

## Research Article

# Problems in Non-formal Education: Equality Education Studies in Semarang City

Imam Shofwan<sup>1,2\*</sup>, Sunardi Sunardi<sup>3</sup>, Abdul Rahman<sup>3</sup>, Gunarhadi Gunarhadi<sup>3</sup><sup>1</sup>Student Doctoral Educational Science, Universitas Sebelas Maret Surakarta, Indonesia<sup>2</sup>Non-formal Education, Faculty of Education, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia<sup>3</sup>Lecturer Education Science, Universitas Sebelas Maret Surakarta, Indonesia**Abstract.**

The number of equality education programs has increased every year. One of the alternative education methods expected to reduce the dropout rate in Indonesia is non-formal education, one of which is equality education Package A, Package B, and Package C. There are some concerns surrounding equality education in Indonesia that make the implementation of equality education programs less effective. Evaluation is urgently needed for the improvement and development of the different programs so that the implementation of education in Indonesia is effective. This study aimed to discover the problems in implementing equality education programs in Semarang. This research used a descriptive qualitative approach. Data was collected through observations, interviews with 100 respondents, and documentation. Data analysis in the study used member-checking techniques. The results showed that there were five main problems in the implementation of equality education in Semarang City. Very low learning motivation, the level of awareness of the importance of education was low, infrastructure for practice was not adequate but theoretical learning has been fulfilled although not entirely satisfactory, many educators were not competent, the funding system was insufficient, and education management planning was not running well. The problems that occur must be followed up immediately so as not to cause new issues, so that the government, the community and *stakeholders* play an active role in improving the quality of education in Indonesia.

**Keywords:** Problems, Non-formal Education, Equality Education, Semarang City

## 1. Introduction

Educational services on non-formal education pathways organized by the community have a very broad dimension considering the function of non-formal education as a substitute, enhancer and / or complement to formal education so that it can be used as a forum to improve knowledge, skills, and personality for the community in certain or special conditions that require attending non-formal education through the implementation of education services, Package A programs are equivalent to elementary school education, Package B is equivalent to junior high school education, and Package C is equivalent to high school education [1].

Corresponding Author: Imam  
Shofwan; email:  
ishofwan@mail.unnes.ac.id**Published** 26 May 2023Publishing services provided by  
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One type of non-formal education that exists in Indonesia is equality education. Equality education provides educational services for children who are out of school as a result of poverty, being in remote locations, and underdevelopment to get access to a decent education. The goal of equality education in Indonesia, which is increasing in number every year, is the basis that all children in Indonesia are entitled to decent educational services, one of which is through equality education. The increasing number of equality education targets opens up the fact that in Indonesia there are still many school-age children who have not received education and have dropped out of school due to limited development resources. However, there are groups of people in urban areas who deliberately attend school education (*homeschooling*) because they cannot accept the formal education system. Although they organize *homeschooling education*, the final result of the educational process must take the equality exam held by the authorized institution [1].

Problems that occur in students in non-formal education, especially equality education, do not only occur due to problems in certain factors, but problems also arise in the academic and individual fields of each student. Based on the results of the problem disclosure tool (AUM) it was found that in three equality education institutions of the Package C education program located in Serang City out of 10 statements there were 3 statements that had the highest percentage, namely (1) career and job problems (KDP) 84%, (2) personal self-problems (DPI) 35%, and (3) education and lessons (PDP) 38% [2]. Problems that arise in non-formal education are not only in students, but problems also arise in relation to management, the quality of educators, inadequate facilities and infrastructure, and so on. This study aims to find out the problems experienced by equality education institutions in Semarang City.

## 2. Non-Formal Education

Non-formal education is carried out in a structured manner, has certain educational goals and the existence of time limits [3]. Non-formal education is an educational path that is held in the formal education system whose implementation is regular and tiered. According to the National Education System Law No. 20 of 2003 in article 1 paragraph 2 states that the function of non-formal education as a substitute, enhancer, and complement to formal education so that non-formal education must be considered from all aspects by the government, society and related *stakeholders* [4]. One of

the objectives of providing non-formal education is to expand the opportunities of individuals who still do not have the traditional education system and meet educational needs more effectively[5].

Non-formal education is characterized by education that is independent of formal educational institutions, but non-formal education still requires a system and a place of training. Through non-formal education, certain knowledge and skills are acquired as well as the achievement of certain learning objectives through learning curricula, learning structure and time, and variations in learning forms that are tailored to the needs of the target group [6]. Non-formal education pathways take place in the family, community, social media environment to change attitudes, behaviors, knowledge and skills of students more flexibly [7].

