

WHY IS THE QUALITY OF TEACHERS IN INDONESIA SO POOR?: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS ON GURU GEMBUL'S VIDEO

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ARTICLE HISTORY

Received : 26-07-2025

Revised : 07-08-2025

Accepted : 19-08-2025

KEYWORDS

Quality of Teachers;
Guru Gembul's;
Quality of Education.

ABSTRACT

In the context of Indonesian education, this research delves into the discourse surrounding the quality of teachers, focusing on the analysis of Guru Gembul's video content. By employing critical discourse analysis, the study aims to uncover the intricate interplay of identity, ideology, and social relationships as portrayed in the video. Through a deep exploration of language use and communication strategies, the research seeks to shed light on the underlying factors influencing teacher effectiveness and educational reform in Indonesia. The methodology involves a qualitative approach, utilizing thematic analysis of the video transcript and audience comments to reveal insights into the perceptions and challenges faced by teachers in the country. The findings highlight the significance of understanding how teachers construct their identities and ideologies through discourse, and how these constructions impact their interactions with students and the broader educational landscape. By bridging traditional textual analyses with multimedia communication, this study contributes to a nuanced understanding of the complexities surrounding teacher quality discourse in Indonesia, ultimately aiming to inform strategies for enhancing the quality of education and supporting teachers in their crucial role in shaping the future of Indonesian students.

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INTRODUCTIONS

In the era of digital communication and social media, discourse analysis plays a crucial role in understanding how information spreads, ideologies emerge, and identities are constructed (Jin, 2025). This research will focus on

Guru Gembul's video titled "Why Is the Quality of Teachers in Indonesia So Poor?"—a thought-provoking piece that has ignited discussions across online platforms. Guru Gembul is a prominent YouTuber who produces educational content covering various topics such as history, religion, politics, psychology, philosophy, and conspiracy theories. His channel stands out due to its originality, presenting content in such a way that is not commonly found in other channels. Guru Gembul covers a wide range of subjects, making the videos suitable for diverse research purposes. His discourse can be analyzed to understand how he presents complex topics to his audience. His videos often take an educational approach, which aligns well with your research focus on discourse analysis. Analyzing Guru Gembul's discourse can shed light on how he constructs narratives and communicates ideas. Guru Gembul is reportedly a history teacher at SMAN 16 Bandung, Indonesia. His expertise in history and education may contribute to the quality and depth of his content. By conducting a discourse analysis, this study aims to unravel the complexities surrounding teacher quality, with a specific focus on identity, ideology, and social relationships.

The quality of teachers directly impacts student learning outcomes, classroom dynamics, and overall educational reform (Engida et al., 2024). As policymakers and educators strive to enhance the Indonesian education system, understanding the factors that contribute to teacher effectiveness becomes paramount. Previous research has explored the prevailing discourse around teacher quality. The concept of teacher quality has played a significant role in the policy discourse driving education reform in recent years, and it continues to impact both school education and teacher education (Singh et al., 2021). In fact, it is indicated that translating discourses of excellence to a local level is a complex task, especially when multiple stakeholders are involved. Thus, it is essential to recognize the value of pursuing teaching excellence from various perspectives—policy, professional, institutional, disciplinary, and personal—to achieve a comprehensive understanding of teaching excellence (Wilcox, 2021). However, this study will focus on Guru Gembul's video, bridging the gap between traditional textual analyses and multimedia communication through critical discourse analysis.

Guru Gembul's video has sparked conversations across social media platforms, drawing attention to the challenges faced by teachers. Public discourse shapes perceptions of the teaching profession, affecting recruitment, retention, and teacher morale. Previous research provides a relevant lens for understanding how ideologies intersect with teacher identity. Teacher identity is connected to teachers' roles within the social, cultural, historical, and political frameworks, thus making it multifaceted, fluid, and intertwined with power dynamics in social discourse (Sang, 2022). By analyzing the video transcript, this study can uncover implicit ideologies and shed light on the social construction of teacher quality.

Beyond the video content itself, the comments from netizens offer a rich source of data. These comments reflect social relationships, community norms, and collective judgments. Conversationalisation of discourse plays a key role in the shift of social relationships (Yang, 2023). This study pioneers the integration of netizens' comments into discourse analysis, providing an important perspective on how social relationships influence the discourse surrounding teacher quality.

