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THE IMPLEMENTATION OF 12-YEAR COMPULSORY EDUCATION IN 3T AREA: A CASE STUDY OF KUPANG REGENCY

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ABSTRACT

Education is a fundamental right and should be accessible to all school-age in Indonesia in a fair and equal manner. In addition, the government has created and put into action various education programs that are just and fair, with a primary focus on the 12-year compulsory education program, specifically in the three T regions, namely the most (Remote, Frontier and outermost). Therefore, this study aimed to examine how the 12-year compulsory education was being carried out in 3T area, using Kupang Regency in East Nusa Tenggara as a specific example. In order to perform the investigation, a qualitative approach was employed, and interviews were performed with different individuals, including the head of the Kupang Regency Office, school principals from elementary, middle, and high schools, as well as community leaders. The results showed numerous challenges that the region faced, such as problems related to access, infrastructure, education quality, and educational standards. The strategies used involved cooperation among the government, private sector, and the community to effectively implement the 12-year compulsory education program.

Keywords: Study, implementation, 12-year compulsory education, three area remote, frontier and outermost, Kupang regency.

ABSTRAK

Pendidikan merupakan hak asasi yang seharusnya dapat dinikmati secara adil dan saksama oleh semua kanak-kanak dalam usia persekolahan di Indonesia. Sehubungan dengan itu, kerajaan Indonesia telah merangka dan melaksanakan pelbagai dasar serta program pendidikan bagi memastikan akses pendidikan yang lebih inklusif dan menyeluruh. Antara inisiatif utama yang diperkenalkan ialah Program Wajib Belajar 12 Tahun, khususnya di kawasan 3T, iaitu kawasan tertinggal, terdepan dan terluar. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk meneliti pelaksanaan Program Wajib Belajar 12 Tahun di kawasan 3T dengan memberikan tumpuan khusus kepada Kabupaten Kupang, Nusa Tenggara Timur. Kajian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan melaksanakan temu bual bersama beberapa informan utama, termasuk Ketua Jabatan Pendidikan Kabupaten Kupang, guru besar dan pengetua sekolah rendah serta sekolah menengah, di samping pemimpin masyarakat setempat. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa pelaksanaan program tersebut berhadapan dengan pelbagai cabaran, khususnya dari aspek akses kepada pendidikan, kemudahan infrastruktur, kualiti pendidikan dan patuhan terhadap standard pendidikan. Bagi menangani cabaran tersebut, kerjasama strategik antara pihak kerajaan, sektor swasta dan komuniti setempat perlu diperkukuh bagi memastikan Program Wajib Belajar 12 Tahun dapat dilaksanakan secara berkesan dan menyeluruh.

Kata kunci: *Kajian, pelaksanaan, pembelajaran wajib 12 tahun, kawasan 3T, tertinggal, terdepan dan terluar, Kabupaten Kupang.*

INTRODUCTION

One of the primary objectives of Indonesia for national development between 2020 and 2024 is to enhance the quality of human resources through equitable and high-quality education provisions. The national education system holds the responsibility of ensuring uniform opportunities and an elevated standard of education. This challenge is not unique to Indonesia, as various other countries also encounter obstacles in achieving educational equity (Fatah et al., 2021). For example, in Africa, the focal points are directed toward the quality (Seehawer & Breidlid, 2021) and standards (Zhang et al., 2019) of education. A predominant issue is the inadequate access to education for all school-age children. According to the data from the Ministry of Education and Culture, during the academic year 2020/2021, approximately 83.7 thousand students dropped out of schools across Indonesia. This encompassed dropouts from elementary (44,516 individuals), junior (11,378 individuals), senior (13,879 individuals), and vocational high schools (13,950 individuals) (Ahdiat, 2022). Moreover, information from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) highlights a surge in school dropouts during 2022, affecting all tiers of education, from primary to high school. The rate for senior high school reached 1.38% in 2022, signifying that 13 out of every 1,000 individuals discontinued their education. This represented a 0.26% increase compared to the preceding year with a value of 1.12%, marking the highest rate among all education levels. The rate for junior high school was at 1.06% in 2022, marking a 0.16% upswing from 0.90% in the previous year. The dropout rate for elementary schools was 0.13%, a slight rise of 0.01% from 0.12% in 2021 (Sadya, 2022). The data is visually represented in the figure below.

