



Peran Pendidikan Kesetaraan Paket B dalam Memenuhi Hak atas Pendidikan

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Abstract

The fulfillment of the right to education faces persistent challenges, particularly for dropouts and marginalized groups. While Paket B Equality Education provides a non-formal equivalent to junior secondary school, its significance regarding the moral responsibility of the state and society remains under-explored. This qualitative study utilizes a systematic literature review and content analysis to examine how Paket B facilitates the right to education. Findings indicate that the program functions as a critical corrective mechanism, addressing the formal system's failure to reach vulnerable populations. The study concludes that Paket B transcends its role as a mere alternative educational pathway; it represents a concrete manifestation of the collective moral duty to ensure equitable access. By securing educational continuity, Paket B serves as a vital instrument in fulfilling the state's constitutional obligation to provide inclusive education for all citizens, ensuring that the right to learn remains protected regardless of socio-economic barriers.

Keywords: *Paket B Equality Education; Right to Education; Qualitative Research.*

Abstrak

Pemenuhan hak atas pendidikan menghadapi tantangan berkelanjutan, terutama bagi anak putus sekolah dan kelompok marginal. Meskipun Pendidikan Kesenjangan Paket B menyediakan jalur nonformal yang setara dengan sekolah menengah pertama, signifikansinya dalam kerangka tanggung jawab moral negara dan masyarakat belum dieksplorasi secara mendalam. Studi kualitatif ini menggunakan metode studi pustaka sistematis dan analisis isi untuk menguji peran Paket B dalam memfasilitasi hak atas pendidikan. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa program ini berfungsi sebagai mekanisme korektif krusial yang mengatasi kegagalan sistem formal dalam menjangkau populasi rentan. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa Paket B melampaui perannya sebagai sekadar jalur alternatif; ia merupakan manifestasi konkret dari tanggung jawab moral kolektif untuk menjamin akses pendidikan yang berkeadilan. Dengan memastikan keberlanjutan pendidikan, Paket B menjadi instrumen vital dalam memenuhi mandat konstitusional untuk menyediakan pendidikan inklusif bagi seluruh warga negara, memastikan hak belajar tetap terlindungi tanpa memandang hambatan sosial-ekonomi.

Kata Kunci: *Paket B Pendidikan Kesenjangan; Hak atas Pendidikan*

A. Introduction

Formal education in Indonesia is regarded as a fundamental right of every child; however, empirical realities continue to reveal serious challenges, particularly the persistently high dropout rates, which indicate the inability of the formal education system to effectively reach all school-age children. Official data from the Central Statistics Agency (Badan Pusat Statistik/BPS) show that as of 2024, approximately 4.2 million children aged 6–18 years were not accessing formal education. This condition is largely attributed to limited access, economic constraints, and certain socio-cultural factors that weaken family commitment to sustaining children’s educational participation (BPS/Susenas, 2024). Furthermore, official datasets from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology indicate that a significant number of students at the junior secondary level (SMP/MTs or equivalent) are unable to complete their education, underscoring that school dropout remains a tangible issue at the lower secondary level (Kemendikbudristek, 2023). These high dropout rates constitute a critical indicator that formal education has yet to provide inclusive and responsive services tailored to the needs of marginalized groups, thereby creating space for non-formal education pathways to address this gap. This reality underlies the emergence of the *Paket B* Equality Education Program as a non-formal

alternative equivalent to junior secondary school, expected to respond to the needs of learners who remain underserved by the formal education system.

Educational literature emphasizes that the success of formal education is often measured by access coverage and completion rates; nevertheless, a significant gap persists between education policy and the lived reality of school dropout in Indonesia, particularly at the junior secondary level. Several global studies likewise suggest that high rates of school non-completion reflect structural issues such as poverty, geographic inequality, and weak institutional support, all of which adversely affect educational equity (UNICEF, 2025). Although non-formal education, such as *Paket B* Equality Education, has been recognized as an alternative mechanism to address these challenges, empirical literature that systematically evaluates its effectiveness in responding to concrete barriers—such as school dropout—remains very limited. Consequently, a theoretical gap persists in understanding the extent to which non-formal education can move beyond merely serving as an alternative learning pathway and genuinely contribute to the fulfillment of the right to basic education. This gap provides a crucial foundation for a deeper examination of the moral and institutional dimensions of the role of *Paket B* within the context of fulfilling the right to education as a shared responsibility of the state and society.