While existing studies have explored teacher quality, this research stands out in several ways. Few studies have specifically analyzed video content as a primary source for discourse analysis. By combining linguistic cues from the video transcript and critical discourse analysis, this research not only examines spoken language but also the meaning behind the language. This multimodal approach allows us to capture nuances that textual analyses alone might miss. Not only that, this study combines three lenses—identity, ideology, and social relationships—to provide a comprehensive understanding of teacher quality discourse. This holistic approach allows this research to explore the interplay between these dimensions and their impact on educational practices. Unlike other research that used single-dimensional studies, this triple-lens approach will provide a rich perspective toward the discussion.

By incorporating netizens' comments, this study will also explore the collective thoughts and opinions of online communities. These voices represent diverse perspectives, ranging from parents and students to fellow educators. This

research will bridge the gap between formal discourse and grassroots opinions, enriching the understanding of teacher quality.

METHOD

This research employs a qualitative design, chosen for its suitability in exploring the complexities of discourse surrounding teacher quality. Qualitative methods allow this research to delve into meanings, interpretations, and social phenomena inherent in spoken and written language. Given our focus on discourse analysis, this approach provides the necessary flexibility to uncover nuances and context.

This study centers on analyzing a specific video titled “Why Is the Quality of Teachers in Indonesia So Poor?” by Guru Gembul. Rather than involving human participants, This Research engages directly with the video content. The absence of traditional respondents aligns with this research objectives, as it aims to dissect the discourses within the video itself.

This research instrument involves video transcripts and netizen comments from YouTube videos. The video transcript serves as the primary textual resource. It captures the spoken language, gestures, and visual cues used by Guru Gembul. Through close examination, it can analyze how identity and ideology are constructed within the discourse. This research will pay attention to linguistic choices, rhetorical strategies, and implicit meanings embedded in the transcript. The comments section provides a secondary source of data. Netizens’ responses reflect social relationships and community interactions. Analyzing these comments allows this research to understand how viewers perceive the video, express agreement or dissent, and engage in dialogues related to teacher quality.

This research will employ thematic analysis to uncover recurring themes, patterns, and underlying meanings within the video transcript and netizens’ comments. This method allows this study to: (1) Identify explicit and implicit discourses related to teacher quality, identity, and ideology; (2) Explore how social relationships manifest in the comments section and; (3) Systematically code and categorize textual data to reveal insights into the discourse surrounding Indonesian teachers’ quality. In summary, this research methods combine qualitative video analysis with thematic exploration, aiming to contribute to the broader understanding of teacher quality discourse in Indonesia.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In the landscape of educational content on YouTube, Guru Gembul emerges as a prominent figure. His channel traverses a diverse array of topics, spanning history, religion, politics, psychology, and philosophy. As this research will embark on critical discourse analysis, this study will examine how Guru Gembul constructs his identity, his ideology, and social relationships among his audience. By dissecting these aspects, this study aims to understand why his content resonates and why it serves as a valuable resource for research on the quality of teachers in Indonesia.

Guru Gembul’s Identity as a Teacher

Identity is a dynamic quality that people acquire via interaction. It is actively formed and shaped in communicative practices since it is constructed through discourse. In this section, the researchers want to dissect the identity that exists in the video of Guru Gembul. In identity itself will be divided into three parts: a. macro-level demographic categories; b. local, ethnographically specific cultural positions; and c. temporary and interactionally specific stances and participant roles.

a. Macro-level Demographic Categories

These basic categories—race, gender, class, and ethnicity—are essential to the process of creating an identity. Although these categories are frequently regarded as permanent and natural, Bucholtz & Hall (2005) contend that language constructs and preserves these categories. Talking about these categories and using language in connection with them shapes social understandings and either reinforces or challenges the power dynamics that are already in place (Ridgeway, 2009).

Let us examine an illustration of how identity (macro-level demographic) may be performed.

Saya sendiri adalah guru jadi ini adalah introspeksi bersama.