Figure 1

School Dropout Rates by Education Level



To ensure equity in education, the government introduced a 6-year compulsory education in 1984, followed by a 9-year program in 1994. Subsequently, the Universal Secondary Education was launched in preparation for the 12-year compulsory education program in 2013. This clearly shows that each program builds upon the achievements of its predecessor. For example, the initiation of the 12-year USE program followed the attainment of the 9-year goal of a 95% participation rate in 2008 (Abrar, 2012). The USE was executed based on the Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation No. 80 of 2013, with the objective of offering quality secondary education services, expansion, and equal opportunities for all Indonesian citizens. The USE aims to target citizens aged 16-18 who aspire to pursue secondary education and to accelerate the achievement of a 97% gross enrolment ratio in secondary education by 2020.

The USE policy was adopted by 14 provinces, using the term "12-year compulsory education." These provinces include North Sumatra, Jambi, South Sumatra, Bangka-Belitung, Lampung, Yogyakarta Special Region, East Java, Bali, South Kalimantan, East Kalimantan, North Sulawesi, South Sulawesi, Maluku, and Jakarta Special Capital Region (Handayani, 2012). It is important to note that not all provinces have implemented the 12-year compulsory education policy, as some are still in the process of completing the 9-year program. The progress of the educational development program is gauged by GER, which compares the number of enrolled individuals in a specific education level to the population of corresponding school-age individuals. However, in 2022, the GER for secondary education had not yet met the target of 97%. The achievements of the past three years are shown in the table below.

Table 1

Gross Enrollment Ratio Achievements 2019–2022

Education Level	Gross Enrollment Ratio			
	2019	2020	2021	2022
Elementary (School/MI/Equivalent)	107,46	106,32	106,20	106,27
Junior High (School/MTs/Equivalent)	90,57	92,06	92,80	92,11
Senior High (School/Vocational High School/MA/Equivalent)	83,98	84,53	85,23	85,49

Source: BPS (2021, 2023)

Numerous assessments have identified obstacles to the implementation of the 12-year compulsory education. In Yogyakarta Province, these obstacles encompass (a) limited community investment in education due to low purchasing power, (b) inadequate awareness among children and parents about the value of education, (c) persistent school dropouts in Yogyakarta City, (d) insufficient promotion of the 12-year compulsory education program, and (e) inadequate government subsidies (KMS) in Yogyakarta City (Hasanah & Jabar, 2017). In Rokan Hulu, barriers include a lack of funds, teacher shortages, and unsupportive school policies regarding the 12-year compulsory education (Nazaruddin, 2017). In another region, challenges involve budget constraints, zoning systems, parental misconceptions about education, disinterest of students in schooling, economic fragility, insufficient infrastructure, and shortage of teachers in remote areas (Khairunnisa & Tinus, 2018). In Bekasi City, hindrances entail insufficient budget allocation, inadequate school facilities, a shortage of teachers, and limited educational aid (Putri, 2019). In Sidoharjo Village, Jambon, Ponorogo, barriers comprise environmental factors, low learning motivation, lack of interest, and economic considerations (Fadillah, 2020).

Education in Disadvantaged, Remote, and Border (3T) areas is regulated through Minister of Education and Culture Regulations No. 72 of 2013, No. 67 of 2016 (amendments to No. 72), and Minister of Education and Culture and Research Technology Regulation No. 160/P/2021. Despite these regulations, education implementation in 3T areas encounters substantial challenges and has yet to realize the intended outcomes.

Figure 2

Distribution Map of Disadvantaged Area for 2020-2024 and Entas Disadvantaged Area for 2015-2019



This study focuses on the implementation of 12-year compulsory education in 3T areas, which often face severe conditions, even in more advanced regions, where technical challenges are apparent. The need to explore the implementation of the compulsory education program in these areas is intriguing based on the limited attention from the Central Government. This study will be a best practice if the 3T area successfully implements the program, as education is crucial for the future generations of a nation. In terms of education, challenges in 3T areas comprise the absence of education services, limited access to educational services, inadequate educators and staff, uneven teacher distribution, a mismatch between teacher supply and demand, low school participation rates, and insufficient quantity and quality of facilities and infrastructure (M. T. Fi. Putera & Rhussary, 2018).

