



Effective Education Funding Strategies to Increase Student Achievement

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Abstrak

Studi ini mengkaji alokasi dan distribusi pendanaan pendidikan di Indonesia dan mengevaluasi efektivitas program-program yang didanai dalam meningkatkan kualitas dan prestasi siswa. Data dikumpulkan dari sumber-sumber resmi dan dianalisis secara kuantitatif dan kualitatif. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa peningkatan pendanaan untuk pendidikan menengah atas berkaitan dengan peningkatan partisipasi sekolah dan penurunan angka putus sekolah. Program Indonesia Pintar (PIP) menunjukkan bahwa bantuan keuangan yang tepat sasaran dapat memfasilitasi peningkatan prestasi akademik, terutama di kalangan siswa dari latar belakang yang kurang beruntung. Namun, tantangan dalam pelaksanaan program, seperti keterlambatan pencairan dana dan proses administrasi yang rumit, mengurangi efektivitas program secara keseluruhan. Studi ini mengusulkan untuk meningkatkan alokasi dana untuk pendidikan tinggi, memperkuat sistem pemantauan dan evaluasi, dan menyederhanakan proses administrasi untuk memastikan bahwa dana tersebut didistribusikan kepada penerima yang dituju. Selain itu, studi ini juga menyarankan agar kolaborasi dengan sektor swasta dan lembaga swadaya masyarakat (LSM) perlu diupayakan. Namun, studi ini memiliki keterbatasan, yaitu kurangnya data longitudinal dan cakupan geografis yang mungkin tidak sepenuhnya mencerminkan kondisi di Indonesia. Penelitian lebih lanjut direkomendasikan untuk memperluas cakupan wilayah dan menganalisis dampak jangka panjang dari program-program pendanaan pendidikan.

Kata Kunci: Pendidikan, Alokasi Dana, Program Indonesia Pintar, Prestasi Siswa, Kebijakan Pendidikan

Abstract

This study examines the allocation and distribution of education funding in Indonesia and evaluates the effectiveness of funded programs in improving student quality and achievement. The data were gathered from official sources and subjected to quantitative and qualitative analysis. The findings indicate that an increase in funding for senior secondary education is associated with an increase in school enrollment and a reduction in dropout rates. The Indonesia Smart Program (PIP) demonstrates that targeted financial assistance can facilitate enhanced academic achievement, particularly among students from disadvantaged backgrounds. However, challenges in program implementation, such as delays in disbursement and complicated administrative processes, reduce its overall effectiveness. The study proposes increasing funding allocation for higher education, strengthening monitoring and evaluation systems, and simplifying administrative processes to ensure that the funds are distributed to the intended recipients. Moreover, the study suggests collaboration with the private sector and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) should be pursued. However, the study's limitations include a lack of longitudinal data and geographical coverage, which may not fully reflect the conditions in Indonesia. Further research is recommended to expand the coverage scope and analyze the long-term impact of education funding programs.

Keywords: *Education, Fund Allocation, Indonesia Smart Program, Student Achievement, Education Policy*

Introduction

Education is one of the main pillars in the development of a nation (Suharno et al., 2020). Good quality education is an important foundation for the intellectual, social and emotional development of students (Immordino-Yang et al., 2019). In this context, education financing management plays a crucial role in determining the quality and effectiveness of the learning process (Agusniati, 2022). Adequate and well-targeted financing can ensure the availability of necessary resources, such as learning facilities, qualified teaching staff and access to modern education technology (Sukmayadi & Yahya, 2020). However, challenges in budget management often hamper efforts to improve learners' academic performance.

The importance of effective education financing has been the focus of attention of education researchers and practitioners. Previous research has shown that prudent allocation of funds and transparent management can have a significant impact on student learning outcomes (Wagithunu et al., 2014). Investments in educational infrastructure, teacher training and other support programs have been shown to increase learning motivation and academic achievement. However, there are various factors that influence the success of financing management, including government policies, community participation and the managerial capabilities of the educational institutions themselves (Baynes et al., 2015).