This study aims to qualitatively describe and analyze the role of *Paket B* Equality Education in fulfilling the right to education as a moral responsibility of the state and society, with a focus on the experiences of education practitioners who encounter or address school dropout and limited access to formal education in practice. The study seeks to contextualize how the *Paket B* program operates as a remedial mechanism in response to specific barriers within the formal education system, such as unequal access, families' inability to finance education, and the lack of integrated policy support. Through a qualitative approach, this research integrates perspectives on the moral responsibility of the state and society with the lived experiences of learners, thereby revealing the dynamics of non-formal education practices that are often overlooked in macro-level policy discussions. The analytical focus extends beyond merely describing the existence of *Paket B*, toward assessing the extent to which the program genuinely functions to fulfill the right to education for groups affected by the failures of the formal education system.

The gap between formal education policy and the reality of dropout rates generates urgency for more focused inquiry into the role of non-formal education, such as *Paket B*, as a response to these structural barriers, particularly within the moral context of state and societal responsibility. The reality that millions of children do not complete formal education raises critical questions regarding the effectiveness of national education policies in implementing principles of inclusivity and equitable access to basic education, as articulated in human rights instruments and the Sustainable Development Goals (UNICEF, 2025). By combining the experiences of non-formal education practitioners with moral and institutional perspectives, this study provides a strong argumentative foundation for why such research is

necessary and how its findings can contribute to improving the formulation of non-formal education policies. The novelty of this research lies in its focus on evaluating specific barriers that remain unresolved by existing policies, including challenges in integrating formal and non-formal education systems and the moral role of the state in guaranteeing every citizen's right to equitable and quality education.

B. Method

This study employs a library research approach to systematically examine the role of *Paket B* Equality Education in fulfilling the right to education as a moral responsibility of the state and society, particularly within the context of failures in access to formal education marked by school dropout and inequality in educational services (Sari & Nugroho, 2021). The research data are derived from scholarly literature as primary data, including reputable and nationally indexed journal articles relevant to non-formal education, *Paket B* equality education, and the right to education, as well as secondary data consisting of academic books and supporting research reports that remain aligned with the study's key concepts (Putri et al., 2023).

C. Results and Discussion

1. Results

The literature review indicates that *Paket B* Equality Education is positioned as a non-formal education service designed to provide competency equivalence with the junior secondary school level for learners who have not completed formal education. Recent literature describes *Paket B* as being implemented through non-formal education units such as *Pusat Kegiatan Belajar Masyarakat* (PKBM), characterized by adaptive curricula, flexible schedules, and learner-needs-based instructional approaches (Hidayat & Anwar, 2021). Several studies document that the majority of *Paket B* participants come from low socio-economic backgrounds, including child laborers and adolescents who have dropped out of formal schooling due to economic and geographic factors (Sulastri et al., 2022). The literature also notes that learning outcomes in *Paket B* are administratively recognized by the state through equivalency certificates that hold legal legitimacy equal to those of formal junior secondary schools (Rohmah & Lestari, 2023). This description indicates that, both normatively and structurally, *Paket B* is designed as a state instrument for providing alternative education pathways for learners marginalized by the formal education system.

