

Evaluating the Implementation of the *Sekolah Penggerak* Policy in Cianjur, Indonesia: Addressing Challenges And Enhancing Outcomes

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ABSTRACT

The Program Sekolah Penggerak (PSP) is a priority initiative launched by Indonesia's Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbud) to drive rapid school transformation and foster collaboration within the educational ecosystem at the regional level. Despite these efforts, 2,504 schools in the first cohort of the program were deemed unsuccessful after three years of receiving targeted support and funding. This study aims to assess the implementation of the PSP Batch 2, which has been operational for over two years in Cianjur Regency, Indonesia, through a retrospective analysis. The findings are critical for formulating policy recommendations to address the weaknesses identified in the implementation process. A descriptive qualitative case study approach was employed, utilizing snowball sampling for data collection and analysis. The results provide insights into (1) the chronology of PSP Batch 2's implementation in Cianjur Regency, (2) policy violations and challenges, including the lack of supporting local policies and frequent changes in school leadership during ongoing mentorship, and (3) recommendations for future PSP implementations, offering three key alternatives: centralization of the program, enhanced inter-ministerial collaboration, and the development of region-specific policies. This study presents valuable guidance for policymakers in decentralized education systems and calls for further research in other regions to evaluate the PSP's implementation mechanisms.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Program *Sekolah Penggerak* (PSP) is the fifth chapter of the Merdeka Belajar policy initiated by the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Nadiem Anwar Makarim (Rustam et al., 2023). As a part of Merdeka Belajar policy chapter, the aim of the PSP policy is to encourage the school transformation process so that it can improve student learning outcomes holistically, both from cognitive, non-cognitive, and character-competency aspects (Kemendikbudristek, 2021; Rusdiman AB et al., 2022). This program aims to realize the Pancasila student profile (Kurniasih, 2022); a new elaboration of national education goals pursued through National Education Standards (Presiden Republik Indonesia, 2021).

The transformation of schools as intended by the Ministry of Education and Culture is not limited to educational units implementing PSP quickly (Afrina et al., 2022). More than that, schools implementing PSP can trigger the creation of change and mutual cooperation in the education ecosystem at the regional level (Lestari et al., 2022). Schools implementing PSP are expected to be able to lead the transformation of education within and between regional networks so that changes that occur periodically (Dewi & Mudrikah, 2023) can, in turn, develop educational outcomes in Indonesia at the national level.

The PSP policy is driven by the need to address disparities in education quality between regions in Indonesia (Putri et al., 2023). This gap has been highlighted in various case studies, such as the 2019 Computer-Based National Examination (UNBK) results, which revealed that the average scores of students from two provinces on the island of Java surpassed those of the top 10% of students in ten provinces outside Java (Akhyar, 2019). These findings underscore the significant disparity in educational achievement between students in Java and those in other regions of Indonesia (Hendajany & Riyadi, 2022). There is considerable hope that the PSP schools can help mitigate these inequalities by extending outreach and support to surrounding schools (Khofifah & Syaifudin, 2023).

In an effort to encourage equal distribution of education quality between regions, the Ministry of Education and Culture encourages educational units implementing PSP to take part in overseeing the transformation of surrounding schools (Kurniasih, 2022; Maryati & Radiana, 2023; Wiryatmo et al., 2023) in order to avoid gaps in educational attainment (Meriyanti & Jasmina, 2022) in the past. The author sees innovation in this policy, namely activating the schools implementing PSP as a catalyst for developing the quality of education in other schools in the nearby area.

Procedurally, the scope of the PSP implementation policy is implemented through 6 stages: (1) Socialization of the PSP; (2) Determination of the province, Regency, or city as the organizer of the PSP; (3) Determination of an educational unit as the implementer of the PSP; (4) Implementation of PSP activities in provincial, Regency or city local governments; (5) Implementation of the PSP; and (6) Evaluation of the implementation of the PSP (Kemendikbudristek, 2021).