In a social context, the issue of education financing is often closely related to the economic disparities that exist in society. Data shows that students from families with low economic backgrounds tend to experience difficulties in accessing quality education (Jury et al., 2017). This can be seen from the low school enrollment rates in remote and less developed areas, which generally have limited educational facilities and infrastructure. This creates a widening education gap between students from affluent and underprivileged families, which in turn has an impact on their academic performance.

Research also shows that inadequate education financing can have a direct impact on the quality of the teaching force (Colson & Satterfield, 2018). Teachers who lack financial

support often experience limitations in professional development, such as training and further education. In fact, the quality of the teaching force is one of the key factors in improving student achievement (Koedel et al., 2015). Lack of incentives for teachers to continue improving their competence can lead to stagnation in education quality and low student motivation.

Additionally, the sustainability of educational programs often depends on the stability and adequacy of available funds (Riddell & Niño-Zarazúa, 2016). Programs such as scholarships, extracurricular activities, and psychological support and counseling for students require sufficient financial resources to run effectively (Colson & Satterfield, 2018). Without proper financial management, these programs can be stalled or not run optimally, depriving learners of many opportunities to develop their full potential. Therefore, the study of comprehensive and innovative education financing management is crucial to ensure that every learner has equal access to quality education and can achieve their best.

A substantial body of literature underscores the pivotal role of education financing management in enhancing learner achievement (Glewwe & Muralidharan, 2016). For example, studies have demonstrated that investment in education, particularly in enhancing the quality of teachers and learning facilities, significantly contributes to students' academic achievement (Mincu, 2015). The results indicated that countries with higher education funding allocations tend to demonstrate superior education outcomes (Hagood, 2019). This research highlights the significance of effective and efficient management of educational funds in achieving the desired educational outcomes (Glewwe & Muralidharan, 2016).

Furthermore, the study indicates that targeted expenditure on particular programs, such as teacher training and support for students with special needs, yields a more pronounced positive outcome than non-targeted spending. The researchers conclude that the significance of funding is not merely quantitative, but also qualitative. The strategic and evidence-based utilization of financial resources can assist in the resolution of the multifarious obstacles

confronted by learners, particularly those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

Another study underscored the significance of allocating resources toward early childhood education. The researchers discovered that high-quality early childhood education programs can provide a robust foundation for children's cognitive and social development, which subsequently contributes to their academic achievement in later life. This indicates that effective financial management should encompass all levels of education, from primary to higher education, in order to guarantee sustainability and consistency in enhancing learner achievement.

This research will synthesize findings from previous literature with empirical data obtained from the field to develop practical and applicable recommendations. It is anticipated that this research will not only make a valuable contribution to the academic field, but also provide guidance for policymakers and education practitioners in effectively managing education funds to enhance learner achievement in Indonesia.

The urgency of this research is increasingly felt in the context of the educational challenges facing Indonesia today. Although the government has made several efforts to improve the quality of education through various programs and policies, the results achieved have not been fully adequate. The low quality of education in some regions, the wide gap between cities and villages, and the lack of adequate educational facilities are challenges that need to be addressed immediately. In addition, the recently passed COVID-19 pandemic situation has added to the complexity of the problem, with many schools having to adapt to distance learning without adequate infrastructure support. All this confirms the importance of better and more targeted management of education funding.

The main objective of this research is to identify and analyze effective education finance management strategies for improving student achievement. The research will examine various financing models that have been implemented in other regions and countries and evaluate their implementation in the Indonesian context. In addition, the research also aims to identify barriers to education financing management and provide evidence-based recommendations to overcome these barriers. Thus, the results of this

study are expected to serve as a reference for policy makers in formulating a more effective and efficient education financing strategy.

Specifically, this research will focus on several key aspects, namely: (1) analyzing the allocation and distribution of education funding, (2) evaluating the effectiveness of funded programs, and (3) developing policy recommendations based on empirical findings. Through this comprehensive approach, this research is expected to make a significant contribution to improving the quality of education in Indonesia and, ultimately, to improving overall student achievement.

