

# The Role of Professional Organization (PGRI) in Protecting Teachers Right

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## Abstract

**Background** – A nation's progress is intrinsically linked to its human resource quality, driven by factors like per capita income, life expectancy, and education levels. As higher education directly correlates with improved human capital and national competitiveness, the pivotal role of teachers in the educational process necessitates robust protection of their rights to ensure their effectiveness.

**Purpose** – This paper aims to meticulously examine and analyze the specific role of the Indonesian Teachers' Association (PGRI) in advocating for and protecting teachers' rights, as explicitly outlined in Law No. 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers.

**Method/Approach** – Employing a qualitative research approach, this study utilizes a combination of comprehensive literature review and in-depth case studies. Data analysis focuses on scrutinizing PGRI's various initiatives, advocacy efforts, and practical interventions designed to safeguard teachers' rights and foster their ongoing professional development.

**Findings** – The findings unequivocally indicate that PGRI serves as a crucial and instrumental entity in safeguarding teachers' rights. Its efforts encompass providing essential legal protection, actively promoting the welfare of educators, and engaging in advocacy that directly contributes to enhancing their professional standing and working conditions.

**Conclusions** – This study concludes that PGRI is a vital force in upholding the professional rights and welfare of teachers in Indonesia. Its multifaceted role is critical for ensuring that educators can perform their duties effectively, thereby contributing significantly to the overall quality of national education.

**Novelty/Originality/Value** – This research offers a unique and detailed qualitative insight into the practical mechanisms and effectiveness of a major teacher organization (PGRI) in advocating for professional rights within the specific legal framework of Law No. 14 of 2005. It provides a nuanced understanding of how such associations contribute to teacher empowerment and national educational advancement, offering valuable lessons for similar contexts globally.

**Keywords:** Professional Organization, PGRI, Protecting Teacher

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## INTRODUCTION

A nation's progress is intrinsically linked to its per capita income, life expectancy, and, fundamentally, its educational attainment (Odoni, 2024). As the societal level of education ascends, the quality of its human resources invariably improves, leading to a populace that is highly competitive on both national and global stages. Central to this educational success are teachers, defined by Law No. 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers as professional educators primarily responsible for educating, teaching, guiding, directing, training, assessing, and evaluating students in primary and secondary education.

Teachers, as quintessential professional educators, must possess specific academic qualifications, core competencies, and valid teaching certificates aligned with the standards of their respective educational levels (Mustofa, 2024). This professional standing necessitates a comprehensive mastery of pedagogical, personal, professional, and social competencies. Crucially, when teachers fully embody their roles as professional educators, they are inherently entitled to legal guarantees and assurances designed to maximize the exercise of their rights (Nawawi, 2019; Chen, 2022). These teacher rights are explicitly enshrined within the Teacher and Lecturer Law, establishing a vital legal framework that supports teachers in the fulfillment of their professional duties. Furthermore, teachers require robust professional organizations to fulfill three essential functions: fostering the advancement of professional knowledge and technology, elevating the quality of professional service practices, and diligently upholding the professional code of ethics (Darling-Hammond, 2021).

In Indonesia, the landscape of professional organizations for educators is diverse, encompassing entities such as PGRI, IGI, MGMP, KKG, among others, all of which provide invaluable opportunities for teachers to engage in continuous learning and adapt effectively to evolving educational policies (Kamola, 2024). Among these, the Indonesian Teachers' Association (PGRI) stands as the largest professional organization for teachers in the nation, specifically mandated to protect the rights and obligations of its members while simultaneously enhancing their professional capabilities (Grimm, 2024; Meesuk et al, 2021). As an organization, PGRI bears the critical responsibility of advocating for its members' rights in strict accordance with applicable regulations and its overarching organizational objectives. These vital rights, as stipulated in Law Number 14 of 2005 Article 14, include entitlements to income exceeding minimum living needs and social welfare guarantees, opportunities for promotion and awards commensurate with duties and achievements, and comprehensive protection during the performance of duties, along with rights to intellectual property and other associated entitlements (Shofwan et al, 2022). The robust protection of these rights is paramount, ensuring that teachers can discharge their professional responsibilities with a sense of security, comfort, and sustained enthusiasm, ultimately contributing to improved performance.