The six stages explain that PSP is implemented through collaboration between the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Regional Government, and is followed by primary and secondary schools, including Early Childhood Education (PAUD), Primary School (SD), Junior High School (SMP), Senior High School (SMA), Vocational High Schools (SMK) and Special Schools (SLB), both public and private (Kemendikbudristek, 2021). This indicates certain challenges in implementing PSP, namely procedures that rely heavily on collaboration between stakeholders.

Even though every educational unit in Indonesia can register for the PSP recruitment (Novita et al., 2022), the educational units that are entitled to take part in the PSP are determined based on the results of a strict selection (Mendikbud, 2021). Schools that register and pass the selection – as depicted in stages 2 and 3, are then declared to be PSP-implementing educational units so that they are entitled to receive 5 support interventions to carry out development. These interventions include; (1) Consultative and asymmetric assistance; (2) Strengthening Human Resources (School HR); (3) learning with a new paradigm; (4) Data-Based Planning; and (5) School Digitalization (Kemendikbudristek, 2021).

The five support interventions for carrying out development were implemented simultaneously with additional financial support, namely, School Operational Assistance Performance (BOS Kinerja) which was given specifically to schools that implementing PSP (Kemendikbudristek, 2022) for 3 years (Mendikbud, 2021). This assistance is presented using a consultative and asymmetric model (Harningsih et al., 2023), and is provided by the Ministry of Education and Culture through selected experts called PSP facilitators so that schools move from a certain stage to the next stage.

The PSP aims to encourage rapid school transformation and trigger the creation of change and mutual cooperation in the education ecosystem at the regional level. PSP implementation policy is implemented through 6 stages; (1) Socialization of the PSP; (2) Determination of the province, Regency, or city as the organizer of the PSP; (3) Determination of an educational unit as the implementer of the

PSP; (4) Implementation of PSP activities in provincial, Regency or city local governments; (5) Implementation of the PSP; and (6) Evaluation of the implementation of the PSP. Explaining the schools' development through PSP, look at Figure 1.

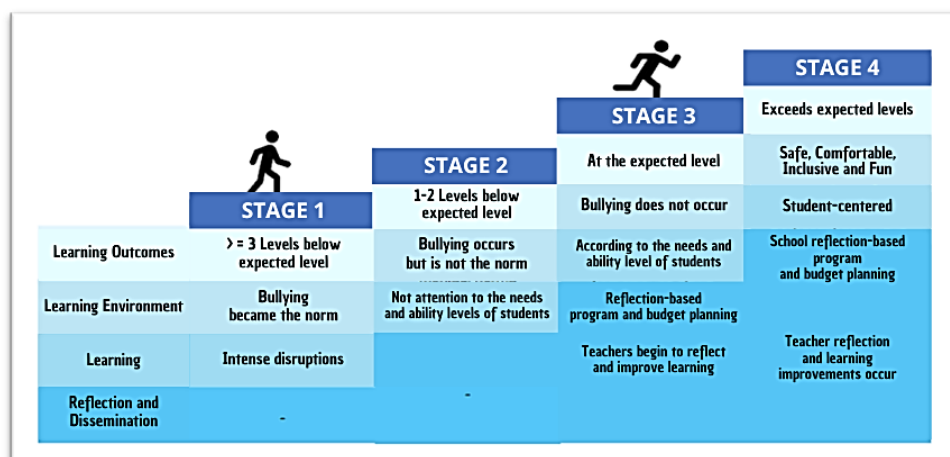


Figure 1. Stages of the Indonesian School Transformation Process

Figure 1, obtained from PSP socialization (Kemendikbudristek, 2021) illustrates that schools in Indonesia can generally be divided into 4 categories. PSP is carried out so that educational units implementing PSP which are at stages 1, 2, 3, or 4 can continue to develop holistic learning outcomes with the help of 5 support interventions. For educational units implementing PSP Batch 1, this starts from the date of their recruitment graduation, namely in January 2021, and ends in December 2023. Meanwhile, for schools implementing PSP Batch 2, the period starts from January 2022 and will end in December 2024. In other words, at the time this research was conducted, the implementation of PSP Batch 1 had been completed and the implementation of PSP Batch 2 had been carried out for more than 2 years and 4 months.