The 12-year compulsory education policy in Kupang Regency aims to boost the Human Development Index (HDI). This policy has been in place since fiscal year 2007, as specified in Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, particularly Article 34 paragraph (2), ensuring compulsory education at the basic level without fees. Furthermore, it aligns with Law No. 23 of 2002 on child protection, where Article 9 guarantees every child the right to receive education according to their interests and talents for personal and intellectual growth. The 12-year compulsory education policy is driven by the low GER for Senior High School/Vocational High School/Madrasah Aliyah in Kupang Regency (35.27%) compared to the national GER for the same level (2004 National Socioeconomic Survey data). While the GER for the Elementary School level surpasses the national rate and the Junior High School level approaches the value, the success of the 9-year compulsory education program is evident.

This scenario shows a high school participation rate for children in Elementary School, followed by Junior High School. However, most children in Senior High School/Vocational High School/Madrasah Aliyah levels do not continue their education, with an approximate 65% dropout rate. In order to address this issue, Kupang Regency Government, led by Drs. Ibrahim Agustinus Medah, initiated the 12-year compulsory education policy, aiming for a Senior High School/Vocational High School/Madrasah Aliyah education for the entire population by 2018. This study focuses on local initiatives to realize the concept of compulsory 12-year secondary education, and also addresses three key questions, 1) How is the program implemented in the 3T area described? 2) What obstacles hinder the system? 3) What exit strategies support the implementation of the education program?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Policy Implementation & Policy Models

Richard Rose (1969) defined policy as a direction or activity pattern that went beyond a mere decision. According to Paterson (2003), public policy involved government action to address who gets what, when, and how. The problem-solving process included critical stages, namely policy agenda setting, formulation, adoption, implementation, and assessment (Dunn, 2004, in Keban, 2008). Implementation is part of this process, encompassing the establishment of connections between actions and goals (Charles O. Jones, 1991). Mazmanian and Sabatier (in Solichin Wahab, 1991) stated that implementation was the process of enacting policy decisions, usually according to laws, but potentially in the form of executive orders or significant judicial decisions (Grindle, 1980).

Ripley (1985) highlighted how institutional characteristics influence policy implementation performance. Mazmanian (1983) presented three independent variables in this context, including (1) problem control ease, (2) ability to structure implementation, and (3) non-policy variables influencing implementation. Meanwhile, Van Meter and Van Horn (1975) formulated six variables affecting policy implementation outcomes, namely (1) policy standards and objectives, (2) resources, (3) communication and coercion use, (4) implementer disposition, (5) implementing institution characteristics, and (6) social, economic, and political conditions.

Education as a System

A robust education system entails (1) well-structured organization, (2) transparent and accountable management, (3) clear curriculum documents aligned with the job market, (4) competent human resources in academic and non-academic fields, and (5) sufficient facilities, infrastructure, and a conducive academic environment (Hidayat & Abdillah, 2019).

Provision of Special Service Education (3T Area)

According to Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation No. 72 of 2013, Special Service Education (PLK) refers to educating students in remote or disadvantaged areas, isolated indigenous communities, or those affected by natural, social, and economic hardships. The purpose of PLK is to grant educational access to students, ensuring their right to education. Furthermore, it encompasses formal, non-formal, and informal education routes at all levels. These initiatives are jointly organized by the government, local authorities, and/or communities.

The implementation of the formal education pathway in 3T areas differs from those in other regions. Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation No. 67 of 2016, which amends Regulation No. 72 of 2013 on the Implementation of Special Service Education, outlines the various forms of units in 3T areas as follows:

1. Small schools, which cater to a minimum of 3 students.
2. Open schools, offering educational services through visits from the main school.
3. Emergency schools, providing services during natural or social disasters.
4. Integrated schools, delivering education across multiple levels within a single location.

5. Other school models that align with legislative regulations. These schools are situated in remote or disadvantaged areas, border regions with other nations, areas affected by natural or social crises, or locations undergoing emergency conditions, including exceptionally remote islands.

METHOD

This study employed qualitative analysis to explore the challenges of implementing 12-year compulsory education in the 3T area of Kupang Regency. The method involved in-depth analysis through interviews with multiple informants, including the head of the Education Office, 10 school principals from Elementary, Junior High, and Senior High Schools, 15 teachers, and 5 community figures.

RESULTS

The presence of School Operational Assistance (BOS) policy (Ubaid et al., 2016) and the Special Assistance for Students from the central government motivated the government to support 9- and 12-year compulsory education. This was carried out by providing funds for Vocational/state Senior High Schools/Madrasah Aliyah, and also offering special assistance for those in private institutions.

