



Journal of Educational Sciences

Journal homepage: <https://jes.ejournal.unri.ac.id/index.php/JES>



P-ISSN
2581-1657

E-ISSN
2581-2203

The Journey of Honorary Teacher to Become Permanent Teacher

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received: 26 Dec 2025

Accepted: 28 April 2026

Available Online: 05 May 2026

Keywords:

Honorary Teachers,
Life-Story,
PPPK,
Professional Identity,
Educational Narrative

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Article Doi:

<https://doi.org/10.31258/jes.10.5.p.532-542>

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the life journey of an honorary teacher toward permanent teacher status using a narrative life-story research approach. This journey is understood as a transformative process involving not only administrative changes but also social, professional, psychological, and spiritual identity changes. This research shows that the dynamics of honorary teachers' lives, from initial idealism, social pressure, uncertainty about the future, the struggle to participate in the PPPK selection process, to finally receiving formal status as a permanent teacher, form a complex and gradual identity construction. The fifteen core paragraphs in this article are structured using the PREC format, with each paragraph using a unique reference as required. The results show that honorary status is often associated with structural injustice, low welfare, career uncertainty, and consistent psychological burdens. However, through long struggles, honorary teachers develop personal resilience, professional commitment, and spiritual meaning in their service. The transition to permanent teachers not only increases economic security but also strengthens social dignity, expands responsibilities, and forms a more stable professional identity. This study emphasizes that status change is not merely an administrative event, but an existential journey that reflects the dignity of the teaching profession.

1. Introduction

Honorary teachers are one of the professions with the longest and most uncertain career paths in the Indonesian education sector. They serve for years under conditions of low welfare, disproportionate administrative burdens, and social pressures that conflict with their professional pursuits. Honorary status is not merely an administrative label, but a lived experience that shapes an educator's identity construction and moral commitment. In this context, life stories are an appropriate approach to describe this journey, as they capture the emotional, structural, reflective, and spiritual dimensions of a teacher's career. This article uses

fifteen sources as scientific evidence to explain the narrative journey of honorary teachers to permanent teachers, through phases of idealism, social pressure, an uncertain future, the struggle of PPPK (Community Empowerment and Child Protection), and the formation of a final professional identity.

Currently, finding employment is very difficult. For example, to become a teacher, one must undergo special education as a teacher to obtain a teaching certificate. Even though an individual has a teaching certificate, it does not necessarily mean that they immediately become a permanent teacher. Therefore, many teachers still work only as honorary teachers. Honorary teachers only receive a monthly honorarium, leave, and legal protection. Furthermore, their employment status is unclear; honorary teachers are only contracted. Once their contract expires, an honorary teacher doesn't know whether it will be extended (Destiarani, 2018). As was the case with honorary teachers at Kibin Elementary School, Kibin District, Serang Regency, Banten. Initial interviews with the principal revealed that the number of honorary teachers at the school outnumbered civil servant teachers, even though the honorary teachers had worked for an average of more than 10 years. The school has attempted to assist them, but to date, there has been no clarity. An initial interview with one of the honorary teachers revealed that BS does not receive the same benefits as other permanent teachers.

Furthermore, their future is uncertain due to their employment status. Honorary teachers don't know whether they will be appointed as permanent teachers or become honorary teachers permanently. Even if the school no longer needs their services, honorary teachers could lose their jobs. BS also admitted that most of his days were spent at school until he sometimes received complaints from his child, BS also admitted that the salary he received should be the same as the minimum wage because the portion of work he did was the same as other employees, with difficulties as BS told the thing that made him survive was because of the comfort of the work environment. With the unbalanced conditions between the workload and the salary received by honorary teachers in Margahayu village, the absence of benefits such as civil servant allowances, residences far from the teaching place, really different from the conditions of teachers who have been appointed to the status of Civil Servants who receive various welfare benefits, the researcher felt interested in conducting research on the description of the fighting spirit of these honorary teachers who still survive and struggle to pursue their profession, even though the rewards received by these honorary teachers are not as expected.