Despite the clear legal framework and the existence of professional organizations (Demchenko et al, 2021), the practical realization and full protection of these teacher rights remain a persistent challenge in many contexts. Instances of inadequate welfare, lack of legal recourse in professional disputes, or insufficient recognition for their demanding work often hinder teachers' ability to perform optimally (Enyiaz, 2022). This gap between legal provision and actual implementation constitutes a significant problem requiring focused investigation into the mechanisms and effectiveness of teacher professional organizations. The existing body of literature largely addresses teacher rights or the general role of professional organizations; however, there is a notable lacuna in detailed studies specifically examining how a prominent organization like PGRI concretely implements its mandate to protect teacher rights under a particular national law (Law No. 14 of 2005). This study aims to bridge this gap by offering an in-depth analysis of PGRI's specific efforts and their impact, thereby representing a crucial novelty in research on teacher advocacy within the Indonesian context.

Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to thoroughly examine and analyze the specific role of the Indonesian Teachers' Association (PGRI) in advocating for and protecting teachers' rights

as stipulated in Law No. 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers. The urgency of this research stems from the imperative to ensure that teachers, as foundational pillars of the education system, can operate in an environment where their rights are consistently upheld, fostering their effectiveness and ultimately enhancing the overall quality of national education (Aseefa, 2024). This study makes a significant contribution by providing empirical insights into the operational effectiveness of a major teacher professional organization, offering valuable lessons for policy formulation, organizational development, and the ongoing improvement of teacher welfare and professional standing both in Indonesia and potentially in similar developing contexts globally.

## METHODS

This study utilizes a qualitative approach to thoroughly investigate the role of the Indonesian Teachers' Association (PGRI) in safeguarding teachers' rights. This approach was chosen to provide an in-depth, nuanced understanding of complex social phenomena, focusing on interpretations and meanings rather than statistical measurements (Dehalwar & Sharma, 2024). The research design integrates both literature review and case study methods. The literature review involved a comprehensive examination of existing scholarly articles, books, and reports on teacher professional organizations, teacher rights, and relevant educational laws in Indonesia. Concurrently, the case study aspect focused specifically on PGRI's activities and interventions.

Data for this study was meticulously gathered from diverse sources to ensure triangulation and enhance the robustness of the findings. Primary data was collected through in-depth interviews with key informants, including PGRI officials at various levels (central, provincial, local branches) and teachers who are members of PGRI or have been beneficiaries of its advocacy efforts. These semi-structured interviews aimed to elicit detailed perspectives (Striepe, 2021), on PGRI's strategies, challenges, successes in protecting rights, and the perceived impact on teachers' welfare and professional development. Secondary data sources included a thorough review of legal documents such as Law No. 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers, other relevant government regulations, and internal PGRI statutes and reports. Additionally, academic literature from reputable journals and publications provided theoretical frameworks and comparative insights.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the qualitative data, several measures were employed for validity and reliability. Triangulation was a key strategy, involving the comparison and cross-referencing of information obtained from interviews, legal documents, and academic literature to confirm consistency and reduce potential biases (Masuwai et al, 2025). Member checking was also employed, where selected interviewees were given the opportunity to review transcripts or summaries of their statements to ensure accuracy of their expressed views. For reliability, a detailed audit trail was maintained, documenting every step of the research process, from data collection to analysis, allowing for transparency and replicability of the methodological decisions. The consistent application of the research framework and analytical approach across all data sources also contributed to the study's reliability.