However, it is known that of the 4.997 Batch 1 PSP Implementing schools from all regions of Indonesia, only 2.493 of them were declared to have passed the PSP (Kemdikbud, 2024). This means that 2.504 schools were implementing PSP Batch 1 that were declared not to have passed, after receiving special assistance and funding (BOS Kinerja) for 3 academic years. This indicates that the implementation of the PSP policy is facing a number of complex challenges. What factors cause hundreds of educational units implementing PSP to fail is an important issue that needs attention from every stakeholder of Indonesian education.

This condition needs to be followed up with educational policy analysis steps so that the factors (Muthanna & Sang, 2023), including obstacles (Karaevli et al., 2024) within it can be studied. So that materials can be obtained to provide considerations to policymakers; on whether this policy should be stopped, or continued with certain improvements (Pandey & Shukla, 2022). Because good policy is a policy that contains meaning and principles for many people, it also avoids causing harm to many people (Zakarya et al., 2022), including state losses if the implementation of the PSP policy is ineffective. It is important in this context to formulate policy recommendations (Fika et al., 2023), namely the process of formulating a follow-up plan to overcome problems that occur in a social entity (Panjaitan, 2021) if it is true that there are weaknesses in it.

As far as the literature search that the author conducted on the Google Scholar and Scopus databases, there is only one previous study that is relevant and has identical aims, namely the research of Masyhuda et al. (2023). They examined the implementation of the PSP policy in the city of Palu, Indonesia. The research found that the implementation of PSP policies in Palu City is still low-powered because it is faced with the challenges of minimal multi-stakeholder participation and limited local government support. The urgency of analyzing the implementation of the PSP policy which has been

started by Masyhuda et al. (2023) in the city of Palu needs to be followed up with similar research in other areas. Especially with research concerned with the mechanism of PSP implementation, and found what the actually weakness in that implementation. In order to obtain related findings from various regions, a calculation of the findings can become a broader representation. So that the resulting policy recommendations can later receive a serious response from national education policymakers regarding how to follow up on the PSP.

The option of Cianjur Regency was based on two backgrounds. First, the Cianjur Regency Education Index is 57.36 (Disdik Jabar, 2024). This score makes Cianjur Regency the third worst education index in West Java in 2022, after Subang and Indramayu. This achievement implies that Cianjur Regency is one of the Regencies that requires special attention. Second, the implementation of PSP assistance for batch 1 has been completed. Meanwhile, for an in-depth analysis of PSP policy implementation, ongoing PSP assistance is needed. This criterion refers to PSP batch 2, and Cianjur Regency is one of the regions implementing PSP batch 2.

The Merdeka Belajar Policy is Indonesian education policy that was established to accelerate the achievements of education in Indonesia since 2019. The Merdeka Belajar policy consists of various episodes, one of which is a priority program, namely the Program Sekolah Penggerak (PSP). Schools that implement the PSP are entitled to receive additional funding, namely the BOS Kinerja. If the implementation of the priority program contains weaknesses that are not addressed, then many educational achievement opportunities will fail to be projected as originally planned.

With this background and objective in mind, we carried out the research. The research questions are formulated as follows: First, we will examine the timeline of Cianjur's participation in the implementation of PSP Batch 2. Second, we will explore the specific challenges and policy compliance issues faced by the Cianjur government during this process. Finally, we will consider strategies to address the weaknesses in PSP for future implementation.

2. METHODS

This research was carried out using the application style retrospective analysis model introduced by William Dunn, namely a style of policy analysis that highlights and explains the causal relationship between policy objectives and policy actors (Muethia & Wardhono, 2022) so as to identify inconsistencies that arise in them. The selection of this analytical model is based on the consideration that the research question aims to explore the causal relationship between the provisions of the PSP policy and the implementation of the PSP. This analytical model is suitable for analyzing policies in a region (Cropper et al., 2018).

A descriptive qualitative approach (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) using a case study model (Pradani, 2020) was used (Muji et al., 2021). Although this research was conducted in the context of the Cianjur regency case, the implementation of PSP in other regions follows the same procedures. As a result, the findings of this study can be generalized by other regions implementing PSP in Indonesia for the purpose of evaluating PSP at the district or city, provincial, or national level.