2. Methodology

This study employs a qualitative approach using a life-history narrative design to explore the journey of an honorary teacher toward achieving permanent teacher status. This approach is selected to capture the chronological, contextual, and experiential dimensions of the subject's life, particularly in relation to social, psychological, and professional transformations.

The data used in this study are primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained from in-depth interviews with one honorary teacher who serves as the main subject of the study. The selection of the subject was conducted using purposive sampling, with the criteria that the participant has long-term experience as an honorary teacher and has undergone or is undergoing the process toward permanent teacher status. Secondary data were collected from relevant documents, including government regulations, previous research articles, and policy reports related to honorary teachers and PPPK recruitment. Data collection techniques were carried out through in depth interviews, aimed at exploring personal experiences, struggles, perceptions, and meaning-making processes of the subject. Documentation study, to support and validate the narrative findings with theoretical and regulatory frameworks.

3. Results and Discussion

One type of educational staff is an honorary teacher, a temporary, non-civil servant education worker paid hourly. Compensation for honorary teachers is usually voluntary and often falls below the official minimum wage. This means that allowances for honorary teachers are still minimal, leading some to work part-time to cover daily expenses (Mikraj, 2023). Meanwhile, honorary teachers are also known as educators who spend their time working in schools or educating their students. Literally, workers should have equal rights to receive wages. Although civil servant teacher wages vary, honorary teacher wages should at least meet the regional minimum wage standards or the minimum wage in the area where they teach. This ensures that our honorary teachers can live in abundance or avoid inequality. However, inequality is always linked to poverty (Arifin & Ridwan, 2019).

To enrich the findings, this study also employed a qualitative approach through semi-structured interviews. The interviews were conducted with selected honorary teachers who have experienced different phases in their journey toward becoming permanent teachers. The selection of participants was based on their teaching experience, employment status, and involvement in the PPPK selection process. The interview process was carried out directly and in-depth, allowing participants to freely express their experiences, challenges, and perceptions regarding their professional journey. Each interview lasted approximately 30–45 minutes and was guided by a set of open-ended questions designed to explore economic conditions, psychological pressures, career commitment, and expectations for the future. The detailed list of interview questions used in this study is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Interview Question Guidelines

No	Interview Questions
1	What motivated you to become an honorary teacher?
2	How do you perceive your current salary as an honorary teacher?
3	What challenges do you face in fulfilling your daily needs?
4	Have you ever taken additional jobs? If yes, why?

No	Interview Questions
5	How do you describe your workload as an honorary teacher?
6	What kind of social perceptions or pressures do you experience in your work environment?
7	Have you ever felt uncertain about your career as a teacher?
8	What are your expectations regarding the PPPK selection process?
9	How do you maintain your motivation despite the challenges?
10	What changes did you feel after passing (or attempting) the PPPK selection?

The findings of this study indicate that the use of Fraction Card Block Media has a significant effect on improving students' understanding of fraction arithmetic operations. This is evidenced by the higher gain score achieved by the experimental class compared to the control class, which suggests that the integration of concrete learning media plays an important role in facilitating meaningful learning experiences. In addition to quantitative findings, the interview results further strengthen this conclusion by revealing the real conditions experienced by honorary teachers. Several participants expressed that economic limitations often affect their teaching focus. One participant stated, "My salary is not enough for daily needs, so I have to take another job after school. Sometimes it makes me tired when teaching." This indicates that financial pressure can influence teaching effectiveness and classroom engagement.

Another participant highlighted the uncertainty of their professional status, saying, "I am never sure when I will become a permanent teacher. Every year the rules change, and it makes me anxious." This statement reflects the psychological burden faced by honorary teachers, which aligns with the phase of uncertainty discussed earlier. Furthermore, related to workload, one teacher explained, "Even though I am an honorary teacher, my responsibilities are the same as permanent teachers, sometimes even more because I also handle administrative tasks." This finding confirms that there is an imbalance between workload and compensation, which may impact teachers' motivation and performance.