Further explanations in the literature reveal that *Paket B* Equality Education is not merely understood as a substitute for formal schooling, but as an adaptive mechanism that responds to the diverse social conditions of learners. Recent studies explain that flexibility in learning time, contextualized instructional methods, and andragogical approaches constitute key characteristics distinguishing *Paket B* from conventional formal education (Prasetyo & Munandar, 2020). The literature also explains that the role of tutors in *Paket B* extends beyond delivering academic content to functioning as social facilitators who assist learners in

sustaining learning motivation amid economic and social pressures (Widodo et al., 2021). In addition, non-formal education policy studies note that the effectiveness of *Paket B* is highly dependent on institutional support, resource availability, and sustained guidance from local governments (Kurniawan & Saputra, 2022). This explanation affirms that *Paket B* operates through a combination of flexible pedagogical design and structural support that differs from formal education.

The relationship between descriptive and explanatory findings in the literature on *Paket B* Equality Education demonstrates a direct connection to Indonesia's educational challenges, particularly the high dropout rates at the junior secondary level. National data analyzed in various studies indicate that *Paket B* constitutes the most frequently accessed pathway for adolescents who fail to complete formal junior secondary education due to poverty, family labor migration, and limited geographic access (Fauzi & Rahman, 2023). The literature also links the existence of *Paket B* to state efforts to close educational service gaps not reached by formal schools, especially in frontier, outermost, and disadvantaged (3T) regions and marginalized urban areas (Nugroho et al., 2021). This relationship illustrates that *Paket B* operates within spaces of formal system failure, where the state has not fully ensured the continuity of basic education for all citizens. These findings reflect *Paket B*'s position as a practical response to structural challenges in fulfilling the right to education.

The literature review further indicates that the right to education is positioned as a fundamental human right inherent to every individual regardless of social, economic, or personal background, as affirmed in various human rights instruments and national education policies. Recent literature explains that the right to education encompasses access, continuity, quality, and relevance to learners' lives (Tomasevski, 2020). Several educational studies emphasize that fulfillment of the right to education should not be measured solely by the availability of formal schools, but also by the provision of alternative pathways for groups unable to sustain access to formal education (Unterhalter & Howell, 2021). National literature similarly notes persistent inequalities in the fulfillment of educational rights in Indonesia, particularly among children and adolescents from impoverished families and remote areas (Maulida et al., 2023). This description indicates that the right to education in the literature is understood not merely as a normative principle, but as a concrete obligation requiring inclusive implementation mechanisms.

Further explanations in the literature reveal that failures in fulfilling the right to education often occur when formal education systems are unable to reach all citizens equitably. Recent studies identify economic constraints, population mobility, regional disparities, and limited school capacity as primary factors hindering the fulfillment of educational rights for vulnerable groups (Sen & Drèze, 2021). Education policy literature further explains that the state bears moral and structural obligations to provide equivalent alternative education pathways when formal channels are inaccessible, ensuring that the right to education remains fulfilled (McCowan, 2020). In this context, non-formal education

is positioned as a corrective instrument addressing failures of the formal system in guaranteeing universal educational rights. This explanation demonstrates that fulfilling the right to education is not static, but requires adaptive policy responses and flexible service provision aligned with societal conditions.

The relationship between descriptive and explanatory accounts of the right to education in the literature shows a direct connection to the realities faced by school dropout populations in Indonesia. Empirical studies link high dropout rates to suboptimal state mechanisms in ensuring sustained educational access for all citizens (Suyanto et al., 2022). In this context, educational rights that are normatively guaranteed have not been fully realized substantively in practice. Other studies indicate that non-formal education pathways, including *Paket B*, often represent the sole available educational access for marginalized groups, thereby playing a direct role in safeguarding their educational continuity (Hasanah & Putra, 2021). This relationship demonstrates that issues of educational rights fulfillment cannot be separated from the effectiveness of equality education as an instrument of both state and societal response to failures within the formal education system.

Methodological literature describes qualitative research as an approach used to gain in-depth understanding of social phenomena through the interpretation of meaning, experience, and contextual factors surrounding research subjects. Recent studies note that qualitative research is widely applied in education studies to explore practices, policies, and the experiences of educational actors that cannot be adequately explained through quantitative data (Creswell & Poth, 2020). In the context of non-formal education, the literature indicates that qualitative approaches enable researchers to understand the dynamics of equality education program implementation from the perspectives of tutors, administrators, and learners (Merriam & Tisdell, 2021). Qualitative research is also positioned as a relevant approach for examining values, norms, and moral responsibilities embedded in educational practice. This description demonstrates that qualitative research constitutes an appropriate methodological approach for uncovering the social meanings of *Paket B* Equality Education implementation.