Education Facilities and Infrastructure

All sub-districts in Kupang Regency had facilities for Elementary, Junior, and Senior High Schools. However, certain sub-districts lacked vocational high schools, such as Semau, South Semau, East Amarasi, Amabi Oefeto (which had Vocational High Schools in 2019 and 2020 but not in 2021), Central Fatuleu, West Fatuleu, Southwest Amfoang, Central Amfoang, North Amfoang, and East Amfoang. The total number of schools in the region was at least 633, yet many schools still suffered from inadequate conditions, a fact acknowledged by the head of the Education and Culture Office of Kupang Regency (Ndoen, 2022). An example of a school facing unfavorable conditions was State Elementary School Nunka, situated in Hamlet 3 of Ponain Village, Amarasi Sub-district. It was observed that the emergency building in the institution had started to lean due to broken wooden parts and a leaky roof. The school also possessed one permanent building and three Army-assisted rooms from 2014, along with a library used for fifth-grade classes, serving as an office and staff room. The emergency building was constructed in 2012 through community contributions, but only two rooms could be used for first and second-grade classes since the rooms were slanted, making it challenging to sustain the teaching and learning process. The school principal stated that there were 31 students, with the highest enrollment being in the first and second grades, comprising approximately 12 individuals. Due to the shortage of classroom space, the emergency building was still in use. In a recent study by Tapehen (2022), it was stated that the school was awaiting government construction efforts. Other schools requiring attention included State Junior High School 4 Amfoang Northwest, State Junior High School 4, State Junior High School 7 in Central Kupang Sub-district, and 1 Junior High School in Amabi Oefeto Sub-district (Mbuhan, 2023).



Emergency building of State Elementary School Nunka in Ponain Village, Amarasi Sub-district.

The shortage of classroom space was not unique to State Elementary School Nunka Ponain. Similar issues were also confronted by Presidential Instruction Elementary School Akle and State Junior High School 2 South Semau on Semau Island. State Junior High School 2 South Semau possessed only four classrooms and one science laboratory. There was no separate room for the teachers, leading to the use of one classroom as the staff office. Meanwhile, State Junior High School 2 South Semau had four classes, comprising one for grade 7, two for grade 8, and one for grade 9. To meet classroom needs in the institution, the laboratory was also used as a classroom. Regarding Presidential Instruction Elementary School Akle, there were a total of eight classes. To cater for the room shortage, including the one for the teacher's office, an old, poorly conditioned building was used but it required renovation.

Aside from the challenge of insufficient classroom space, another issue was the low student enrolment in specific areas. This corresponded with statements from the Education and Culture Office that numerous schools in close proximity faced a student shortage (Binsar, 2019). According to Mbuhang (2023), institutions needed to be at least 7 kilometres apart, implying that the construction required the collaboration of three elementary schools to meet the standards. Education ratio data indicated that at the elementary school level, one civil servant teacher should instruct 28 students. For Junior High School, one teacher should handle 36 students, while for Senior High School, the ratio should be one teacher for 40 students. Vocational High Schools followed a ratio of one teacher for 29 students, and special needs institutions maintained a ratio of one teacher to 16 students. These teacher-student ratios represented average figures across the entirety of Kupang Regency. However, practical circumstances revealed schools still grappling with teacher shortages, necessitating the recruitment of honorary teachers. In the context of honorary educators, questions arose about their compensation and funding sources. Based on field interviews, honorary teachers were paid using BOS funds, when available. Transportation allowances were allocated solely to teachers meeting specific criteria, as outlined by regulations. The discussion regarding supplementary allowances for teachers could be linked to the criteria in Kupang Regency, which was still classified as a 3T area according to Presidential Regulation No. 63 of 2020. Since 2006, the government had granted allowances to teachers serving in remote and underdeveloped regions, based on their remoteness and backwardness. The shortage of teachers presented a challenge to the realization of free schooling. In order to tackle these education delivery constraints, Kupang Regency government collaborated with village administrations to use village funds for educational development.

