko, 2022). Permendikbudristek Number 40 of 2021 emphasizes the importance of the quality of teachers who will serve as school principals. This is reflected in the process of preparation, appointment, and performance assessment of school principals, which focuses on abilities in the areas of learning leadership, entrepreneurship, academic supervision, school-based management, and the development of cultural education and national character. Therefore, Syafarina et al. (2021) argued that the performance of a principal produced through their behavior in carrying out managerial functions is very important, because the way they carry out tasks and achieve work results reflects their commitment as a reflection of their personality and social competencies, and has a positive impact on the results achieved.

Semi-structured interviews conducted with school principals showed that the principals in primary schools majority in Sukabumi district responded positively to the implementation of *Permendikbudristek* Number 40 of 2021. They see this policy as an effort to improve professionalism and leadership quality in primary schools. Principals also realize that the assignment of teachers as principals requires adequate leadership competencies and skills. Principals' understanding of the content of *Permendikbudristek* Number 40 of 2021 varies but remains one vision. Most principals have studied this policy in detail and understand the requirements and tasks which the principal teachers must carry out. Overall, there are two main parts to the requirements for principal candidates: normative (administrative) requirements and substantive requirements. Administrative requirements include aspects related to important documents and legalization. Examples include ensuring the existence and legality of the last diploma, last rank and class, teaching certificate, and health and drug-free certificate. These documents must be authentic and have received legalization from the competent authority. On the other hand, substantive requirements involve written tests that test problem-solving skills, as well as interview tests involving examiners who have competence in their fields.

However, the response of school principals related to article 2 in paragraph 1 of *Permendikbudristek* Number 40 found obstacles. In the article emphasizes the requirement that the principal must have a *penggerak* teacher certificate, an evaluation related to the policy of placing the principal position from the *penggerak* teacher is expected by the principal. Most respondents disagreed with the requirement that the principal must come from the *penggerak* teacher, because many teachers are experienced, have good leadership and management skills, and can be appointed as principal even though they are not from the *penggerak* teacher. The teacher mobilizer program is considered good for creating quality teachers as leaders. However, there are also teachers who did not participate in the teacher mobilizer program but have the quality and eligibility as principals. According to Said (2018), managerial skills are essential for principals. Most principals consider that teacher mobilizers tend to be academic, but it does not matter if it brings progress to the world of education. Both those who become mobilizers and those who do not must be given the same opportunity. This is based on the fact that many teachers are ready to become principals but are constrained by not having participated in the mentor teacher program. There is hope that this policy can still be modified, but it is currently still in place.

The challenges faced in implementing *Permendikbudristek* Number 40 of 2021 are also evident in this study. Some of the challenges include the lack of competent human resources in the principal position, the need for leadership training and development, and the limited time to carry out dual duties as a teacher and principal. In addition, there are challenges in managing

the dual roles of principal and teaching staff members, including dealing with potential conflicts of interest and high workloads. The results of this study also revealed a gap between principals' understanding and implementation of *Permendikbudristek* Number 40 of 2021. Although most principals have enough understanding to implement this policy has not been fully realized effectively in several primary schools in Sukabumi district. Factors such as the lack of adequate resources and support, the limited understanding of principals, and the operational challenges faced, may account for this gap (Jabar, 2020).

The results of observations identified various obstacles faced in the implementation of *Permendikbudristek* Number 40 of 2021. First, there is a shortage of qualified human resources to become school principals. Along with the assignment of teachers as principals, the number of teachers who can fill the role of principal is limited. Some schools experiencing a shortage of qualified principals. Second, principals who previously had limited managerial experience in managing the administrative and quality development aspects of education are faced with new challenges. They need adequate training and support to carry out their new duties as principals. Third, the implementation of this policy also faces challenges in terms of changes in organizational culture. Some teachers assigned as principals may face resistance or difficulty in adapting to their new roles and responsibilities. A comprehensive approach is needed, as principal recruitment may be hampered by the limited number of teacher mobilizers, which is currently inadequate to meet the needs of school principals. In a short period, this could potentially lead to a shortage of principals and difficulties in finding replacements, this is reinforced by the research of Zaenuri et al. (2022) which explains that recruitment patterns have a significant effect on the performance of school principals.

The implementation of the policy evaluation in practice cannot be carried out thoroughly because the appointment of new school principals lasted less than two years. However, interviews with school principals showed that they responded positively to the recruitment strategy stipulated by *Permendikbudristek* number 40 of 2021 and showed openness. But the policy contained inequalities that could hamper the short-term leadership regeneration process in elementary schools in Sukabumi district. The different views and perceptions between school principals and policymakers are obstacles to the implementation of this policy. Discrepancies in an understanding of this policy can lead to misalignment in policy implementation. Therefore, according to Rahmadi (2019), it is important to conduct effective dialog and communication between all relevant parties to achieve a more uniform understanding. Generally, the principals' responses tended to be positive amid some of the constraints and challenges outlined earlier. They recognize the benefits of this policy in improving their competencies and self-development as principals. This positive response reflects their willingness to adapt to the policy changes and commit to performing the role of principal to the best of their ability.

To overcome the challenges faced. It is essential for local governments and related institutions to take concrete steps. One of the steps that can be taken is to increase the number of teachers who qualify as principals through training and professional development. This will help strengthen the capacity of principals in carrying out their leadership and managerial duties in schools (Ruminten et al., 2022). In addition, there is also a need for good coordination between all relevant parties, including teachers, principals, and other related parties, to reach a mutual agreement on the implementation of this policy. The findings of this study have an essential contribution to the understanding of the implementation of the policy on assigning teachers as principals and the challenges faced. The findings can be used as a basis for developing more effective policies and quality strategies for principal leadership

improvement and education in primary schools. In addition, the legal basis governing this policy, *Permendikbudristek* Number 40 of 2021, provides strength and legitimacy for the implementation of this policy.

CONCLUSIONS

Through this research can be concluded that the implementation of the policy on assigning teachers as school principals has an impact on principals' responses and challenges. Principals' responses tend to be positive, but challenges such as the lack of qualified teachers and differences in views need to be overcome. Concrete steps are needed such as re-evaluating burdensome articles, improving teacher qualifications, good coordination, and developing principal leadership to strengthen the implementation of this policy. The results of this study can contribute to the development of better policies and strategies in improving the quality of principals' leadership and education in primary schools.

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