The subjects of this research were officials from the Cianjur Regency Education Office, PSP facilitators, and PSP Batch 2 participants in the Cianjur Regency called the Learning Committee or Komjar (Irmawan et al., 2023). The snowball sampling technique was applied (LeBlanc et al., 2023) because it is suitable as a treatment for populations that are difficult to reach entirely (Etikan, 2016). In this case, the population we mean is all stakeholders involved in implementing the Batch 2 PSP policy in Cianjur Regency, West Java, Indonesia. We began the sampling determination phase by collecting data on the stakeholders of PSP batch 2 in Cianjur. Then, we established three categories: Learning Committee, PSP facilitators, and local government elements, including the District Education Office. From each category, the data is absorbed until it reaches saturation point. Data collection uses triangulation (July et al., 2023). Interviews with selected participant samples, documentation of PSP policies and evidence of PSP implementation, as well as observations of PSP activities related to the learning committee. Only coherent data from the three are presented, so the research results contain

strong reliability and strong eligibility. Meanwhile, data analysis uses inductive techniques (Fadli, 2021) which allows for obtaining new hypotheses (Imran & Almusharraf, 2023). This step used according to the thematic analysis for triangulation results, regarding recommendations for follow-up to PSP policies in the future.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. The Chronology of PSP Batch 2 Implementation in Cianjur Regency

The letter issued by the Directorate General of Early Childhood Education, Primary and Secondary Education, Ministry of Education and Culture Number 10187/C/DM.05.03/2021 to regional heads on 16th August 2021 concerning the Determination of Regency or Cities Organizing PSP Batch 2 is the basis of the policy which gives the right of involvement to Cianjur Regency in the Ministry of Education and Culture's Batch 2 of PSP. As outlined in the PSP mechanism as stated in Minister of Education and Culture Decree Number 371/M/2021 concerning PSP, the determination of target areas for implementing PSP is then followed up with the selection of school principals in the relevant areas.

So the Director of Professional Education and Development of Teachers and Education Personnel as the head of the relevant unit at the Ministry of Education and Culture wrote letter number 4018/B2/GT.03.15/2021 concerning the Recruitment of Principal Candidates for the Batch 2 of PSP on 25th August 2021. While the initial rollout of PSP in Cianjur followed the outlined procedures, several significant challenges and policy violations emerged during implementation, which are discussed in the following section.

The final result of the series of selection processes is the Decree of the Directorate General of Early Childhood Education, Primary and Secondary Education Number 0301/C/HK.00/2022 concerning the Determination of School Implementing the Batch 2 of PSP published on 14th January 2022 (Dikdasmen, 2022). List of school units Implementing PSP Batch 2 in Cianjur Regency, including 40 school units. Look at Table 1.

Table 1. List of educational units implementing PSP Batch 2 in Cianjur Regency

Number in the relevant Director General's Decree	Serial Number in District. Cianjur	Name of Education Unit	NPSN	Status
Early Childhood Education Levels (PAUD)				
312	1	TK Nurul Wathan	20255314	Private
313	2	TK Tunas Karya III	20255364	Private
314	3	TK As-Sakinah	69904061	Private
315	4	KB Al-Mughtar	69966515	Private
316	5	TK Islam Jamiatul Kurnia	69919192	Private
317	6	TK Riyadlussolihin Takokak	69823311	Private
318	7	TK Puti Reno Nilam	69965202	Private
319	8	TK Kristen Kanaan	20254926	Private
320	9	TK Mekar Pertiwi 3	69982692	Private
321	10	TK Mardi Waluya	69911105	Private
Elementary School Level (SD)				
-	-	-	-	-
Junior High School Level (SLTP)				
276	11	SMP Negeri 3 Cidaun	20203853	State
277	12	SMP Negeri 3 Cipanas	60733360	State
278	13	SMP Negeri 2 Cikalongkulon	20203805	State
279	14	SMP Negeri 3 Cianjur	20203850	State
280	15	SMP Negeri 1 Cipanas	20252023	State