Achievement of Education Enrollment Ratio

The Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) and Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) based on education levels in Kupang Regency in 2021 and 2022 were as follows:

Table 2

The Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) and Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) based on education levels in Kupang Regency in 2021 and 2022

Education Level	NER		GER	
	2021	2022	2021	2022
Elementary School/MI	94,44	94,69	107	108,26
Junior High School/MTs	74,06	74,68	97,15	91,49
Senior High School/Vocational High School/MA	58,25	59,91	95,43	96,22

Source: *Kabupaten Kupang Dalam Angka*, 2023

The number of school dropouts in Kupang Regency remained relatively low, due to BOS funds that had eased the financial burden on parents concerning the education of their children. It should be noted that school dropouts still occurred, even though their numbers were not significant. To address this issue, the Education and Culture Office collaborated with village administrations to guide school dropouts toward Participatory Learning Community Centers (PKBM). Another initiative, the ATS (Anak Tidak Sekolah or Out-of-School Children) program, was introduced by UNICEF in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Culture starting in 2022, focusing on Elementary, Junior High, and Senior High Schools. The provision of education, specifically at the Elementary and Junior High Schools, received support from BOS funds provided by the central government. This fund availability played a role in reducing the number of school dropouts. However, practical challenges arose in obtaining the funds in 2023 for 25 schools due to issues related to permits and operational licenses, which were prerequisites for the fund applications (Kabar Independen, 2023). Some schools lacked permits, while others faced delays in uploading the requirements to the server of the ministry. Among these 26 schools, all were private institutions, comprising 23 Elementary and 3 Junior High Schools. In addition to the assistance for education, Kupang Regency did not allocate local government BOS funds due to budget limitations. The free education program funded by BOS applied to the elementary and junior high school levels. Meanwhile, Senior High School came under the jurisdiction of the provincial government and was no longer overseen by the Education and Culture Office of the regency.

The imposed enrollment fee of fifty thousand per child fell short of covering the operational expenses of schools, considering that only 21 new students had enrolled. Similarly, school uniforms were not fully provided free of charge. For example, at Elementary School Akle, students still needed to purchase uniforms at their own expense, amounting to 150 thousand. A similar situation was observed at the Elementary School GMT Tuapukan, where not all uniforms were provided for free. State Junior High School 2 South Sema also required parents to purchase uniforms, including white-blue, scout, physical education, and traditional uniforms. The existence of school committees and voluntary contributions showed community involvement in education. Support from the business sector for educational development in Kupang Regency was evident through CSR assistance from Bank NTT to Kupang Regency government, amounting to Rp. 300.000.000,- in 2022 (Hendrikus, 2022).

DISCUSSION

The policy of 12-year compulsory education in the 3T areas was officially endorsed by the government through the Ministry of Education and Culture on June 25, 2013, as part of the Universal Secondary Education (USE) program. This program aimed to provide all students with access to general and vocational education (Nazaruddin, 2017). However, the full implementation of this program faced challenges beyond economic and access factors (Elyasa, 2016; Hardiasanti & Trihantoyo, 2021). These challenges included teacher shortages, insufficient classrooms, low school awareness, environmental factors, parental involvement, poverty, network issues (Fatah et al., 2021), as well as low literacy rates, high dropout, inadequate teacher and educational staff competencies, and insufficient facilities and equipment (Sariguna Johnson Kennedy et al., 2019).

Problems in Implementing 12-Year Compulsory Education in the 3T Area of Kupang

Policy implementation involved a sequence of decisions and actions aimed at executing government or legislative decisions that had been previously formulated (Bashori & Aprima, 2019; Elyasa, 2016; Hardiasanti & Trihantoyo, 2021; Maharani & ., 2016). The 12-year compulsory education program in the regency was based on the Regional Regulation on the Regional Education System, which mandated individuals aged 7 to 18 to complete basic and secondary education (Regional Regulation No. 3 of 2013 on the Regional Education System) (Abrar, 2012). Those responsible for policy implementation, referred to as implementers, were individuals or organizations tasked with carrying out and supervising the implementation process (Putri, 2019).

The target group comprised individuals or organizations that received goods or services affected by the policy and whose behavior was influenced. The 12-year compulsory education program aimed at the community aged 7 to 18 within the regency. For those beyond school age, participation in the Package Program (Package A, B, and C) organized by the Education Office was recommended. Additionally, several regencies provided Open High Schools for Senior High levels, such as Senior High School Bayan, including those found in Lombok Province. These institutions catered to children facing challenges such as aiding parents in earning a living, working in fields or harbors, and early marriages. Students who dropped out due to bullying fears, teacher discomfort, and emotional reasons still possessed a desire to learn. To make provisions for troubled students, the Education Office, in partnership with the Education Department, offered alternative solutions through open schools, which offered the same subjects with flexible timing, aligning with the study by Wagner (Bindamnan, 2023). In conjunction with open schools, the government provided Package Programs, namely Packages A, B, and C for Elementary, Junior, and Senior High Schools, respectively, showcasing efforts to educate children from Elementary to Senior High levels. The quality of education in Zimbabwe had also been a subject of study as stated by Garira (2020).