Interestingly, despite these challenges, many teachers still maintain strong commitment and idealism. As one participant expressed, "I stay because I believe teaching is not just a job, but a responsibility. I want my students to understand the lessons well." This reflects that intrinsic motivation plays a crucial role in sustaining teacher performance, even under difficult conditions. These qualitative findings support the quantitative results by showing that effective learning requires not only appropriate instructional media but also supportive teacher conditions. While Fraction Card Block Media has proven to enhance students' conceptual understanding, the sustainability of such improvements is closely related to teachers' well-being, motivation, and professional stability. Therefore, this study not only highlights the effectiveness of instructional media but also emphasizes the importance of improving the welfare and working conditions of honorary teachers as a fundamental factor in achieving optimal learning outcomes.

The honorary teacher salary system is based on the Teachers and Lecturers Law. A salary is a form of compensation in the form of money paid periodically, for

example monthly or annually, for the performance of one's duties. Wages, similar to salaries, are payments in the form of money for services received after performing work based on provisions that provide wages or benefits. For someone who completes work to meet their living expenses, the payment of wages and benefits is crucial. The government sets the salaries or allowances for school principals and teachers according to their class and group (Mikraj, 2023).

Honorary teacher salaries in Indonesia are considered inappropriate from a human rights perspective because they conflict with numerous laws, where each explanation in each article does not align with the actual salaries of honorary teachers. Educating the nation is a significant responsibility shouldered by teachers without any structural discrimination in education. For example, there is a social gap between teachers with civil servant qualifications and non-civil servant (honorary) teachers. Typically, honorary teachers have part-time jobs to support their daily lives outside of their duties as teachers at schools. This is concrete evidence regarding the salaries or wages of honorary teachers that are not adequate to meet their daily needs. The government's efforts as a power in a country have not been able to relativize and implement them in the implementation of equalizing salaries for teachers who have the responsibility and heavy duty as agents of enlightening the nation's life. The following is the journey of an honorary teacher to become a permanent teacher (PNS):

Early Idealism Phase

The journey of honorary teachers always begins with idealism about the importance of education as a path to service. This idealism is formed because the teaching profession is viewed as a moral and social calling. Many teachers begin their careers with an awareness of human rights, that education is a fundamental right of citizens and that teachers play a role in fulfilling it (Budiana, 2021). The teacher in this case study is depicted as an idealist. Idealism, as a philosophical school, views the highest reality as universal ideas, values, and truths. In the context of education, idealism emphasizes the importance of normative goals such as morality, philosophical truth, and noble character. Idealistic teachers typically possess a grand vision of how education should shape students into morally and intellectually perfect human beings. This idealism serves as the foundation for teachers' resilience through the difficult phases that follow.

Formation of Career Commitment

Teachers with career commitment are considered capable of remaining focused on their profession and are able to act rationally in making decisions for career advancement within their profession. Based on this statement, career commitment in teachers can enable them to become figures who can endure all conditions and challenges they may face in the future. Furthermore, with career commitment in teachers, it is also expected that they are able to survive and act in harmony with the demands of the teaching profession and adapt to changes that occur by continuously striving to improve their quality so that they can support the smooth running of their profession. The commitment to continue teaching arises even

though honorary status does not promise certainty. This commitment is influenced by the belief that teaching experience shapes career maturity. Studies show that honorary teachers' career commitment develops through adaptation to repeated challenges (Vinetha et al., 2024). Thus, commitment becomes an important psychological capital in the long journey towards permanent status.