Non-formal educational methodologies tend to encourage creativity, ability and openness into opportunities to incorporate learners' interests and cultural backgrounds in a more flexible way through the learning process [8]. Non-formal education applies to any person who has not completed primary education or has received primary education [9]. The target of non-formal education is to develop following the development of science, technology, culture and available jobs[10]. Non-formal education programs do not have to follow the *Meaders* system and allow having varying lengths of time and allowing to be granted or not granted a learning certificate. Non-formal education is considered as a process to acquire knowledge, explore one's potential so that it is useful for oneself and the surrounding community [11].

The implementation of non-formal education seeks to support the expansion of access and improve the quality of education for the community. The phenomenon of the emergence of non-formal education provides a space for awareness for the public that education is not solely to obtain certification or legality but as an activity of absorption and internalization of knowledge that will improve the standard of living of humans and society in various aspects of life [12]. So it can be concluded that non-formal education represents any educational activity that is organized deliberately and systematically structured which is usually carried out outside of formal schools with a learning system adapted to individual needs and circumstances aimed at maximizing the learning and knowledge system and minimizing problems that occur in the formal education system [13]. Non-formal educational institutions focus on the needs of individuals who want an efficient, effective education system according to their needs, so that their existence is used as a forum to improve specific and practical skills and knowledge [14].

The effectiveness of the implementation of non-formal education has been studied in Indonesia. Based on the results of research by Hadi, et al (2019) the effectiveness of non-formal education programs on the awareness and conditioning of vagrants and beggars in the social cottage environment of Jember Regency is aimed at making vagrants and beggars have self-awareness to improve living standards through training assistance in the hope that they can open business opportunities to improve their economic standards [15].

### 3. Equality Education

Package A, Package B, and Package C equivalency education programs are aimed at solving insurmountable educational problems through formal education. Factors that until now have not been resolved are problems in schools, traumatic experiences, dropouts, hyperactive children and autism, so that non-formal education is equalized with formal education through equality examinations [16]. The specificity of equality education lies in functional skills as a complement to academic knowledge and the process of implementing equality education is not the same as the formal education system.

Equality education plays a role in helping people who are unable to pursue formal education due to dropping out of school or due to other factors and *socially disadvantaged communities*. Groups of people who are unable to pursue formal education are influenced by several factors, namely: (1) the students themselves, (2) the parents, (3) the school system, (4) the social environment, (5) the misappropriation of the allocation of educational resources, and (6) mutual relations due to very complex causes [17]. The challenges of equality education in the future are the increasing need for education for society, the rapid advancement of science and technology, the changing orientation of education, the demands for the quality of implementation and the image of equality education [1]. In 2019, the school participation rate (APS) for the 16-18 age group was 72.36% while the 19-24 age group was 25.21%. Based on this data, it can be seen that many students in the high school education level group do not receive education and most choose to attend Package C equality education [18]. Individuals who graduate from the Package C equivalency education program are expected to have vocational skills that are not limited to cognitive abilities only because the Package C equality

education program is intended for individuals who want a learning system that is not boring and after lulus immediately gets a job [19].

Based on Raharjo’s research (2018) on the empowerment of street children through equality education in Samarinda City, it was found that the character of street children who tend to be tough requires the concept of special education that emphasizes the cultivation of character values and *the mindset* that education is important for future investment. Strategies to overcome the problems of street children require readiness of learning management that is in accordance with the conditions of street children [20]. Different learning systems are needed to overcome problems that occur in the scope of education so that they are right on target.

#### 4. Method

The purpose of this study is to find out the problems that occur in non-formal education in Semarang City. This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach. Qualitative research is a research process that describes as a whole and is complex to understand human or social phenomena with the aim of gaining an understanding of human and social phenomena in more detail [21]. The collection of research data was carried out with field observations, interviews and documentation. The respondents in this study were 100 people consisting of 4 managers of non-formal educational institutions, 15 educators in non-formal educational institutions, 10 educational staff in non-formal educational institutions, 20 parents and 20 students in non-formal educational institutions in Semarang City and 20 people from children who experienced dropouts in Semarang City such as buskers, scavengers, tissue sellers and 11 people from the general public.

TABLE 1: Research Respondents.