By stating his occupation, Guru Gembul is not simply providing factual detail. He is performing his social class through this identification. Teachers typically have college degrees and specialized training. This places them above manual laborers who might not require such qualifications. Being a teacher carries a certain degree of social status and is respected within many societies. This performance has several implications: (1) Teachers are often seen as experts in education. Guru Gembul's identification potentially positions him as someone with valuable insights into the challenges faced by the system; (2) His social class, associated with higher education and training, lends him a certain degree of credibility and authority within the discourse and; (3) However, by framing the issue as "joint introspection," Guru Gembul acknowledges that addressing educational problems requires a collective effort, not just individual responsibility. This potentially transcends a purely self-serving performance of social class and opens the door for a broader discussion.

This finding aligns with other resources in his work on class structure, emphasizing how occupations shape access to resources and social mobility (Engels, 2010). Guru Gembul's position as a teacher demonstrates this point. In addition, Fairclough's work explores how language reflects and constructs social identities and power dynamics. The way Guru Gembul identifies himself as a teacher can be seen as a way of exercising and legitimizing power within the educational discourse. The finding is also relevant to the Gee (2014) understanding of how the teacher's self-identification functions within the broader educational and social context.

b. Local, ethnographically specific cultural positions

Local, ethnographically specific cultural positions in Discourse Analysis refer to the ways people in a particular culture use language to reflect their unique experiences, values, and beliefs. It's about understanding how language both shapes and is shaped by a specific cultural context (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009).

In the context of the script about teachers in Indonesia, here's how it applies:

"Pada dasarnya rakyat Indonesia itu menganggap guru itu sebagai sesuatu yang sakral, sesuatu yang suci, sesuatu yang benar-benar tinggi bahkan di masa hindu-budha dan Islam itu guru itu statusnya di atas raja-raja dan bangsawan begitu sempat misalkan ada konflik antara para guru para pendeta dengan raja diantaranya adalah pas zaman Raja Kertajaya. Rakyat langsung berpihak kepada siapapun yang memusuhi Kertajaya karena Kertajaya dianggap tidak sopan kepada gurunya. Begitu ceritanya di masa lalu itu seperti itu kemudian ketika kita masuki zaman Islam".

The use of words like "sakral" (sacred), "suci" (holy), and "tinggi" (high) emphasizes the elevated status of teachers. These words are usually associated with religious figures, deities, or concepts considered sacred. By using them for teachers, the speaker emphasizes their elevated status and the reverence accorded to them in Indonesian culture. It could be argued that this word choice deviates beyond mere description and instead enters the domain of metaphorical language. By drawing comparisons between teachers and holy objects, the speaker is employing a metaphor to boost the status of educators.

The finding aligns with Gumperz (1982) which discussed how discourse strategies are influenced by cultural norms and social contexts. His work can provide insights into how the sacred status of teachers in Indonesian culture

is communicated and maintained through language. This kind of discourse analysis does more than merely analyze word meanings. It explores the social criticism that is ingrained in the vocabulary. The speaker is probably attempting to convey the value of treating teachers with respect and the traditional veneration that they enjoy in Indonesian society by employing these strong terms

c. Temporary and Interactionally Specific Stances and Participant Roles

Temporary and interactionally specific stances and participant roles refer to the positions individuals take and the ways they interact within a specific conversation or text (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005).

1. Temporary: these stances and roles are not permanent identities. They are adopted for the duration of the interaction and can be fluid, changing as the conversation progresses.
2. Interactionally Specific: these stances and roles are shaped by the specific context of the interaction. The participants' relationship with each other, the topic of discussion, and the power dynamics at play all influence how they position themselves and interact.

Guru Gembul, a self-proclaimed teacher, adopts various stances and roles throughout the speech to convey his message and engage with the audience. Guru Gembul begins by acknowledging the overall poor quality of education in Indonesia, citing international studies and national assessments.

"Kita harus mengakui juga fakta bahwa guru-guru di Indonesia itu memiliki kualitas yang tidak baik, sampai seberapa jauh tidak baiknya. Pertama, PISA dari sebuah lembaga internasional itu sering menyebut bahwa Indonesia itu adalah negara dengan sistem pendidikan terburuk di dunia nomor 1, Nomor 2, dan nomor 3".

When saying "PISA" the speaker adopts a critical stance, questioning the quality of education in Indonesia by citing international assessments like PISA. The speaker uses PISA's well-established reputation as an indicator for assessing Indonesia's educational system. This bolsters their case while also subtly criticizing the faults of the Indonesian system in comparison to other systems.