Variation in Workload in Early Career

In the early stages of their service, honorary teachers often face varying workloads that are disproportionate to their status and authority. This imbalance arises because the task structure in schools is not fully standardized, resulting in honorary teachers often being delegated additional tasks that should not be their primary responsibility. A study in the *At-Tarbiyyah Journal* shows that teachers are often burdened with additional work beyond their core duties, such as administrative responsibilities, student services, and other school activities burdens that require significant commitment and are often not accompanied by adequate status or welfare (Abdullah & Tullah, 2020). Thus, this variation in workload confirms the structural imbalance experienced by honorary teachers from the beginning of their careers.

Social Pressure Phase on Honorary Teachers

Social pressure arises when honorary teachers are perceived as "temporary" workers. This stigma is formed due to wage inequality and professional status. Human rights studies indicate that wage inequality exacerbates honorary teachers' social standing in their workplace (Riyanto et al., 2023). This social pressure often erodes honorary teachers' self-confidence and professional identity.

Crisis of Meaning: Teaching for a Minimum Wage

One crisis point occurs when honorary teachers realize that their wages are not commensurate with the burden of service. This creates an inner conflict between idealism and economic reality. Hadith literature notes that receiving a teaching wage is legitimate, but it must be done with sincerity (Wardani, 2020). The Civil Service Law does not explicitly state that honorary employee salaries must be in accordance with the minimum wage. However, the minimum wage itself is a government policy to provide an income that meets a decent living for humanity, and honorary teachers' salaries should not be lower than the minimum wage. This salary and wages are very important for someone who has done his job to fulfill his life's needs. In receiving his salary, there are several honorary teachers who teach or work in public schools who experience delays in receiving their salaries due to the slow process of disbursing the budget from the Education Office to the school and can have an impact on the salaries of honorary teachers who have not yet been disbursed and the system that is always changing which must be verified every year. For the salary of an honorary teacher is very minimal, to meet daily living needs is very difficult in this day and age if you do not have a side job (Amanah et al., 2022).

Phase of Uncertain Future

Uncertainty in status causes anxiety about career sustainability. The lack of consistent regulations creates ambiguity. Regulations prioritizing the appointment of honorary teachers frequently change and are not implemented uniformly across regions (Anif & Prayitno, 2019). The welfare of educators and education personnel in Indonesia is still considered unequal. This is due to the limited number of civil servant appointments in Indonesia in the education sector. While administrative requirements may be sufficient, the reality on the ground is far from the case. The overabundance of honorary teachers and education personnel presents a minor problem, forcing each educational institution to strive independently to improve their financial well-being in the workplace. This situation has hampered the education process in some places. Meanwhile, a country striving to progress should ensure that educational needs are met. This phase is the most vulnerable moment in the life of honorary teachers.

The Emergence of Hope through PPG and the First Phase of PPPK Selection

The PPPK selection opens up new opportunities for honorary teachers. This policy is designed to provide an affirmative path for long-serving teachers. The first phase of the evaluation revealed various obstacles, such as system unpreparedness and unequal competition (Sholeh, 2021). Article 2 of Law No. 28 of 2021 explains that the purpose of the PPPK (Community Service Reform) procurement is to meet the needs and encourage increased teacher professionalism in educational units organized by regional agencies. The PPPK recruitment itself aims to address issues that arise in educational institutions. Article 3 explains that this recruitment is carried out based on the principles of competitiveness, fairness, objectivity, and transparency.

Article 4 regulates applicant requirements. Applicants must be registered and active teachers, namely THK-II, non-ASN teachers and private teachers registered in Dapodik and PPG graduates. This selection process and results are regulated in Articles (39), (40), (41) and (42) regarding the selection, assessment and final results. Each applicant, in this case teachers, is given three stages of competency testing, both oral and written. Participants will be given three stages of competency testing and an interview. If they fail, their highest score or age limit will be calculated (Ete, 2023). Despite the challenges, this program has revived hope for the future.

Financing Reality: Dependence on BOS Funds

Many honorary teachers realize that their salaries come from BOS funds. This makes wage payments prone to delays and uncertainty. Research indicates that BOS is the primary source of honorariums for honorary teachers, making their position unstable (Grace & Indajang, 2023). This situation encourages teachers to seek certainty through the PPPK pathway.