281	16	SMP Negeri 2 Mande	20203810	State
282	17	SMP Negeri 2 Cipanas	20203812	State
283	18	SMP Negeri 1 Tanggeung	20203822	State
284	19	SMP Negeri 1 Sukanagara	20203819	State
285	20	SMP Negeri 4 Cikadu	20270886	State
286	21	SMPN 1 Cugenang	20203894	State
287	22	SMP Garnesia	69953126	Private
288	23	SMP Al-Mamoen	69820508	Private
289	24	SMP Islam Kreatif	20271169	Private
290	25	SMPS Mardi Yuana Cianjur	20203865	Private
291	26	SMP Islam Sirojussyafiiyyah	69761725	Private
292	27	SMPS K Kanaan Cianjur	20203864	Private
293	28	SMPS Terpadu Al Ma Shum Mardiyah	20252331	Private
294	29	SMP Cendikia Sukahegar	69930717	Private
295	30	SMP PGRI 1 Cikadu	69919136	Private
296	31	SMP Quran Terpadu Al-Uswah	70012078	Private
297	32	SMP Islam Al-Fajar Maleber	69894965	Private
298	33	SMP Terpadu Azzahra	69899011	Private
299	34	SMPS PGRI Cugenang	20252043	Private
		Senior High School Level (SLTA)		
121	35	SMAS Plus Darussalam	20252465	Private
122	36	SMA Terpadu Al-Mu' Aawanah	70006980	Private
123	37	SMAS Pasundan 1 Cianjur	20252051	Private
124	38	SMA Islam Al-Istiqomah	69906513	Private
125	39	SMA Dar El Fikri Cianjur	69883257	Private
126	40	SMA PGRI Kadupandak	69944385	Private

3.2. Policy Violations and Implementation Challenges

3.2.1 Lack of Regency-Level Policies to Support PSP Implementation

The Regency government's implementation of PSP is determined by the Ministry of Education and Culture through a series of mechanisms. After the relevant Regency government receives PSP socialization from the Ministry of Education and Culture, those who agree to the memorandum of understanding can become PSP target areas. The two points that are part of the memorandum of agreement are commitments that (1) The regent of the Regency government will formulate Regency-level policies that support the implementation of PSP; and (2) will not rotate the principal of the PSP implementing school in the Regency within a period of 4 years from the appointment of the PSP implementing schools (Mendikbud, 2021). However, in the exploration carried out, no Regency regulations (Perda) or Regent Decree (Perbup) in Cianjur Regency were found to contain, regulate, or follow up on PSP policies.

The Head of the Cianjur Regency Education Service (Kadisdik Cianjur) for 2022-2023 presented various official documents during interviews, including circulars, workshop invitations, and assignment letters for Komjar PSP to conduct outreach to nearby schools. While these documents served as the foundation for task assignments and regional activity directives, they were limited to operational instructions. They did not outline a clear or sustainable framework for how the Regency government would provide ongoing support to schools implementing PSP in the region. This lack of structured policy support was also confirmed by the PSP Batch 2 facilitator assigned to Cianjur Regency.

This finding indicates that the Head of the Education Office does not understand some of their obligations, namely to encourage the formulation of PSP policies at the regional level. In fact, this has

been stated as an obligation for local governments implementing PSP from the very beginning. This indicates that the implementation of a national education policy within a decentralized education system, which grants certain authorities to local governments, can lead to bias and inconsistency in the implementation of national education policies. As a result, the potential for deviations in the implementation of national education policy tends to be significant.

3.2.2 Rotation of School Principals in PSP Implementing Schools

One of the points in the memorandum of agreement signed by Ministry of Education and Culture officials and the Regent of Cianjur in the series of determining Cianjur Regency as a PSP implementing area is that they will not rotate the principal of the PSP implementing school in their area, for at least 4 years. This commitment was apparently violated. One of the principals of the PSP batch 2 implementing school was appointed by the Regent of Cianjur and became head of the junior high school division of the Cianjur Regency Education Service (Disdik) when he had only participated in the program for 5 months. This Cianjur Regent's policy was carried out without the knowledge and permission of the Ministry of Education and Culture, giving rise to sanctions, namely that the Regency could not be included in the PSP selection for the form of school that was violated for the next 1 (one) year (Mendikbud, 2021). Evidently, Cianjur Regency is no longer the implementing area for PSP in PSP Batch 3.