"...apa yang membuat guru di Indonesia nampak kurang profesional atau kurang baik kualitasnya itu adalah sistem rekrutmen kita yang salah sistem kita dalam merekrut itu yang salah dari mana kesalahannya dimulainya dari universitas".

By using phrases like "wrong" and "mistake," Guru Gembul delegitimizes the existing system and implies a need for change. By emphasizing the "mistake," Guru Gembul creates an urgency for change. He positions himself as an advocate for a more effective teacher recruitment system that would ultimately benefit both teachers and students.

The use of "wrong" suggests that the current system is not just ineffective but also potentially unfair. This could resonate with the audience who might believe qualified candidates are being overlooked. Gumperz's work on contextualization cues explains how speakers signal their stances and roles in conversation (Gumperz, 1982). This is relevant for understanding the specific linguistic strategies Guru Gembul employs to convey his critique

Guru Gembul's Ideology Toward the Quality of Teachers in Indonesia

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a powerful tool used to examine how language reflects and perpetuates ideologies related to power, inequality, and prejudice. Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional model provides a structured approach to analyzing discourse by examining text, discourse practice, and sociocultural practice. Previous research also emphasized that the approach suggested by Fairclough is regarded as the most methodical and thorough analytical technique in critical discourse analysis (Yang, 2023). This framework allows researchers to uncover how language use shapes and is shaped by social structures and power relations. This analysis will explore the ideologies embedded in the "Guru Gembul" video transcript, emphasizing the connections to the previous studies

a. Authority and Control in Educational Discourse

Text:

"Hal pertama yang ingin saya sampaikan adalah permohonan maaf kalau misalkan judul yang saya pilih dianggap terlalu tendensius atau provokatif tetapi bagaimanapun yang saya pahami adalah hal atau langkah pertama yang harus kita lakukan untuk memperbaiki diri adalah dengan sadar bahwa kita memang melakukan kesalahan".
"Administrasi mengajar itu 2 rim Baraya Satu tahun itu 2 rim, harus bikin kayak gitu Nah kalau misalkan bisa memenuhi kayak gitu, berarti baraya Ya harus meninggalkan kelas demi untuk bisa menyusun administrasi itu"

Interpretation:

- "langkah pertama yang harus kita lakukan"* - Implies an imperative or command.
- "memperbaiki"* - Suggests a normative standard for behavior.
- " harus bikin kayak gitu"* - Direct command indicating necessity.
- "baraya ya harus meninggalkan"* - Implies a forced choice or action.

Guru Gembul's directives underscore a power dynamic where the speaker assumes authority to guide the audience's actions. This aligns with Avelino (2021) discussion on how power structures are perpetuated through individuals acting as vehicles of power. By framing self-improvement and administrative duties as obligations, the discourse reinforces a hierarchy where the speaker's perspective is positioned as superior and authoritative. The imposition of administrative tasks on teachers further illustrates a coercive power dynamic, reflecting structural power mechanisms that dictate individual actions and maintain existing power relations by prioritizing bureaucratic over pedagogical responsibilities.

b. Prejudicial Narratives in Teacher and Education Evaluation

Text:

"kita harus mengakui juga fakta bahwa guru-guru di Indonesia itu memiliki kualitas yang tidak baik".
"PISA dari sebuah lembaga internasional itu sering menyebut bahwa Indonesia itu adalah negara dengan sistem pendidikan terburuk di dunia".
"saya bilang kurikulum Merdeka itu enggak ngaruh apapun karena apa karena dibawa atau akar rumput guru-guru akan mengajar dengan cara yang sama".

Interpretation:

- "mengakui"* - Suggests an acknowledgment of an undesirable truth.
- "kualitas yang tidak baik"* - Negative evaluation.
- "sering menyebutkan"* - Repeated authoritative claim.
- "negara dengan sistem pendidikan terburuk"* - Superlative negative judgment.
- "enggak ngaruh apapun"* - Negative outcome.

Guru Gembul's assertions involve a prejudicial stance towards Indonesian teachers and the education system. The statement about poor quality teachers frames them as deficient, aligning with Bergh & Brandt (2023), who explores how perceived ideologies influence prejudicial attitudes towards social groups. By acknowledging this "poor quality," the discourse legitimizes negative stereotypes and perpetuates a narrative that undermines the professional dignity of teachers.

