

## THE ROLE AND CHALLENGES OF HONORARY TEACHERS IN THE NATIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEM: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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### Abstract

Honorary teachers have a strategic role in supporting the national education system, especially in fulfilling the need for teaching staff in areas that lack human resources. However, this role is often faced with challenges such as poor welfare, lack of career security and limited access to professional competence development. This literature review outlines the important contribution of honorary teachers to education and the financial and structural barriers they face. Solving these problems requires collaboration between the government, the community and other stakeholders, especially in formulating more inclusive policies to improve the welfare and quality of the honorary teaching profession. With optimal support, honorary teachers can continue to make maximum contributions to the achievement of national education goals.

**Keywords:** Role, Challenges, Honorary Teachers, National Education System, Literature Review

### Introduction

Teachers are key elements in the education process who are responsible not only for the transfer of knowledge and skills, but also the formation of student character. Teachers have a strategic role as role models and facilitators who can instil positive values, such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, and empathy to students through daily interactions in the school environment (Fiteriadi et al., 2024). In addition, teachers can integrate character education into the learning process through thematic approaches, hands-on practice, or extracurricular activities that support the development of positive attitudes and behaviours. With a good approach, teachers not only form academically intelligent students, but also individuals who have integrity, ethics, and strong social skills to become responsible members of society (Judijanto & Aslan, 2025); (Fitriani et al., 2024).

In the national education system, the existence of honorary teachers has become an integral aspect. Honorary teachers, who are often appointed to fill teaching vacancies in various educational institutions, play an important role in supporting the implementation of the learning process, especially in remote areas and schools that lack teaching staff (Wijayanti ., 2024)

Honorary teachers are educators who are appointed and employed by educational institutions, both public and private, but not as State Civil Apparatus (ASN) or Civil Servants (PNS). They are usually recruited to fulfil the need for additional teachers in schools that lack teaching staff. Honorary teachers work based on contracts or agreements, with salaries generally sourced from school funds, government grants, or other sources, which are often below the salary standards of civil servants. Despite the limited status and compensation received, honorary teachers play an important role in supporting the continuity of the education process and participating in educating the nation's generation (Aditya, 2020).

However, while their role in sustaining the national education system is recognised, honorary teachers face a number of challenges. These include often uncertain employment status, low levels of welfare, and lack of access to training and professional development (Susanti, 2020).

Data from reliable sources, such as the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (Kemendikbudristek), show that the number of honorary teachers in Indonesia is still quite large. In recent years, honorary teachers have become the backbone in addressing the shortage of educators in various regions, especially in remote and underdeveloped areas (Chandra, 2024). Nonetheless, honorary teachers often face significant challenges related to professional recognition and pay gap issues. Many honorary teachers receive much lower salaries than civil servant teachers, despite having similar duties and responsibilities. In addition, their non-permanent or contract status also makes them vulnerable to job insecurity. Therefore, this issue becomes urgent to resolve in order to improve the welfare of honorary teachers, ensure equitable quality of education, and provide motivation for teachers to continue to contribute optimally in the world of education (Hartini., 2022)

The existence of honorary teachers is also closely related to the complexity of education policy in Indonesia. Although the government has introduced various initiatives such as the appointment of honorary teachers as civil servants (PNS) through selection programmes, these policies have not been able to fully bring change to all honorary teachers, especially those in marginalised areas. As a result, many honorary teachers still feel that their contributions are not fairly valued, both financially and professionally. In addition, social challenges such as the lack of appreciation from the community towards the role of honorary teachers is also one of the issues that needs more attention (Oktavia, 2021).

Teacher well-being plays a vital role in the teaching process as it directly affects their motivation, concentration and readiness to create a conducive learning environment. Teachers who feel well-off - financially, emotionally and professionally - tend to be better able to focus on teaching tasks, able to innovate in delivery methods and more responsive to students' needs (Suryadi, 2020). Conversely, dissatisfaction or insecurity, especially arising from low salaries and uncertain employment status, can

impair their performance and hinder the creation of quality learning experiences. Thus, ensuring teachers' well-being not only improves the quality of education but also contributes to students' overall academic and social development (Purike & Aslan, 2025).