Method

This research uses a mixed methods approach that combines quantitative and qualitative methods (McLaughlin et al., 2016), to provide a comprehensive picture of the management of education funding in improving student achievement. This research method consists of three main focuses, namely: (1) analyzing the allocation and distribution of education funding, (2) evaluating the effectiveness of funded programs, and (3) developing policy recommendations based on empirical findings.

A quantitative approach is used to analyze the allocation and distribution of education funding. The required data are collected from official sources such as the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS), the Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC), and local financial reports. The data collected include total education funding, percentage allocations for facilities, teacher salaries, and support programs. The analytical techniques used include descriptive statistical analysis to describe the pattern of funding allocation in different regions, and comparative analysis to compare funding distribution across different areas.

The evaluation of the effectiveness of the funded programs will be conducted using a mixed methods approach (Prosek, 2020). Quantitative data will be collected through surveys and program reports from funded schools. Indicators of program success will be identified, such as improvements in teacher competencies, number of students receiving scholarships, satisfaction with facilities, and student participation in extracurricular activities. Analytical techniques will include descriptive

and inferential analyses to assess the relationship between funding allocations and program success indicators.

A qualitative approach will be used to enrich the results of the quantitative analysis (Maxwell, 2022). In-depth interviews with stakeholders such as school principals, teachers, and local government officials will be conducted to gain insights into program implementation, challenges faced, and factors affecting program success. Thematic analysis will be used to identify key themes from these interviews.

Policy recommendations will be developed based on the results of the funding allocation analysis and program evaluation. A qualitative approach will be used to develop comprehensive and applicable recommendations. Focus group discussions with education experts, policymakers, and practitioners will be conducted to validate findings and obtain additional input.

Result and Discussion

Analysis of Education Fund Allocation and Distribution

The analysis of the allocation and distribution of education funding is a complex process that is influenced by a number of factors. A number of studies have highlighted the importance of funding schemes in promoting sustainable development through the transformation of public goods (Chang & Chang, 2024). The efficiency of resource allocation is a significant determinant of the efficacy of the

higher education system, with the optimization of input combinations being a pivotal factor (Guo, 2023). The lack of certainty in the distribution of resources presents a significant challenge to the attainment of distributive justice in education, underscoring the necessity for the exploration of alternative strategies to address this issue (Gilead, 2019). Furthermore, the distribution of funding between public and private sources for the development of human capital affects individuals' preferences for redistribution, indicating a correlation between education financing mechanisms and social solidarity norms (Busemeyer, 2013). Transparency and an empirical basis are indispensable in the process of allocating funds to guarantee fairness and efficacy. This is exemplified by the criticisms levied against the allocation formula in the Higher Education Funding Council for England and Wales (Whittington, 2000).

In an effort to improve the quality of education and student achievement, it is important to understand how education funds are allocated and distributed across educational levels and income groups. Proper allocation and equitable distribution can ensure that all students, regardless of their economic background, have equal access to quality education. The following table presents data on net enrollment rates by expenditure distribution and education level from 2021 to 2023, reflecting the impact of education funding allocation and distribution on access to education across income groups.

Table 1. Net Enrollment Ratio by Expenditure Distribution and Educational Level

Income (Expense) Group	Elementary School / Equivalent			Junior High School / Equivalent			High School / Equivalent			College / University		
	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023
Bottom 40%	99,89	99,98	100,3	101,17	102,61	101,18	103,29	109,75	105,84	128,57	118,43	123,37
Middle 40% group	99,95	100,05	99,59	100,31	101,27	100,11	103,15	104,22	108,84	130,98	132,44	132,43
Top 20%	100,35	99,99	99,85	98,08	101,51	98,97	97,74	102,12	100,51	108,17	113,13	111,65

Source: Rasio Angka Partisipasi Murni (APM) Perempuan/Laki-Laki Menurut Distribusi Pengeluaran dan Jenjang Pendidikan - Tabel Statistik - Badan Pusat Statistik Indonesia (bps.go.id)

Table 1 shows the net enrollment rate by expenditure distribution and education level from 2021 to 2023. These data divide the population into three groups based on income (or expenditure): Bottom 40%, Middle 40%, and Top 20%. The table includes four levels of education: Elementary school or equivalent, Junior high school or equivalent, Senior high school or equivalent, and College or university.