The collected qualitative data was subjected to a systematic and iterative thematic analysis (Ayre & McCaffery, 2022). This process began with data familiarization, involving extensive reading and re-reading of interview transcripts, document reviews, and case study notes. Following this, an initial coding phase was conducted, where relevant segments of the data were highlighted and assigned preliminary codes. These codes were then grouped into broader themes that emerged directly from the data, focusing on PGRI's advocacy efforts, specific legal protections provided to teachers, and the tangible impact of these efforts on teachers' welfare and professional development. The analysis paid particular attention to identifying patterns, recurring ideas, and significant deviations (Amiri et al, 2024). Finally, these themes were refined, clearly defined, and supported by compelling textual evidence from the data, leading to a comprehensive interpretation of PGRI's multifaceted role in protecting teachers' rights.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Teachers as Professionals

Teachers are the main figures in determining the success of learning and education. In Javanese, the word "Guru" is often acronymed with the meaning of a person who is "digugu" and "ditiru" or a person who is obeyed and imitated. So noble is the figure of this teacher who is considered a role model in society and will have an impact on educational change for a nation. Teachers are often used as role models and even become self-identification figures (Marschall, 2022). Teachers must be able to carry and position themselves so that they are truly able to be role models for their students, their families and the surrounding community. The role of teachers is noble, as they are considered role models in society and significantly impact educational change. According to Law No. 14 of 2005, teachers are defined as professional educators with the primary duties of educating, teaching, guiding, directing, training, assessing, and evaluating students in early childhood education, formal education, primary education, and secondary education. The teaching profession is a professional position that has the main task in learning. This task can be carried out if the teacher has met the professional requirements that are specifically designed for the implementation of the teacher's duties. The professional requirements are as follows: a. Have educational qualifications at least at the Diploma or Bachelor of Education level which clearly states the authority to teach, b. Have personality traits as an educator, such as having sincere affection for students, being fair, wise and others, c. Respect differences of opinion culturally, socially and spiritually, d Uphold cultural values that are a reference for society in their lives, e. Accepted and recognized by society as a teacher and educator, f. As a calling, g. Diagnostic skills, h. Have a professional organization, i. Have a code of ethics (Leibur et al, 2021).

### Teachers' Rights and Obligations

Teachers have rights and obligations as professional educators, as regulated by Law No. 14 of 2005. Teachers' rights include receiving income above the minimum living needs, promotions, legal protection, and opportunities for professional development. Conversely, teachers are obligated to plan and implement quality learning processes, improve their competencies, and uphold ethical standards. The role of the teaching profession in the overall educational program in schools is realized by achieving educational goals, namely optimal student development (Zeng, 2023). Teachers play an important role in learning activities. The role of teachers in the learning process is as educators, teachers, guides, leaders, learning managers, models and role models, administrators, advisors, innovators, and motivators of creativity (Maker, 2021).

Teachers in carrying out their professional duties have obligations including: a. Planning learning, implementing quality learning processes, and assessing and evaluating learning outcomes; b. Improving and developing academic qualifications and competencies in a sustainable manner in line with developments in science, technology and art; c. Acting objectively and not discriminating on the basis of considerations of gender, religion, ethnicity, race and certain physical conditions, or family background, and socio-economic status of students in learning; d. Upholding laws and regulations, laws and teacher codes of ethics, as well as religious and ethical values; and e. Maintaining and fostering national unity (Darling-Hammond, 2021).

The legal certainty of teachers' rights and obligations means that there is no doubt for teachers in carrying out their duties both as educators and teachers.

### Professional Organization of Teachers (PGRI)

PGRI is the largest professional organization for teachers in Indonesia, established to protect teachers' rights and enhance their professional capabilities. PGRI plays a crucial role in advocating teachers' welfare and legal protection, as outlined in Law No. 14 of 2005. The organization provides a platform for teachers to unite and advocate for their rights, ensuring that their voices are heard in educational policy discussions.