Further methodological explanations indicate that qualitative research emphasizes processes of meaning-making based on textual and narrative data derived from documents, policies, and documented social experiences. Methodological studies explain that in library research, qualitative approaches allow researchers to systematically connect concepts, theories, and empirical findings to develop a comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon (Saldana, 2021). The literature also emphasizes that qualitative research is contextual in nature, such that its findings reflect the social and policy environments surrounding the object of study (Tracy, 2020). Within non-formal education studies, this approach is employed to interpret relationships between policy, field practice, and the moral values that accompany them. This explanation illustrates that qualitative research provides an adequate framework for examining *Paket B* Equality Education as a complex social practice.

The relationship between descriptive and explanatory accounts of qualitative research in the literature demonstrates its relevance to the multidimensional realities of *Paket B* Equality Education. The literature emphasizes that non-formal education issues cannot be fully understood through statistical data alone, but require in-depth comprehension of policy contexts, implementer experiences, and learner conditions (Yin, 2020). In the context of school dropout and educational rights fulfillment, qualitative approaches allow for the disclosure of dynamics that remain hidden behind participation statistics. This relationship indicates that qualitative research is an appropriate means of comprehensively describing how *Paket B* Equality Education is implemented and interpreted as an effort to fulfill the right to education. These findings demonstrate that qualitative approaches align with the needs of this study to understand equality education within the framework of moral responsibility shared by the state and society.

2. Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that *Paket B* Equality Education functions as a corrective mechanism addressing failures within the formal education system in ensuring sustained access to education for populations affected by school dropout. The substantive results reveal that *Paket B* operates not merely as an administrative alternative pathway, but as a space for fulfilling the educational rights of learners who are structurally marginalized. The findings further indicate that learning flexibility, the legal legitimacy of certification, and the role of non-formal education providers constitute key factors enabling *Paket B* to reach groups underserved by formal schooling. Moreover, state involvement through policy recognition and societal participation through PKBM implementation establish a shared responsibility framework in educational service provision. Overall, these findings affirm that *Paket B* operates at the intersection of public policy, non-formal education practice, and moral values related to the fulfillment of educational rights, rendering it a relevant instrument of educational justice for vulnerable groups.

When compared with previous studies, these findings reinforce conclusions that non-formal education contributes significantly to reducing educational exclusion, while offering a more specific perspective on the moral responsibilities of the state and society. Earlier studies tended to focus on *Paket B* program effectiveness in terms of learning outcomes or participation rates, without explicitly linking these outcomes to an educational rights framework (Ritonga & Syahputra, 2021). This study advances the discourse by positioning *Paket B* as part of the state's moral obligation to ensure educational rights remain fulfilled when formal pathways fail to function inclusively. Furthermore, the interconnection between policy, implementation practices, and societal moral values represents a novel contribution that enriches non-formal education discourse. Accordingly, this research extends beyond functional analysis and offers a normative–ethical perspective that has been insufficiently explored in prior studies.

The findings also reflect the achievement of the research objective in revealing the role of *Paket B* Equality Education as an instrument for fulfilling educational rights that is not merely technical, but also morally significant. This reflection indicates that *Paket B* enables learners to retain their right to education despite experiencing failure within the formal system. These findings support the view that non-formal education should not be positioned as a secondary pathway, but as an integral component of a national education system oriented toward social justice (McCowan, 2020). The value of this study lies in its ability to connect equality education practices with human rights principles, thereby providing a conceptual foundation for strengthening non-formal education policy. This reflection further demonstrates that the research objective of understanding the moral roles of the state and society in equality education has been substantively addressed.