No	Respondents	Sum		Total
		Man	Woman	
1	Non-Formal Educational Institution Manager	2	2	4
2	Educators	5	10	15
3	Education Personnel	5	5	10
4	Parents of Students	10	10	20
5	Learners	10	10	20
6	Dropouts	10	10	20
7	Community	7	4	11
				<b>100</b>

## 4.1. Research Instruments

The instrument in qualitative research is the researcher himself who becomes the key instrument. The researcher establishes the focus of the study, selects informants, collects data, assesses the quality of the data, analyzes the data, interprets the data into a text narrative and makes conclusions on the research carried out.

## 5. Data Analysis

Data analysis is carried out by (1) data reduction, (2) data presentation, and (3) drawing conclusions and verification. The results of the analysis in this study are presented in the form of narrative texts. The data analysis technique used in the study is *member checking*.

## 6. Results and Discussion

The key to nation-building lies in education because basically through education, it is hoped that individuals can improve quality and play a role in development programs. To realize adequate education, it is necessary to have the support of adequate, qualified, professional, and competitive educators through continuous coaching and training [22]. The problem in non-formal education is not just a problem of illiteracy, numbers, and Indonesian society, but it extends to serious problems. These problems include the vagueness of non-formal education, the unclear intensiveness of educators, the number of unprofessional non-formal educational institutions, and the lack of quality assurance institutions in non-formal educational institutions.

Another problem faced by the Regional Technical Implementation Unit of the Non-formal Education Unit of the Learning Activity Center for the Package C program is related to the facilities and infrastructure of building availability, causing the learning system to not run optimally [23]. The problem is the same as the research results of Suriyani, et al (2021). However, on the other hand, non-formal education also has problems related to the problem of education targets and the level of public concern for the existence of non-formal education in Indonesia is very low, this is a challenge for non-formal educational institutions in Indonesia [24]. Based on the results of interviews with the managers of equality education institutions in Semarang City, several institutions

that carry out the implementation of equality education in Semarang City are still experiencing some obstacles that cause problems in implementing the education system. The problems that occur in the implementation of equality education in Semarang City can be explained as follows:

### 6.1. Low Learning Motivation

Low motivation to learn in students who drop out of school is very unlikely if the student wants to continue school again because they are used to being away from school life making participants not interested in participating in non-formal education programs [24]. Jordan's education world is also experiencing something similar, men's education participation rate is lower than that of women, due to poverty and the need for men to work, causing many men in Jordan to drop out of school higher than women. In addition, the inability to pay fees and their belief in feeling unsafe about transportation are the reasons for dropping out of school. Other constraints such as the lack of community participation in families, lack of communication and coordination in a centralized system, lack of quality and relevance of learning appropriate to the needs of society and the job market greatly affect student motivation towards learning [25].

The motivation for community learning in Semarang City is still not fully applied to each individual, especially to out-of-school children in Semarang City. Based on interviews with buskers, scavengers and tissue sellers in Semarang City, they explained that as they get older they are less interested in continuing their education again on the grounds that they have to work to meet the needs of their families. Of the 20 respondents with backgrounds as buskers, scavengers and tissue sellers, they were children who had experienced formal education but had to drop out of school due to the cost of education.

Based on the results of the problem disclosure tool (AUM) in the research of Mulyawan, et al (2020) it is known that the main problem in Package C equality education in Serang City is related to career problems due to lack of knowledge and information and students belong to the lower middle class so that students experience confusion in planning their careers. Direction in career planning needs to be done to help students of the Package C equality education program in Serang City [17]. Motivation needs to be built, appreciated and instilled that the non-formal educational learning system is pleasant so that students can enjoy and make them to come back

is a very important factor [26]. Low socioeconomic status and lack of parental support also affect low academic achievement and perseverance in learning so that the child's learning motivation will also be low[27].

## 6.2. Level of Public Awareness

Non-formal educational institutions will always be in contact with the poor, people who are unlucky to get formal education, street children, unemployed, people in remote areas. In addition to problems with the target of education, non-formal educational institutions also experience problems with the lack of concern of the educationally literate community for the existence of non-formal education. The low level of public awareness will create new problems in the form of difficulty in maintaining non-formal educational institutions in providing alternative educational services for the community.

Community participation in non-formal education in terms of planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation remains low. In general, people rarely even participate and only a small part have the awareness to participate in any development programs carried out by non-formal educational institutions[28]. The level of public awareness in Semarang City regarding the existence of non-formal education and the importance of education in life is also still relatively low. This is based on the results of interviews with the managers of equality education institutions in Semarang City that there are still many people who do not know the importance of education even through equality education, and some of the people also take equality education in Semarang City lightly.

