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AN EVALUATION OF THE FREE EDUCATION PROGRAM  
IN PALEMBANG CITY  
INDONESIA

BAMBANG APRIADY LOENETO



05-4506832



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THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT  
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
(EDUCATIONAL MEASUREMENT)

FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT  
SULTAN IDRIS EDUCATION UNIVERSITY

2017



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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to evaluate the implementation of the Free Education Program (FEP) in Palembang, Indonesia that has been implemented since 2009. The population of the study was all the 22 public senior high schools in Palembang. The sample consisted of 14 school heads, 33 members of school management teams, and 150 teachers in the 14 schools. School heads and school management teams were chosen through purposive sampling, while teachers were chosen via stratified random selection. The research design used a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches involving questionnaire, interview protocol, and document analysis. The findings show that FEP is actually a funding policy from the province and the city government in addition to the existing School Operational Funding Assistance (BOS) and a one-off fund granted upon application from the central government. Respondents perceived that the overall fund was insufficient to run the school activities. Several issues regarding the implementation include mismatch between the governor's regulation and schools' understanding of the program, absence of school management team that oversees FEP, and late payment. The FEP fund was used together with BOS and other funds to carry out school activities. Therefore, it is almost impossible to measure the outcomes and impact of FEP on education separately. It is recommended that the Provincial Government of South Sumatra and Palembang City Government be fully committed to the goal of FEP and distribute the fund on time. The study provides insight about the implementation of the FEP, issues encountered in its implementation, and opportunity for the provincial government to review the policy. For further study, the evaluation of FEP can be conducted in all types of school at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels to provide a thorough and comprehensive evaluation of the program.





## **PENILAIAN PROGRAM PENDIDIKAN PERCUMA DI BANDARAYA PALEMBANG, INDONESIA**

### **ABSTRAK**

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk menilai pelaksanaan Program Pendidikan Percuma (PPP) di Palembang, Indonesia yang telah dilaksanakan semenjak 2009. Populasi kajian ialah kesemua 22 sekolah menengah atas negeri di Palembang. Sampel kajian terdiri daripada 14 orang pengetua sekolah, 33 ahli pasukan pengurusan sekolah, dan 150 orang guru daripada kesemua 14 sekolah tersebut. Pengetua dan pasukan pengurusan sekolah dipilih melalui kaedah pensampelan bertujuan, manakala guru dipilih melalui kaedah rawak berstrata. Rekabentuk kajian ini menggunakan kombinasi pendekatan kuantitatif dan kualitatif melibatkan soal selidik, protokol temu bual, dan analisis dokumen. Dapatan menunjukkan bahawa PPP sebenarnya ialah satu dasar bantuan kewangan daripada kerajaan negeri dan kerajaan tempatan sebagai tambahan kepada Bantuan Operasi Sekolah (BOS) dan bantuan hibah yang diberi melalui permohonan, daripada kerajaan pusat. Responden berpendapat peruntukan yang diterima tidak mencukupi untuk menjalankan aktiviti sekolah. Beberapa isu tentang pelaksanaan termasuklah ketidakselarasan antara peraturan gabenor dengan kefahaman sekolah tentang program ini, ketiadaan pasukan pengurusan sekolah yang mengawasi PPP, dan pembayaran yang lewat diterima. Peruntukan PPP digunakan bersama-sama dengan BOS dan dana lain untuk menjalankan aktiviti sekolah. Oleh itu, adalah hampir mustahil untuk mengukur hasil dan impak PPP kepada pendidikan secara berasingan. Dicadangkan agar kerajaan negeri Sumatera Selatan dan Bandaraya Palembang komited terhadap tujuan PPP dan mengagihkan peruntukan tepat pada masanya. Kajian ini memberi gambaran tentang pelaksanaan PPP, isu yang dihadapi dalam pelaksanaannya, serta peluang untuk kerajaan negeri menyemak semula dasar ini. Bagi kajian selanjutnya, penilaian PPP boleh dijalankan di semua jenis sekolah di peringkat pendidikan rendah, menengah rendah dan tertiar untuk mendapatkan penilaian yang menyeluruh dan komprehensif bagi program ini.



## CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
<b>DECLARATION OF ORIGINAL WORK</b>	ii
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</b>	iii
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	iv
<b>ABSTRAK</b>	v
<b>CONTENTS</b>	vi
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>	xi
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	xiv
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATION</b>	xv
<b>LIST OF APPENDICES</b>	xvi
<b>CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION</b>	
1.1 Background and Rationale	1
1.2 Free Education Program (FEP)	3
1.3 School Funding Sources	12
1.4 Statement of the Problem	21
1.5 Conceptual Framework	23
1.6 Objectives of the Study	27
1.7 Research Questions	28
1.8 Significance of the Study	29
1.9 Limitation of the Study	29

1.10	Definition of Key Terms	30
1.11	Summary	32

## CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1	Introduction	33
2.2	Program Evaluation	34
2.3	Types of Evaluation	54
2.4	Evaluation Models	58
2.4.1	Simulation Model	58
2.4.2	An Input-Output Model	59
2.4.3	A Micro-Economic Model	60
2.4.4	A Macro-Economic Model	60
2.4.5	A Statistical Model	61
2.4.6	Responsive Evaluation Model	62
2.4.7	Goal-Free Evaluation Model	66
2.5	Evaluation Model of CIPP	70
2.6	Program Activities that Can Use FEP Fund	78
2.7	<i>Bantuan Operasional Sekolah</i> – School Operational Funding Assistance	87
2.8	Educational National Standards	90
2.9	Educational Improvement Initiatives in Other Countries	95
2.9.1	Education in the United States of America	95
2.9.2	Education in Malaysia	101
2.9.3	Education in Singapore	103
2.9.4	Education in China	105