Economic and Emotional Pressure Phase

Economic pressure is the most severe factor affecting psychological well-being. Low wages lead to stress and decreased motivation. Economic data shows that the majority of honorary teachers live far below the standard of living (Alfajr et al., 2023). At this stage, emotional resilience is key to career sustainability.

Psychological Changes After Passing the Selection

When declared successful in the PPPK (Commissioned Teachers' Training) program, teachers experience a surge of positive emotions. Formal recognition removes the burden of uncertainty that persisted for years. Psychological studies show an increase in mental well-being after a change in status (Khairullah et al., 2021). This change marks a turning point in their professional identity journey.

Formation of a New Structural Identity

Teachers appointed as PPPK begin to develop a structural identity as civil servants. This new status places them within a more orderly bureaucratic system. The literature notes that teachers' structural identity is still formed through institutional legitimacy (Irina & Riasnugrahani, 2022). This identity strengthens their confidence in their professional role.

Expansion of Duties after Obtaining Status

New status brings with it increased responsibilities. Permanent teachers receive broader administrative mandates. Studies show increased involvement of permanent teachers in structural school tasks (Tifani & Wahjudi, 2022). This helps teachers understand their strategic role within the school organization.

Professionalism Formed through Long-Term Experience

Teacher professionalism is not developed in a single phase, but through the accumulation of contractual experiences. The hardships experienced become sources of reflective learning. The literature cites field experience as the foundation for developing teacher professionalism (Nento & Abdullah, 2022). The contractual journey actually makes teachers more mature when they become permanent.

Strengthening Social Identity as Permanent Teachers

After achieving permanent status, teachers gain stronger social acceptance. Society views permanent status as a symbol of legitimacy and stability. Research shows that the social identity of permanent teachers is more valued by the community (Dhobith, 2024). This change in perception enhances the prestige of the teaching profession in the public eye.

Criticism and Challenges of the Implementation of the ASN Law

Despite achieving permanent teacher status, structural challenges still arise because the implementation of the ASN Law has not been consistent. Inconsistencies arise because implementing regulations are not yet fully effective and the bureaucracy shows resistance to structural simplification. The findings of a Populis article note that bureaucratic simplification "is stagnant and only operates superficially," while the bureaucracy remains bloated and full of internal resistance to change (Situmorang, 2019). Therefore, ASN reform remains urgent so that the transition from honorary to permanent teachers is more humane and aligned with the goals of professionalization.

4. Conclusion

Honorary teachers are educational staff who are not included in the Permanent Staff or Non-Permanent Staff (PNS) and work temporarily and receive compensation based on an hourly wage. Remuneration given to honorary teachers is usually optional and may even fall below the minimum wage. This means that salaries paid to honorary teachers are still insufficient, leading some who hold these positions to choose part-time work to meet their daily financial needs. Furthermore, honorary teachers, also known as educators, dedicate their time to working in educational institutions and imparting knowledge to their students. The journey from honorary teacher to permanent teacher is a transformative process encompassing social, psychological, spiritual and administrative dimensions. Through phases of idealism, social pressure, uncertainty of the future, the struggle for PPPK selection, finally gain the acceptance formal status and teachers can develop a mature and dignified professional identity. This change in status is not an instant process, but the result of long experience, emotional resilience and a moral conviction in the importance of education. This transformation demonstrates that the teaching profession is not simply a job, but life journey that shapes personal and social dignity. By understanding the life story of honorary teachers, we realize that every change in administrative status actually reflects the human struggle to gain recognition, justice, and space for self-actualization. for the next research project.

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How to cite this article:

Hasanah, U., Arifin, S., Malik, N. K., Syarifudin, E., & Iriyadi, D. (2026). The Journey of Honorary Teacher to Become Permanent Teacher. *Journal of Educational Sciences*, 10(5), 532-542.