As stated in point A, interviews with buskers, scavengers and tissue sellers in Semarang City prefer to work instead of continuing their education, so they are not aware of the existence of non-formal educational institutions in Semarang City. When discussed further, they want more money than education for their future. As a result of interviews with the general public, some of these people only know that there are non-formal educational institutions but they do not know the purpose and function of the establishment of the institution.

## 6.3. Educational Facilities and Infrastructure

The facilities and infrastructure to support theoretical learning in equality education institutions in Semarang are generally adequate, but the facilities and infrastructure



used to support practical learning are still inadequate, and there are even non-formal educational institutions that only have 1 classroom to carry out the learning process. The increase in the number of targets for equality education in Semarang City, which is increasing if not followed by the provision of adequate and sufficient facilities and infrastructure, is not considered to reduce the dropout rate in Semarang City.

The same problem is also experienced by PKBM institutions in Semarang City, in the research of Harjono, et al. it was found that the infrastructure at PKBM in Semarang City only meets the needs of theoretical learning, while the management of facilities for skill practice learning is still inadequate and representative so that students cannot carry out practical learning. Another research that reveals the same thing is Dacholfany's research (2018), that pkbm al-Suroya experienced problems related to special facilities / tools and buildings according to the form of activities so as to hinder the educational process [22]. The results of this research were strengthened by the results of research by Puspito, et al (2021) found problems in the facilities and infrastructure of PKBM Wana Bhakti, Ngasem District, Bojonegoro Regency, which were inadequate, so they needed coordination and communication with government agencies in the procurement of these facilities and infrastructure [29]. It requires support and commitment from all apparatuses, both the Education and Culture Office and non-formal education partners in providing services and completing infrastructure supporting non-formal education services to be more optimal[30]. Poor socioeconomic conditions, underdevelopment of physical infrastructure and lack of reach to telnology are also experienced by non-formal educational institutions in Bangladesh[31].

#### 6.4. Educators

Tutors in non-formal educational institutions play a role in helping students to learn learning materials. The lack of professional educators in non-formal educational institutions because they prefer to teach in formal educational institutions. Professional educators will create a good and effective learning process. This is in line with the results of Dacholfany's research (2018), that one of the factors inhibiting quality improvement in PKMB as-Suroya Lampung Metro City is the lack of human resources (experts) as educators [22].

The problem of educators that arises in the implementation of non-formal education in Semarang City is not only limited to problems related to the competence and

availability of educators, but another problem that arises is the lack of commitment from tutors in learning meetings because tutors are not ready if they have to teach in a new environment. In Raharjo's research (2018), the empowerment of street children through equality education in Samarinda City experienced problems due to the lack of commitment of tutors to teach on the road, low motivation to learn street children and the character of street children who closed themselves [20]. One way to overcome problems related to the competence of educators in non-formal educational institutions is through *assessment* training and learning evaluation. To improve the professional competence of a teacher requires innovative experience, technological adaptation to the educational system and the development of exclusive programs [32].

## 6.5. Funding System

Generally, education is the responsibility of the government and the entire community. The implementation of equality education programs also requires the allocation of funds from both the government (APBD, Provincial APBD and District/City APBD) as well as non-governmental funds. However, the allocation of funds from the government often does not meet the needs of providing equality education in non-formal educational institutions, causing problems in the form of delays or cancellations of educational programs that should be implemented. The provision of funding assistance by the government and the community is a form of attention carried out by people as an effort to improve the competence of students in non-formal educational institutions. The government should provide some funds and facilities that can motivate students to be literate [33].

Funding for non-formal educational institutions in Semarang City according to the managers of non-formal educational institutions in Semarang City is always budgeted in the government budget even though the amount of allocation is not too large. To support the operation and education system in non-formal schools in Semarang City, they often get assistance from third parties and contributions from students even though the amount is still relatively small. According to the manager, educators and education staff, non-formal educational institutions in Semarang City carry out a cross-subsidy system to help students who cannot afford it to continue to gain knowledge. The provision of cultural education programs to non-formal institutions in rural areas is different from urban areas in that individuals who are in urban areas benefit economically

and are more likely to participate, so it can be assumed that central and urban areas have greater flexibility in building cultural programs through non-formal education with third party funding, while rural areas depend on public sponsorship or funds county[34]. The swaswa sector does not have enough involvement in the funding of non-formal learning and education programmes in Nigeria [35].