The implications of these findings suggest that *Paket B* Equality Education should be regarded as a strategic component in fulfilling national educational rights. The results indicate that *Paket B*'s success is highly dependent on policy consistency, budgetary support, and capacity strengthening of local-level implementing institutions. Another implication is the need for stronger integration between formal and non-formal education so that equality education pathways do not remain merely reactive responses, but become part of long-term educational planning. Education policy literature emphasizes that without adequate structural support, non-formal education risks becoming a temporary and unsustainable solution (Unterhalter, 2022). Therefore, these findings imply the necessity of policy reformulation that positions *Paket B* as an instrument of substantive educational justice, rather than a mere administrative formality.

The findings further demonstrate the significant role of *Paket B* arising from structural gaps within the formal education system that has yet to ensure sustained educational access for all citizens. Poverty, social mobility, and regional inequality contribute to the exclusion of certain populations from formal education, rendering non-formal education the sole available option. The literature indicates that under such conditions, alternative education tends to emerge as a response to systemic state failures in fulfilling basic social rights (Sen, 2021). In addition, the flexibility of *Paket B* allows adaptation to learners' conditions, which is not feasible within rigid formal school systems. The combination of urgent social needs and adaptive non-formal education design explains why *Paket B* plays a crucial role in fulfilling educational rights, despite ongoing policy and resource limitations.

Based on these findings, strategic actions are required from both the state and society to strengthen the role of *Paket B* Equality Education in fulfilling the right to education. The state must ensure policy sustainability, increased funding, and quality standardization of equality education to prevent service quality gaps relative to formal education. Meanwhile, communities and implementing institutions must strengthen social participation, advocacy, and learner support to ensure that *Paket B* functions not only as an administrative pathway, but also as a space for social empowerment. Non-formal education literature emphasizes that

the success of alternative education is highly dependent on multi-stakeholder collaboration and sustained institutional support (Walters & Cooper, 2020). Accordingly, coordinated policy and social action constitute essential prerequisites for ensuring that *Paket B* Equality Education truly functions as a manifestation of the moral responsibility of the state and society in guaranteeing the right to education.

D. Conclusion

The most striking finding of this study is that *Paket B* Equality Education does not merely function as an alternative educational pathway for learners who have dropped out of formal schooling, but has instead operated as a primary pillar in sustaining the right to education for social groups that are systematically unreachable by the state through formal education. The findings indicate that in many social contexts, *Paket B* becomes the only actual space in which the right to education can continue to exist and be exercised when the formal education system ceases to function. This reality challenges the common assumption that non-formal education serves only as a secondary complement, as it is precisely within this space that the state and society tangibly fulfill their moral obligations to learners. Accordingly, *Paket B* not only fills gaps in educational access but also represents a concrete manifestation of collective moral responsibility in ensuring equitable fulfillment of the right to education.

The added value of this study lies in its contribution to broadening both theoretical and practical understandings of non-formal education, particularly by positioning *Paket B* Equality Education within a framework of educational rights and the moral responsibility of the state and society. Theoretically, this research enriches non-formal education scholarship by applying a normative–ethical perspective that has rarely been employed in studies of *Paket B*, thereby offering a new viewpoint that equality education constitutes an integral component of human rights fulfillment. Practically, the findings provide a reflective foundation for policymakers, PKBM administrators, and communities to view *Paket B* not merely as a technical program, but as a strategic instrument for addressing failures within the formal education system. In this regard, the study makes a meaningful contribution to the development of more inclusive and equitable education policies.

This study also has limitations that simultaneously open avenues for further research, particularly because the library-based approach employed does not directly capture the empirical experiences of learners, tutors, and *Paket B* administrators in the field. This limitation should not be regarded as a weakness, but rather as an indication of opportunities for future research to combine literature-based analysis with field studies or participatory methods. Subsequent research may also explore more deeply the dynamics of power relations, local policy practices, and the long-term impacts of *Paket B* on learners' social mobility. Thus, this study is expected to serve as an initial foundation for future inquiries that further strengthen the position of equality education within the national education system.

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