These data suggest that the allocation and distribution of educational resources have been quite effective in maintaining enrollment rates at the primary level, especially in the middle- and lower-income groups. However, challenges remain at higher levels, particularly at tertiary institutions, where the lowest income groups show greater variation. This suggests that, despite efforts to distribute education resources more equitably, there is still a need to increase

allocations, particularly for low-income groups at the tertiary level.

The significant increase in enrolment at the upper secondary level across all income groups suggests that the resources allocated to this level are beginning to show positive results. However, more attention needs to be paid to the stability of participation at the tertiary level to ensure that all income groups have access to higher education without significant financial barriers.

A high net enrollment rate has a significant impact on student achievement by ensuring equitable access to quality education, reducing educational disparities, improving the quality of learning, and increasing motivation and academic performance. This is achieved through a structured school environment and support from teachers and peers, which can increase interest in learning and encourage students to achieve better academic results.

The positive psychosocial impact of formal education is also evident, as participation provides opportunities for peer interaction, development of social skills and self-confidence, which indirectly affect academic performance. In addition, high enrolment rates at the tertiary level increase students' opportunities to acquire further education and skills needed in the labour market, leading to better career prospects and professional success.

However, challenges remain, such as improving the quality of teaching, ensuring adequate facilities and infrastructure, and providing extracurricular support. To maximize this impact, continuous efforts are needed to improve the quality of teaching, educational facilities and student support at all levels of education. A holistic and sustainable approach can significantly improve students' academic performance, with long-term benefits for individuals and society as a whole.

A high net enrollment rate has a significant positive impact on student achievement in terms of access, motivation, quality of learning and future opportunities. However, challenges remain, such as ensuring adequate facilities and infrastructure, and providing extra-curricular support to enhance students' overall development.

Evaluating the effectiveness of funded programs

It is imperative to assess the efficacy of a funded program in order to ascertain its impact

and make well-informed decisions for improvement. The success of such programs is contingent upon a number of factors, including the enhancement of team skills, collaboration with stakeholders, the development of networks, and the implementation of comprehensive business planning strategies (Mueller, 2023). In the context of tiger conservation projects, the effective allocation of funds, a focus on on-the-ground actions such as patrolling, and the development of sustainable funding mechanisms are essential for achieving the desired results (Mannan et al., 2023). Furthermore, the evaluation of federal targeted programs entails the assessment of budgetary expenditures, program implementation, and the role of program curators and state customers, with the objective of enhancing the efficiency of capital investments (Lawelai et al., 2021). In the context of educational institutions, it is of paramount importance to facilitate the updating of staff knowledge and skills through training, the sharing of resources, the integration of processes, and the leveraging of information technology in order to ensure optimal organizational effectiveness (Warahmah, 2023).

In an effort to improve the quality of education, the Indonesian government has launched several scholarship programs, one of which is the Smart Indonesia Program (PIP). This program is designed to help students from underprivileged families to continue their education without the burden of tuition fees. The following chart shows the amount of Program Indonesia Pintar (PIP) funding per recipient per year by education level.

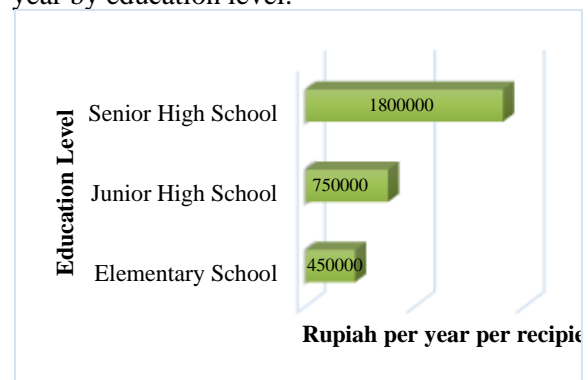


Figure 1. Amount of Indonesia Smart Program/PIP funding by level of education
Source: Muhamad, (2024)

Figure 1 illustrates the allocation of PIP funds to three levels of education: Elementary

School, Junior High School, and Senior High School.