This study aims to identify and analyse the roles and challenges faced by honorary teachers in the national education system, as well as provide a review of relevant literature to understand their position in the education system. With this approach, it is hoped that the results of the research can make a real contribution to the formulation of better policies for the development of honorary teachers' professionalism and welfare in the future.

### **Research Methods**

The study in this research uses the literature method. The literature research method is an approach that is carried out by collecting, analysing, and interpreting information from various written sources to answer research questions or examine a particular topic. This method involves a systematic search of books, scientific articles, reports, and other relevant documents, both theoretical and empirical in nature (Snyder, 2019) ; (Paré & Trudel, 2007) . Important stages in literature research include defining keywords, identifying credible sources, evaluating the content of the literature, and synthesising the key findings. Literature research is very useful for gaining an up-to-date understanding of the development of previous research, finding research gaps, and building a theoretical framework to inform further research (Borenstein et al., 2009) .

### **Results and Discussion**

#### **The Role of Honorary Teachers in the National Education System**

Honorary teachers play a very important role in the national education system. Although their status is often considered lower than that of permanent teachers, their contribution cannot be ignored. They help fill the shortage of teaching staff in many schools, especially in remote areas. This role is vital to ensure that every student gets his or her right to receive a decent and quality education (Wijayanti ., 2024)

The presence of honorary teachers also ensures that the learning process in schools can run smoothly. In many cases, they teach across different subjects and classes. This flexibility allows schools to adjust to diverse educational needs. Honorary teachers often show high dedication as they work on contracts that can be renewed annually. They work without strong job security, but still give their best in their duties (Aditya, 2020) .

Apart from teaching, honorary teachers also play a role in various extracurricular activities and school administration. They participate in accompanying students in various competitions, both academic and non-academic. This role is very important for

students' character and skill development outside the classroom. Their participation in school activities shows their commitment to holistic education that includes both academic and non-academic aspects (Susanti, 2020).

One of the main challenges faced by honorary teachers is their low level of welfare. Their salaries are often far below the minimum standard, and many of them do not receive the same benefits or social security as permanent teachers. This can affect their motivation and performance, although many of them remain committed to giving their best to their students. The lack of job security often puts them in a difficult position, especially when it comes to meeting their basic needs (Chandra, 2024).

In addition, opportunities for training and professional development for honorary teachers are often limited. In fact, training and professional development are essential to improve the quality of their teaching and their ability to face the evolving challenges of education. Many honorary teachers have to make their own efforts to obtain additional training at their own expense. This condition shows the need for more attention from the government to improve access to training for honorary teachers (Hartini, 2022)

It is undeniable that honorary teachers are highly motivated in carrying out their duties. They are often respected by students and the community for their dedication. However, the rewards given to them are often not commensurate with the contributions they make. Therefore, efforts to improve the welfare and recognition of honorary teachers need to be a major concern (Oktavia, 2021).

The sustainability of the national education system will largely depend on how we treat and manage human resources in the education sector, including honorary teachers. If there is no serious effort to improve their welfare and status, we may face serious problems with the quality of education in the future. Opening up more opportunities to become permanent teachers, as well as providing adequate training, can be a good first step to improving the quality of education (Suryadi ., 2020)

The government needs to review the policies relating to honorary teachers. Policies that focus on improving their status, welfare and professional development are essential. In addition, cooperation with the private sector and the community can also help in providing better support for honorary teachers. This support could be in the form of scholarships for further education, specialised training, or performance-based awards (Gunawan, 2022).

It is also important to create a fair evaluation and reward system for honorary teachers. This evaluation should include learning performance, creativity in teaching, and contributions to school and community activities. The rewards given should match their performance and dedication. This system can help motivate honorary teachers to continue improving the quality of education (Rahma, 2025).

The role of teacher professional organisations is also vital in supporting honorary teachers. These organisations can be a means to fight for their rights, provide training,

and be a forum for communication between honorary teachers, the government, and the community. With a strong organisation, the voice of honorary teachers can be heard and considered by policy makers (Fajar, 2023).