3.3. Recommendation for PSP Future Implementation

The PSP policy reflects a strategy aimed at mobilizing civil and regional capacities to address spatial challenges (Finnigan & Holme, 2018) and reduce educational disparities in Indonesia (Ciarla, 2023). Like any educational initiative, its goal is to improve the delivery of education (George & Wooden, 2023). However, this research identifies a disconnect between the policy's design and its actual implementation (Risna et al., 2020). A key issue uncovered in the PSP's execution in Cianjur Regency is the absence of supporting Regency-level policies, which is the first major violation. While the decision not to enact specific policies can be considered a policy choice in itself (Ponzini, 2021), it has negatively impacted the schools involved in PSP. There is a lack of transparency regarding the allocation of the Regional Revenue and Expenditure Budget (APBD) to support these schools, even though regional governments are obligated to provide such support. Similar findings were reported by Sururi et al. (2023), who noted that no specific APBD funds were allocated for PSP implementation in Bandung, one of West Java's largest cities.

Furthermore, rotating the principal of the school to implement PSP is the second violation of the implementation of the PSP policy in Cianjur Regency. Even though it was clearly stated in the memorandum of agreement that this was prohibited, this was violated (Masyhuda et al., 2023). On the one hand, Regency governments are obliged to follow the memorandum of agreement. On the other hand, rotating the position of the school state principal as a part of state civil servant (ASN) entities within the regional scope is within the authority of the Regency government (Sahlim, 2023). In this section, we look at a specific vulnerability in the PSP policy implementation procedure. Minister of Education and Culture Decree Number 371/M/2021 and the memorandum of agreement do not limit regional autonomy. So, there is a potential for deviations or violations of the memorandum of agreement from the beginning. Especially in this era, where there is a trend of regional heads making decisions that are contrary to the decisions of state ministers (Mahmuzar, 2022; Murtadlo et al., 2015; Timpal et al., 2022). Even though this action should not actually be carried out (Kamaruddin et al., 2023).

The violation of this memorandum of agreement was carried out by the Cianjur Regency government. However, the losses that arise as a consequence are in turn borne by all educational entities in the Cianjur Regency area. Even though they were not involved in making the decisions that gave rise to the violations. The benefits of implementing PSP for local governments can be divided into

6 aspects, namely; (1) Increasing the competence of School HR; (2) Making learning more interesting and enjoyable, (3) Multiplier effect from PSP Schools to other schools, (4) Accelerating improvement in the quality of education in the region, (5) Opportunities to get an award as an Education PSP Region; and (6) Become a reference area for good practices in the development of PSP (Kemendikbudristek, 2021). All the tempting benefits that could be obtained disappeared at once for Cianjur Regency in the implementation of PSP Batch 3, because they received sanctions due to the decision of their regent. Even though the Cianjur Education Index is ranked third worst in West Java (Disdik Jabar, 2024). If findings like this are ignored, similar irregularities have the potential to occur again in other areas and lead to a greater escalation of losses.

In terms of the policy hierarchy, the memorandum of agreement between the central government and regional or Regency governments in implementing a government program is at a lower level when compared to the legal force in the Ministerial Decree (Grin & Abrucio, 2017). The policy at the level of a Ministerial Decree which is related to the memorandum of agreement on the implementation of the PSP, in this case, is the Letter of the Head of the State Civil Service Agency (BKN) Number K.26-304/V.100-2/99 (BKN-RI, 2015) concerning the explanation of the authority of regional heads in the field of civil service, which was issued on 19th October 2015 and Letter of the Minister of Home Affairs Number 821/5492/SJ dated 14th September 2022 (Mendagri, 2022).