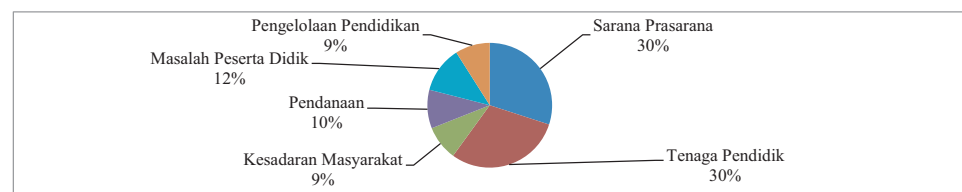
## 6.6. Education Management

Education management strategy or management management is divided into 4 stages, namely the planning, organizing, implementing, and supervision stages. Education management strategies are essential to create an effective learning process and learning objectives are also achieved. The planning stage starts from determining the targets or targets of equality education, maximizing the potential of educational institutions accompanied by efforts to expand services and improve periodically, and carry out educational innovations so that they can remain competitive in the world of education. The organizing stage begins with setting goals and objectives, rules, employees and cooperation that occurs in non-formal educational institutions. The implementation stage begins with applying strategies, tactics, methods and procedures in the learning process. The final stage of the supervisor includes monitoring the work process, the source of funds, resources, the use of time, and any problems or problems that may occur [36].

The management of equality education in Semarang City according to managers and educators in non-formal educational institutions in Semarang City is still not fully effective and well planned. This is due to the lack of experience of managers in managing non-formal education. The problems previously mentioned are also one of the obstacles to the creation of good education management. In Anisaturrahmi's research (2021), one of the forms of meeting needs according to the situation in the environment of non-formal educational institutions carried out by the Hasan-Savvas Reading House is capacity empowerment programs for the community, especially the younger generation in the form of literacy activities, handicrafts, seminars, training, and so on to eradicate illiteracy and marginalization in the circle. ungan the institution [37] stands. In addition to mastery of *hard skills*, non-formal education should emphasize the development of non-cognitive abilities or *soft skills* used in work [38].

The problem of managing non-formal educational institutions also occurs in the Mentari Ilmu 3 Tutoring. According to the results of Romadhon's research (2018), after evaluation of the program, internal and external problems were found in the Mentari Science Bimbel 3. Internal problems include: the implementation of programs that have not been maximized, unclear tutoring targets, tutoring learning curricula that are still not directed, the absence of special teaching materials, systems and institutional management that have not been well planned and so on [39]. A well-planned, structured and implemented non-formal educational institution management strategy will result in the achievement of the educational institution's goal of providing decent and adequate educational services for non-formal education targets in Semarang City so that it is able to compete and show its existence in the world of education in Indonesia.

Overall, the problems that occur in the implementation of equality education in Semarang City can be seen in Figure 1. Next.



**Figure 1:** Chart of Problems in the Implementation of Equality Education in Semarang City.

Based on Figure 1. The biggest problem in the process of providing equality education in Semarang City is related to inadequate infrastructure, many educators are incompetent and public awareness of the importance of education is still low.

Based on the research of Fakhruddin and Shofwan (2019), obstacles in the development of non-formal institutions in Pati Regency include the complexity of the administrative system and the absence of program socialization; Many teachers are not yet competent, the programs developed have not met the needs of students, many teacher qualifications are not irrelevant, people feel prestige and shame to continue schooling through non-formal education, long distances of residence and lack of public awareness of the importance of education [40]. Increasing the target of providing equality education must be followed by improvements and improvements to the education system in Indonesia so that problems that have previously occurred do not occur in the future. The resolution of these problems must be supported by concrete actions such as increasing the competence and relevance of the teaching education background, improving managerial education institutions, clear funding and actuality from equality education institutions in Indonesia [41].

## 7. Conclusions

The implementation of non-formal education is held outside the formal education path which can be used as a forum to improve knowledge, skills and personality. One type of non-formal education that exists in Indonesia is equality education. Education problems in the world still occur, including in Indonesia, not only originating from the personality of students, but problems also arise from institutions and systems for providing equality education in Indonesia. Based on the results of observations and interviews, the problems that occur in many non-formal educational institutions are related to educational supporting facilities and infrastructure that are still inadequate due to budget constraints and the competence of educators and education staff who are not competent and not in accordance with qualifications. Awareness of the existence of educational institutions, awareness of the importance of education in life and low motivation for learning cause many out-of-school children not to be interested in returning to school and prefer to work. In addition to these problems, the problem of limited funding and an unplanned and well-implemented education management system will hinder the achievement of the objectives of providing non-formal education to be ineffective. Problems that occur in non-formal educational institutions in Semarang City need special attention, as a form of following up on these problems, an ongoing evaluation is carried out.

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