Constraints in 12-Year Compulsory Education

Van Meter and van Horn identified six variables influencing policy implementation performance, including:

Policy Standards and Targets:

Clear, measurable policy standards, and targets were crucial for achieving policy objectives. Unclear standards could lead to differing interpretations, causing misunderstandings and conflicts among

implementers. The Regency Education Office had to follow existing regulations and Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) to fulfil its tasks. However, a specific SOP for the 12-year compulsory education policy was currently absent in schools.

Implementation of the 12-year compulsory education policy in the regency was the responsibility of the Regency Office and educational institutions. They oversaw schools, provided funding, and facilitated resources, facilities, and teachers as needed. Effective implementation required disseminating information to the target community. Policy implementers needed to comprehend tasks and convey information to recipients. Kupang Regency Government had conducted socialization through various channels, emphasizing compulsory education for children aged 7-18 without fees (Abrar, 2012).

Resources:

The human resources of the Education Office were sufficient for implementing the 12-year compulsory education policy. Various parties, including the Regency Education Office, Educational Technical Implementation Unit, schools, and the community were involved. The Office collaborated with the Implementation Unit and schools, supervising educational units based on responsibilities. It should be noted that the supervision included development and subject matter oversight. According to the interviews, Education Office was responsible for examining school facilities, teachers, and subject matter. The supervisors in this context oversaw subject teachers and teaching resources. Funding from National and Regional Budgets supported education, along with resources, facilities, and teachers, as confirmed by informant statements. The Regency Education Office facilitated schools to implement the 12-year compulsory education policy.

Characteristics of Implementing Agents:

Schools, which functioned as government educational institutions responsible for executing the 12-year compulsory education program, received direct instructions from the Regency Education Office for all actions during program implementation. However, the implementation of the regency lacked a guideline book, leading to schools relying solely on directives from the education office. The school level faced ongoing shortages in human resources, particularly teaching staff. For example, nearly all schools, from elementary to high school, encountered a shortage of teachers. This was the reason the government appointed contract teachers to address the drawbacks. In Kupang Regency, approximately 80% of teaching staff were contract teachers paid through BOS and committee funds, varying from Rp. 10,000 - 20,000, Rp. 20,000 - 50,000, and Rp. 50,000 - 70,000 per month for Elementary, Junior, and Senior High Schools, respectively. The scarcity of qualified teachers was particularly pronounced for each subject, particularly in Islamic religious studies. This shortfall necessitated coordination between the Education Office and the Religious Affairs Office. Moreover, budget constraints, coupled with human resource limitations, hindered compulsory education program implementation sourced from the National and Regional Budgets, impacting education quality in Indonesia due to insufficient funding (Andriyansyah, 2018). Budget limitations also affected education services, leading to inadequate facilities and school infrastructure (M. T. Fi. Putera & Rhussary, 2018). Proper facilities and infrastructure were vital for smooth 12-year compulsory education program implementation. However, challenges persisted during implementation, including classroom shortages, absence of functional computer labs and computers, insufficient space for student activities, canteens occupying compromised classrooms, and even teachers using unsuitable classrooms, as seen in State Elementary School Semau Kupang. This issue also resonated in developing countries according to the discoveries

of Bekkouche & Dupraz (2023), Bindamnan (2023), Brooks (2021), Mirasol et al. (2021), Serrano Rodríguez et al. (2023), and Teig & Nilsen (2022). Another challenge in the aspect of compulsory education arose from the zoning system, which required schools to admit students residing within their designated zones. However, in the regency, full implementation of this policy had not yet been achieved due to the uneven distribution of institutions. In Kupang, most schools did not enforce zoning when admitting students, which stemmed from low numbers in some villages and limited school capacities, allowing the individuals to register outside their designated zones.

Disposition (Attitudes and Inclinations of Implementers):

Observations showed positive dispositions among schools and communities. Schools implemented the 12-year compulsory education without charging fees, enrolled students according to capacity, and adhered to regulations. However, practicality dictated that insufficient BOS assistance funding allowed parents to voluntarily contribute to committee fees, determined by the school level and agreed upon by parents and the committee.