The PIP is one of the Indonesian government's initiatives to improve access to education for students from disadvantaged families (Muhamad, 2024). Figure 1 shows that a larger allocation of funds is given to students at the senior high school level compared to primary and junior high schools. This reflects the higher demands at more advanced levels of education, which include higher costs for learning materials, extracurricular activities, and preparation for higher education or the world of work.

One of the positive effects of allocating more resources to senior high school students is an increase in enrollment at this level. Data from the BPS show that educational participation rates in Indonesia tend to decline at the upper secondary level, especially among lower economic groups. With the financial support of Rp. 1.800.000 per year, students from underprivileged families will be able to cover the costs of higher education, including books, uniforms, and transportation. This is expected to reduce the financial barriers that are often the main reason for students to drop out at this level.

The PIP program also aims to reduce dropout rates. Students who receive PIP assistance are more likely to complete their education because of the lower cost burden. A World Bank study shows that financial interventions such as PIP can significantly reduce dropout rates. This is important because high dropout rates among high school students can have a long-term impact on the quality of the workforce and future economic productivity.

Another impact of PIP is on student academic achievement. Financial assistance allows students to focus on their studies without worrying about the cost of education. With funds available to purchase books and materials, students are able to study more effectively and efficiently. Research shows that students who are not burdened by financial concerns tend to perform better academically. Evaluating the academic performance of PIP recipients compared to those who do not receive assistance can provide empirical evidence of the effectiveness of this program.

However, although PIP has shown various positive effects, some challenges still need to be addressed to improve the effectiveness of this program. One of the main challenges is the timely and targeted distribution of funds. Some reports

indicate that there are delays in the disbursement of funds and difficulties in the administrative process, which can reduce the benefits to students.

To overcome these challenges, the government needs to improve the fund distribution mechanism to make it more efficient and transparent. In addition, regular monitoring and evaluation should be conducted to ensure that PIP funds are being used in accordance with the program's objectives. Implementing a better reporting system and involving schools and local communities in monitoring can help improve program accountability.

Developing Policy Recommendations

In order to develop effective policy recommendations for education funding, it is imperative to address the key issues highlighted in the research. The extant literature indicates that during periods of economic downturn, such as the Great Recession and the ongoing pandemic, federal assistance was inadequate and inequitably distributed, resulting in discrepancies in funding allocations (Shores & Steinberg, 2022). Furthermore, the necessity of maintaining the level of education finance despite fluctuations in the student population is underscored, along with the imperative for adequate funding for higher education to avert a structural crisis in the system (de Wit & Altbach, 2021). Furthermore, the quality of education is significantly influenced by funding, particularly for disadvantaged groups. This underscores the necessity for democratic and bottom-up stakeholder engagement in policy development to ensure effective problem-solving and budget allocation (Nurhayati et al., 2019). By taking these factors and recommendations into account, such as enacting legislation to secure higher education finance and promoting balanced university development, policymakers can establish a more equitable and sustainable education funding policy.

The development of policy recommendations is contingent upon a comprehensive analysis of the allocation and distribution of education funding, as well as an evaluation of the efficacy of funded programs. This analysis should inform the formulation of policy recommendations aimed at enhancing the quality and accessibility of education in Indonesia. The four primary findings upon which these recommendations are based are school enrollment rates, declining dropout rates, student academic achievement, and challenges in

program implementation. The following policy recommendations are based on the aforementioned empirical findings.

The findings indicate that an increased allocation of funding to senior secondary education is an effective strategy for enhancing school enrollment. It would be prudent for the government to consider augmenting the allocation of PIP funds for senior high school students, particularly in regions exhibiting low participation rates. Such adjustments may be made through the annual budgetary process, with more targeted allocations made as necessary.