On page 3, second point, letter b in the letter from the head of BKN, it is stated that one of the regional heads' powers is to take or determine decisions that have legal consequences on personnel aspects without the need to obtain written approval from the Minister of Home Affairs, including the appointment of civil servants and promotions (BKN-RI, 2015). When the PSP memorandum of agreement between the Ministry of Education and Culture and the regional government was made, one of which stipulated that regional heads would not rotate the principals of PSP participating schools for 4 years, and at the same time, the policy of the head of BKN and the Minister of Home Affairs remained in effect, then the PSP memorandum of agreement was actually weak from the beginning.

A policy implementation needs to be controlled so that it can be evaluated, whether the policy implementation has or has not achieved the originally determined policy objectives (Alamsyah et al., 2020; Kholifah et al., 2024). In an effort to control the implementation of the PSP policy, by the Ministry of Education and Culture, this research recommends an improvement in the procedures for implementing the PSP policy. So that policy objectives can be better achieved (Warman et al., 2023). We propose this recommendation in three alternatives.

3.3.1 Centralized PSP Implementation

The implementation of PSP needs to be centralized in the Ministry of Education and Culture so that similar irregularities by local governments do not occur again. It is currently needed to prevent regional policy deviations. Even though the decentralization of education system is still existing, centralization is necessary for the implementation of PSP in the future to ensure that local governments do not commit deviations for any reason.

3.3.2 Enhance Inter-Ministerial Collaboration

If the PSP provisions are implemented through collaboration between the Ministry of Education and Culture and Regional Governments (Mendikbud, 2021) are to be maintained, then collaboration is needed with the Ministry of Home Affairs (Kemendagri) as the top hierarchy for regional governments, as well as BKN. The involvement of these two state institutions is necessary to minimize deviations and or violations that could potentially be committed by local governments implementing PSP. So enhancing inter-ministerial collaboration has become the second option, as well as aligning regional and national policies.

3.3.3 Develop Specific Local Policies

Schools implementing the Program Sekolah Penggerak (PSP) receive four years of guidance, supported by *BOS Kinerja* funding for only three years. However, the transformation these schools are expected to achieve is intended to extend beyond this period, with a mandate to pioneer inter-regional educational development. Without the support of relevant local government policies, this goal risks becoming unattainable. Therefore, the development of specific local policies that provide sustained support for PSP implementation is strongly recommended. Local policies can play a crucial role in ensuring the continuity and success of school transformation efforts even after national-level support is reduced (Sari & Hidayat, 2021).

It is recommended that the Cianjur Regency government immediately create a policy framework to support and follow up on the implementation of PSP. While such action may seem delayed, it could significantly mitigate the negative impacts already incurred. For example, it would clarify the way forward for schools in PSP Batch 1, which have completed the mentoring process, and provide necessary guidance for schools in PSP Batch 2, which are still undergoing mentorship. Other regions, such as Pacitan, Natuna, Kendal, and Pekalongan Regencies, have already established similar regency or city-level regulations to support PSP, offering a model for Cianjur to follow (Prabowo et al., 2023).

The deviations uncovered in the implementation of national education policies through this research not only highlight the need for temporary remedies but also offer critical lessons for future education policymakers. These findings underscore the importance of ensuring that all stakeholders understand and are adequately prepared to implement policies before their full rollout. Rushing implementation without testing readiness can lead to losses in terms of time, resources, and funding (Harahap & Sihombing, 2020). The core aim of public policy should be to deliver benefits, not to cause harm (Nugroho & Susilo, 2022).

4. CONCLUSION

This study provided a retrospective analysis of the PSP Batch 2 policy implementation in Cianjur Regency, Indonesia, offering valuable insights into the challenges and violations encountered at the regional level. The research identified two significant policy violations that have led to sanctions and negatively impacted the education sector in the area. To mitigate further damage, three recommendations are proposed: centralizing the PSP, enhancing inter-ministerial collaboration between the Ministry of Education (Kemdikbud), the Ministry of Home Affairs (Mendagri), and BKN, and developing specific local policies to support PSP implementation. Given that similar challenges may arise in other regions following the same PSP mechanisms, the findings of this study provide useful guidance for other PSP-implementing regions. More broadly, this research underscores the importance of assessing the readiness of regional implementers before launching educational policies in decentralized systems.

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Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare that there are no objectives or potential conflicts of interest or competition related to the research, writing, and or publication of this article.

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