Finally, active participation from all parties, including the government, schools, communities, and honorary teachers themselves, is needed to create a better education system. Good collaboration will create a supportive environment for honorary teachers to give their best for students. In the end, quality education will be achieved, which will have a positive impact on the development of the nation.

### **Challenges Faced by Honorary Teachers**

Honorary teachers play a very important role in education, especially in areas where there is a shortage of educators. However, they are often faced with various challenges that affect their well-being and quality of work. These challenges include financial, social, and psychological aspects, which can overall reduce their motivation as educators (Widodo, 2025).

One of the main challenges for honorary teachers is the uncertainty in their employment status. Unlike permanent teachers who have job security, honorary teachers are often only hired based on the needs of the school or on short contracts. This makes their future feel uncertain, and in many cases, they can be dismissed at any time without adequate notice. This instability can put significant emotional pressure on them (Kurniawan, 2023).

Low income is another major challenge. Honorary teachers generally receive much lower wages than permanent teachers. In some cases, their salaries do not even match the minimum wage that has been set. This low income makes it difficult for honorary teachers to fulfil their basic needs, let alone invest in self-development or further education (Kadir, 2023).

The lack of social security is also a serious obstacle. Most honorary teachers do not have access to health benefits, insurance, pension funds, or other forms of job security. This makes them more vulnerable to health risks or emergencies, which can be costly. Without these protections, they are forced to rely entirely on their limited monthly income (Ismail, 2022).

In addition, career development opportunities are often very limited for honorary teachers. In many cases, they do not have access to professional training, seminars, or scholarships for further studies that could improve their skills. As a result, they are less able to compete with other teachers who have greater opportunities to learn and develop (Puspitasari, 2024).

Workload is also often one of the issues faced by honorary teachers. Although they are assigned the role of educator, they are often assigned additional responsibilities due to the shortage of teaching staff in the school. This can include teaching multiple subjects outside of their competence or even handling more classes

with longer working hours. Unfortunately, this workload is not always matched by increased compensation (Santoso, 2023).

Another issue is the lack of appreciation for their role. Honorary teachers often feel that their presence in schools is not fully respected or appreciated as an important part of the education community. They are regarded as auxiliary or reserve personnel, rarely recognised for their real contribution to the nation's education (Lestari, 2023).

Psychological pressures cannot be ignored either. The uncertainty of professional status, low pay, heavy workload and lack of recognition can cause honorary teachers to experience stress and emotional exhaustion. In the long run, these conditions can affect how they interact with students, colleagues and the educational institution itself (Firmansyah & Aslan, 2025); (Rokhmawati et al., 2025).

With all these challenges, honorary teachers continue to strive to provide the best for their students and communities. However, in order for the quality of education to continue to improve, serious attention is needed from the government and related parties to provide protection and proper appreciation for honorary teachers. This includes improving their welfare, expanding their career opportunities, and recognising their contribution to education.

## **Conclusion**

Honorary teachers play a very important role in supporting the national education system. They are often the backbone in fulfilling the need for teaching staff, especially in remote areas or those that lack permanent teachers. With their commitment, honorary teachers contribute to improving access to education for students across the country. This role not only covers the teaching aspect, but also includes nurturing, character building, and moral support for students.

However, the existence of honorary teachers is also characterised by significant challenges. One of the main challenges is the lack of financial appreciation and welfare they receive, both in terms of salaries that are far below decent living standards and access to social security such as BPJS or pensions. In addition, honorary teacher status often does not provide career security, which makes them feel underappreciated despite their immense contributions. Another challenge is limited access to training and self-development that can improve their quality as educators. To overcome these challenges, more attention from the government, the community and other policy makers is needed. Clear and fair policies, such as appointing honorary teachers as permanent employees or providing adequate incentives, can improve their welfare as well as the overall quality of education. In addition, training and reward-based approaches can help honorary teachers become more confident and competent in carrying out their duties. Thus, honorary teachers can continue to play their role optimally in educating the nation's next generation.

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