Communication between Organizations and Implementing Activities:

For communication about the 12-year compulsory education implementation, the Regency Education Office convened meetings with school principals. Additionally, the Education Department coordinated and communicated with involved parties, namely the Educational Technical Implementation Unit, educational institutions, and the community – the recipients of the policy. Lastly, the prevailing social, economic, and political landscape played a pivotal role. The economic circumstances of parents greatly impacted their involvement in the education of children. Despite the fee waivers by the government for Elementary, Junior, and Senior High Schools, economic limitations caused some to drop out, with students prioritizing work, echoing situations in other countries (Garira, 2020; Hutchins et al., 2023; Serrano Rodríguez et al., 2023; Teig & Nilsen, 2022).

Social conditions, social status, and education:

Social conditions, social status, and education significantly influenced the education of students. This caused several occurrences of dropouts at various levels due to a lack of social and economic conditions or environments that influenced students. This pattern was prevalent across regions facing similar circumstances as highlighted by Ayuningtyas (2021), Fitriyah (2021), Puspita et al. (2020), M. T. Putera & Rhussary (2018), Reza et al. (2020), Sariguna Johnson Kennedy et al. (2019), Tahun et al. n.d., Wicaksana & Rachman (2018). Another factor was the political context, where the 12-year compulsory education program embodied the vision of Regent and Regency for enhanced education services. Furthermore, it was linked to campaign pledges by local leaders and political party members during elections.

Efforts to Address Constraints in Implementing the 12-Year Compulsory Education Policy in the Regency

In pursuit of the objectives of the 9-year compulsory education program, the government devised strategies, which encompassed expanding the number and capacity of Junior High Schools, recruiting new teachers, enhancing learning facilities, allocating larger education budgets, eliminating school fees, and providing subsidies to private schools. Moreover, several alternatives were put forth to ensure the fulfillment of the 9-year compulsory education, including (1) establishing boarding Junior High

Schools, (2) adding new Junior High Schools, (3) expanding combined Elementary and Junior High Schools, and (4) executing the Package B program effectively. These initiatives aligned with the endeavors of the Regency Education Office and educational institutions. The actions undertaken by the Regency Education Office and educational institutions are outlined below:

First, the Education Office judiciously allocated funds to address urgent and indispensable needs, ensuring that the limited budget was directed appropriately and met essential requisites. Additionally, the Education Office submitted requests for supplementary budget allocations. Second, schools admitted students from beyond their designated zones due to the scarcity of schools in the regency. Third, both the Government and educational institutions conducted public awareness campaigns to emphasize the significance of education for the future of children, involving the community in government-orchestrated events such as Independence Day celebrations and others. To tackle this issue, efforts encompassed public awareness campaigns and educating the community about the importance of education. Fourth, the government and educational institutions engaged the community in contributing to education without financial burdens, encompassing waiving registration and committee fees, and supporting economically disadvantaged students with financial aid and school uniforms. This approach aligned with Nada Nazopah (2012) in achieving the 9-year compulsory education in Mataram City, West Nusa Tenggara, where scholarships were provided to financially disadvantaged students, funded by either the central government or other sources. Fifth, the government constructed new schools in remote regions and established open and combined junior high schools. Simultaneously, educational institutions lacking facilities and infrastructure submitted resource procurement requests to both central and regional governments. Lastly, the efforts of the Education Department in areas with teacher shortages encompassed the initiative of the Regional Government to balance teacher distribution by appointing contract teachers to work in these regions, a measure already taken by the Regency Government.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study on the implementation of the 12-year compulsory education in the 3T areas of Kupang Regency highlighted several challenges related to the availability of educational facilities and infrastructure, which remained uneven. Many school buildings were still inadequate for effective teaching and learning, with shortages of classrooms in certain schools. Furthermore, a scarcity of permanent teachers, particularly for specific subjects and religious education, was evident. The lack of welfare guarantees for teachers was also apparent, as seen in the absence of additional allowances for educators in hard-to-reach areas. Even when allowances were accessible, not all teachers benefitted from the opportunity.

The strategies employed prioritized budget optimization by engaging the community in disseminating information about the 12-year compulsory education program, ultimately leading to satisfactory gross enrollment rates. Additionally, coordination was established with various stakeholders to address teacher shortages and enhance access to facilities that supported the program.

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DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest related to this research and no potential conflicts of interest concerning the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data supporting the findings of this study are available within this article.

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