Referencing PISA adds weight to the claim of educational inadequacy, reinforcing a prejudicial view of Indonesian education. Waldfogel et al. (2021) discuss how exposure to evidence of inequality can lead to motivated reasoning that supports existing biases. Here, the use of authoritative data perpetuates a negative stereotype and discourages a nuanced understanding of the challenges faced by the Indonesian education system.

Critiques of new curricular initiatives reflect a prejudicial view toward educational reforms, suggesting systemic inefficacy. Munandar et al. (2021) highlight how language can construct and perpetuate ideologies. Here,

the failure narrative perpetuates a belief in the ineffectiveness of reforms, potentially discouraging innovative efforts and maintaining the status quo of educational practices.

c. **Economic Disparities and Teacher Compensation**

Text: "gajinya kecil..."

"kecil" - Insufficient.

Low salaries for teachers illustrate economic inequality, underscoring the disparity between the responsibilities teachers bear and their financial compensation. This highlights a structural inequality where educators are undervalued. Waldfogel et al. (2021) discuss the economic aspect of inequality, showing how financial compensation (or lack thereof) reflects and perpetuates social hierarchies and economic disparities. The low salaries signify a broader societal undervaluing of the teaching profession, despite teachers' crucial role in shaping future generations. This economic disparity not only affects the teachers' standard of living but also impacts their motivation and ability to perform their duties effectively, thereby perpetuating a cycle of educational inadequacy and social inequality.

In the end, when analyzed through Fairclough's model, Guru Gembul's video reveals how language perpetuates ideologies related to power, inequality, and prejudice. These themes are intricately tied to the previous studies, demonstrating how discourse not only reflects but also sustains social hierarchies and biases.

Social Relationships among Guru Gembul's Commentators

Individuals' communication decisions in social interactions have a big influence on communication events, especially when it comes to the teaching and learning process, which goes on both inside and outside of the classroom. Their problematic behaviors and the existence of equal or unequal status may have had an impact on their relationships, which differed based on the circumstances and individuals involved. A research method called Critical Conversation Analysis examines how social power, abuse, dominance, and inequality appear in the comments of Guru Gembul's video.

A contemporary approach to analyzing language and communication within social organizations is presented by van Dijk (1995). This approach makes use of critical linguistics and poststructuralist discourse theory to investigate how written and spoken texts in communities, schools, and other settings shape social connections, identity, knowledge, and power. This approach will be used as a method to examine and analyze netizens' comments in Guru Gembul's video.

Based on the opinions, statements, and comments from netizens, the findings show that in recent years, Indonesia has faced significant challenges in its education system, particularly concerning the declining performance of teachers. Some comments from netizens have been chosen and highlighted below:

Comment 1:

"Sampai kiamat pun simtem tetap saja pendidikan kita demikian adanya. Tapi insyaAllah sy yakin dengan perbaikan yg di lakukan pk Nadiem skrng contoh KM itu sedikit lain akan jadi perbaikan di masa yg akan datang,asalkan GURU mendukung kebijakan Pemerintah khususnya kemendikbudristek. Salam dari guru honor di pelosok Negeri"

Based on the comment above, the commentators said that he agreed with Guru Gembul's statement stating that education in Indonesia was less effective. Also, it can be concluded He said and hoped that the education minister, Mr. Nadim, could improve the pattern in the education sector. The commentator believes that one day the education system in Indonesia will reach remote areas and can be enjoyed by all groups. The comment above is considered as a statement of agreement between Guru Gembul as a YouTuber and someone who comments, so in this case, it shows that there is a social relationship between Guru Gembul and his audience.

Comment 2:

“Makasih sharing ilmunya ...Sy guru yang sengaja menghantarkan anak didik menjadi lebih baik dari segi kecerdasan emosional, intelektual,dan spiritual berbekal cinta kasih sayang serta ilmu semasa kuliah, pelatihan , dan tetep berusaha menjadi figur otoritas untuk anak didik dengan segala kekurangan tunjangan dari pemerintah tetep mengupdate pengetahuan terkini ... Panggilan jiwa sih ... Memberi dan berbagi ilmu yg baik.. yaaa level kesadaran individu gurunya juga sih ... Semoga sistem pendidikan Indonesia lebih baik...”