Despite the considerable allocation of PIP funds, there is a necessity for the implementation of targeted programs designed to address the unique challenges faced by remote communities and vulnerable populations. Such programs might include transportation subsidies, logistical support, and the provision of adequate educational facilities. The objective is to address the physical and social barriers that impede access to education for these groups.

To guarantee that PIP funds are distributed correctly and utilized as intended, a more robust monitoring and evaluation system is imperative. The government could implement an online reporting system that enables schools, parents, and communities to document the utilization of funds and receive immediate feedback.

Prepared, implemented that extends beyond the purview of the government. Engagement with the private sector and NGOs can facilitate the provision of supplementary support, such as scholarships, mentorship, and intervention programs for students at risk of dropping out. These programs can offer more tailored and community-oriented assistance.

The results of the evaluation demonstrate that the provision of financial assistance must be accompanied by an enhancement of the quality of teaching. Consequently, it is imperative that teachers receive regular training programs to enhance their competencies in teaching and supporting students. Such training might encompass the introduction of novel pedagogical approaches, the incorporation of technology into the learning process, and the development of strategies to assist students with specific learning needs.

It is imperative that the government guarantee that Personal Independence Payment (PIP) funds are utilized not only for direct

expenses such as tuition fees, but also for the provision of comprehensive learning resources, including books, technological devices, and internet access. With sufficient resources, students are better positioned to learn more effectively and achieve higher academic performance.

A considerable number of reports have highlighted the detrimental impact of complex administrative procedures and delays in the disbursement of funds on the efficacy of the program. Consequently, the streamlining of administrative procedures, including the minimization of bureaucratic constraints and the integration of technology to accelerate the disbursement of funds, is imperative. The government could develop a digital platform for the purpose of facilitating more efficient registration, disbursement, and reporting on the use of funds. It is imperative that the central government reinforce its collaboration with local governments to guarantee the seamless implementation of the program. This entails conferring greater authority upon local governments with regard to the management and supervision of funds, in addition to providing training for local officials in the domain of education fund management.

The development of effective education policy should be informed by empirical evidence pertaining to funding allocation, program evaluation, and implementation challenges. By augmenting the financial allocation to higher education, fortifying the monitoring apparatus, enhancing the caliber of instruction, and streamlining administrative procedures, the government can guarantee that the PIP and other initiatives confer optimal benefits upon students in need. It is anticipated that the implementation of these policy recommendations will facilitate enhanced access to education, curtail dropout rates, and augment student academic achievement across Indonesia.

Conclusion

The primary findings of this study indicate that an increased allocation of educational funding at the senior secondary level is an effective strategy for enhancing school enrollment. Students from impoverished backgrounds who receive PIP benefits are more likely to complete secondary education. The PIP program has been observed to reduce dropout

rates by providing adequate financial assistance, thereby enabling students to remain in school despite economic constraints. The provision of PIP grants has been observed to have a positive impact on students' academic achievement, due to the reduction in financial burden experienced by families and the subsequent ability of students to focus on their studies.

The implications of these findings are significant for policymakers in the development of more effective education strategies. It is essential that the government considers an increase in funding allocations for higher levels of education and ensures a targeted distribution. It is also vital that special programs for remote areas and vulnerable groups are strengthened in order to overcome barriers to education access. Furthermore, it is of paramount importance that improvements are made to the quality of teaching through teacher training and the provision of comprehensive learning resources in order to support students' academic achievement.

While this study offers valuable insights, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of the

research. Firstly, it should be noted that the data used in this study is descriptive in nature and may not cover all variables that affect the effectiveness of the PIP program. Secondly, the limitations of the primary data collection process, which included surveys and interviews, may have an impact on the representativeness of the findings. Third, the evaluation of this program is based on data from a specific period and may not reflect the potential for dynamic changes in program implementation in the future.

Further research is required to address these limitations and enhance the comprehension of the elements that contribute to the efficacy of educational programs. Longitudinal studies employing a more comprehensive long-term and mixed-methods analysis could provide a more complete picture of the impact of the PIP program on education in Indonesia. Therefore, education policies can be continually refined and enhanced to ensure optimal benefits for all students nationwide.

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