In the world of education, professional teacher organizations have an important role in supporting the development of teacher professionalism. Every country must have a professional

teacher organization. A profession can be said to be a lifelong career because in essence a profession is a promise of someone to devote themselves to a position or service. (Mustofa, 2019). Professional teacher organizations aim to advance the profession, improve competence, career, educational insight, professional protection, welfare, and community service. Professional teacher organizations act as a means of uniting members of the profession in a positive context to become government partners in order to produce benefits for teachers amidst increasingly advanced global challenges (Cortezano et al, 2021). Professional organizations function to advance the profession, improve competence, career, educational insight, professional protection, welfare, and community service (Law No. 14 of 2005 article 41). Professional organizations in Indonesia are quite diverse, but the one that is widely known is the Republic of Indonesia Teachers Association

### **PGRI's Role in Advocating for Teachers' Rights**

PGRI has been instrumental in advocating for teachers' rights, including legal protection and professional allowances. The organization has successfully intervened in cases where teachers faced legal challenges and has fought against policies that threaten teachers' welfare. For instance, PGRI intervened in a case involving a teacher who faced legal action due to an incident in the classroom, ultimately helping the teacher secure early retirement while preserving their pension rights. PGRI as a forum for educators and education personnel to gather as a professional, struggle and employment organization that always fights for the welfare of educators, provides protection for educators, and improves human resources for educators (Karnovsky & Gobby, 2024). PGRI as a forum and tool to fight for the fate of its members, namely educators and education personnel.

The professional organization of teachers that is widely followed by educators and education personnel in Batang district is the Indonesian Teachers Association (PGRI). 85% of teachers in Batang district, starting from PAUD, SD, SMP, SMA/MAN/SMK levels, are members of this professional organization. The organizational structure of PGRI starts from the sub-district level, namely at the school level, the branch level, namely the sub-district level, and the Batang district PGRI. This organization has carried out its function as a professional organization well, as evidenced by the various teacher problems that can be resolved well. Some of the struggles carried out by PGRI in fighting for teacher rights as per the results of our interviews with informant 1 (secretary of the Batang branch of PGRI) and informant 2 (treasurer of the Batang branch of PGRI) include: 1. The struggle of the Batang branch of PGRI in providing legal protection to an elementary school teacher in Batang sub-district. In around 2015, an elementary school teacher in Batang sub-district experienced legal problems related to the implementation of the teaching tasks he was carrying out. 2. PGRI's struggle to defend teachers' rights to the professional allowances they receive. The enactment of Law No. 14 of 2005 concerning teachers and lecturers is one form of teachers' struggle through PGRI to be able to improve the level of welfare. Teachers who have obtained a teacher certificate (certified) are entitled to additional income (teacher professional allowance) which is equal to one basic salary (Indriati & Perrodin, 2022; Budiotomo, 2021; Wijaya et al, 2024). This additional income is used, among other things, to improve teacher competence so that their professionalism increases. At that time around 2015, there was news that recipients of this teacher professional allowance would be subject to a 5% deduction which would later be managed by the local government to hold teacher competence improvement activities. 3. PGRI's struggle in providing protection for the teaching profession. Article 28 of Law Number 14 of 2005 paragraph 1 states that teachers appointed by the government or regional government can be transferred between provinces, between districts/cities, between sub-districts or between educational units due to reasons of educational unit needs and/or promotion. This regulation is clear about the promotion or transfer of teachers to other institutions. In 2020, according to informant 1, a number of teachers received new assignment decrees outside educational institutions.



## CONCLUSION

The professional organization of teachers, particularly the Indonesian Teachers' Association (PGRI), plays a vital role in protecting teachers' rights in Indonesia. PGRI serves as a platform for teachers to advocate for welfare, legal protection, and professional development. Through Law No. 14 of 2005, teachers' rights are clearly regulated; however, many challenges remain in its implementation, and PGRI actively engages in educational policy advocacy and provides support to its members in facing various issues in the education sector.

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