Based on the comment above, it shows that there is self-awareness from the teacher himself to be better in the future. Also, when the commentator mentions that he shows the absence of benefits commensurate with the sacrifices he makes, in this case, there is also a social relationship with Guru Gembul that one of the factors of teachers in Indonesia are ineffective in terms of education is when the allowance which is the right of a teacher cannot be received properly or not balanced with what has been sacrificed.

Comment 3:

“Saya seorang siswa SMA. Di sekolah saya ada seorang guru yang menurut saya sangat tidak bertanggungjawab terhadap profesinya. Kerjaannya cuma kasih tugas, menjelaskan materipun sangat singkat, paling dari dua jam pelajaran hanya 15 menit yang digunakan untuk menjelaskan (itupun tidak ada yang masuk di otak). Waktu yang tersisa blio gunakan buat main hp”.

Based on the comment above, it shows that the commentators emphasized that he as a student did not really respect the way and pattern of teachers in carrying out their duties in the class, which means that he as a student strongly disagrees with the pattern given by his teacher, namely by only giving assignments which according to students is less effective in the teaching and learning process. In this case, it is very clear that the relationship and statements agree with what has been expressed by Guru Gembul and the students who commented. Finally, by considering these findings, these can be used to explore the possible factors contributing to the decline and implications for educational outcomes in the country.

Factors Contributing to Decline:

1. **Teacher Salaries and Incentives:** One of the primary factors influencing teacher performance is inadequate compensation and lack of sufficient incentives. Many teachers in Indonesia are paid below the living wage, leading to low morale and reduced motivation to perform at their best.
2. **Teacher Training and Professional Development:** There is a noticeable gap in continuous professional development opportunities for teachers. Outdated teaching methods and a lack of training in modern pedagogical approaches hinder their ability to engage students effectively.
3. **Workload and Class Sizes:** High teacher-student ratios and excessive administrative duties contribute to burnout among teachers. This results in diminished instructional quality and limited individualized attention for students.
4. **Infrastructure and Resources:** Many schools in Indonesia lack basic infrastructure, including classrooms, teaching materials, and technology. This scarcity affects teaching quality and limits innovative teaching practices.
5. **Educational Policy and Governance:** Inconsistent policy implementation and bureaucratic inefficiencies within the education system create challenges for teachers. Unclear guidelines and frequent changes in curriculum disrupt continuity in teaching and learning processes.

Implications for Educational Outcomes:

1. **Student Achievement:** The declining performance of teachers correlates with stagnating or deteriorating student achievement levels across various subjects and grade levels.
2. **Equity in Education:** Disparities in teacher quality exacerbate existing inequalities in educational access and outcomes, particularly for marginalized and rural communities.

3. Global Competitiveness: As education increasingly becomes a driver of economic competitiveness, Indonesia's ability to produce a skilled workforce may be compromised by the underperformance of its teachers.

Addressing the declining performance of teachers in Indonesia requires a multifaceted approach that addresses systemic issues related to compensation, training, workload, infrastructure, and governance. By investing in its educators, Indonesia can improve educational outcomes and better prepare its youth for future challenges and opportunities

CONCLUSION

The analysis of Guru Gembul's video highlights several key issues contributing to the poor quality of teachers in Indonesia. The research identifies insufficient salaries, inadequate teacher training, heavy workloads, and poor infrastructure as primary factors undermining teacher performance. Additionally, inconsistent educational policies and bureaucratic inefficiencies exacerbate these challenges, creating an environment where teachers struggle to deliver effective education. This critical discourse analysis sheds light on how societal and systemic factors perpetuate educational shortcomings and affect teachers' morale and effectiveness.

Through examining netizen comments on Guru Gembul's video, it becomes evident that these issues are widely recognized and criticized by the public. Comments reflect a consensus on the need for better compensation, professional development, and support for teachers. The study underscores the importance of addressing these fundamental issues to improve the quality of education in Indonesia. By critically analyzing the discourse surrounding these challenges, the research provides valuable insights into the systemic changes required to enhance teacher quality and, consequently, educational outcomes in Indonesia.

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