2.9.5 Education in Japan	106
2.9.6 Education in South Korea	111
2.9.7 Education in Belgium	113
2.9.8 Education in Netherlands	113
2.9.9 Education in Hungary	114
2.9.10 Education in Poland	114

### CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction	115
3.2 Evaluation Design	116
3.2.1 CIPP Model	116
3.2.2 Combine Method (Quantitative and Qualitative)	117
3.3 Population and Sampling	118
3.4 Instrumentation	119
3.4.1 Interview Protocol	119
3.4.2 Questionnaire	122
3.5. Pilot Study	123
3.6 Data Collection Procedure	129
3.6.1 Data Collection Schedule	131
3.7 Data Analysis and Interpretation	132
3.7.1 Data Analysis	132
3.7.2 Data Interpretation	136
3.8 Data Triangulation	137
3.9 Ethics of Conduct of the Evaluation	138
3.10 Conclusion	139

## CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1	Introduction	139
4.2	Context Evaluation	141
4.2.1	The Target Population	141
4.2.2	The Goals	158
4.2.3	The Needs of the Schools	167
4.3	Input Evaluation	187
4.3.1	Sort-Term and Long-Term Plans	187
4.3.2	Procedures to Attain the Goals and Program Activities	210
4.3.3	Program Activities That Can Use FEP Fund	215
4.4	Process Evaluation	219
4.4.1	Scheduling of Activity	220
4.4.2	Resource Utilization	226
4.4.3	How Schools Actually Utilized Their Resources	227
4.4.4	Commitment of the Personnel in Carrying out the Activities	236
4.4.5	Monitoring of FEP	237
4.5	Product Evaluation	245
4.5.1	Student Enrolment	246
4.5.2	Student Participation Rates	247
4.5.2	Number of Teachers	249
4.6	Summary	250
4.6.1	Context Evaluation	250
4.6.2	Input Evaluation	254

4.6.3	Process Evaluation	255
4.6.4	Product Evaluation	257
4.7	Interaction between Input, Process, and Product in the Context of FEP Needs	258

## CHAPTER 5 SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1	Summary	262
5.2	Discussion	270
5.3	Recommendations	279
5.4	Implications	280
5.5	Conclusions	281





## LIST OF TABLES

Number of Tables	Page
1.1 Revision of SSP Regional Regulation	6
1.2 Trend of Public and Private Student Enrolment by Provinces in Sumatra for General Secondary Schools, 2007/2008 – 2009/2010	10
1.3 Number of Repeaters, by Sex, Grade, and Province in 2013/2014	18
1.4 Number of Dropout Students of Each Province	18
3.1 Data Collection Schedule	131
4.1 Vision and Mission of Excellent and Non-excellent Schools	145
4.2 Summary of Interview on Student Enrolment	148
4.3 Student Quota for the School	150
4.4 Total Number of Students	153
4.5 Selection of Students for FEP Funding	153
4.6 Student Socio-Economic Background	155
4.7 The Goal of FEP as Perceived by the School Heads	163
4.8 The Goal of FEP as Perceived by the School Management Teams	165
4.9 School Activities and Funding Sources from 2010 to 2014	179
4.10 The Fund the Schools Receive	181
4.11 School Resources	183
4.12 School Facilities	184
4.13 Number of Teachers	185



4.14	Program Planning	192
4.15	Program Planning according to the School Management Teams	194
4.16	Strategy Plan to Achieve the School Missions	196
4.17	SWOT Analysis	198
4.18	Medium-Term Work Plan (Four-Year) SMA Negeri I Palembang 2011-2011 – 2014-2015	201
4.19	School Support	212
4.20	Information about School Program	213
4.21	Summary of Interview with the School Heads on the FEP Goal	214
4.22	Education Budget Planner	217
4.23	Plan Program	218
4.24	Program Activity Plan according to the School Heads	221
4.25	Program Activity Plan according to the School Management Team Members	224
4.26	Number of Teachers	229
4.27	Needed SMA Subject Teachers	231
4.28	Number of Textbooks Used	233
4.29	How Students Get Their Textbooks	235
4.30	Frequency of Textbooks Use in Classroom	235
4.31	Summary of Interview with the School Management Teams on Execution of Activity	239
4.32	Organizing or Executing the FEP Activity by the School Heads	241
4.33	Monitoring of the FEP Activity	242
4.34	How to Evaluate the Activity	244
4.35	Student Enrolment 2008 - 2014	246
4.36	Gross Participation Rate of 2007 - 2013	248

4.37	Net Participation Rate of 2007 - 2013	248
4.38	Number of Teachers 2008 - 2014	249
4.39	Interaction between Input, Process, Product in the Context of FEP Needs	259
5.1	Gas and Oil Products from 2010 to 2014	272



## LIST OF FIGURES

Number of Figure	Page
1.1 Structure of the Indonesian Education System	2
1.2 Organizational Structure of FEP Implementation	11
1.3 Conceptual Framework of FEP Implementation Using CIPP Model	26
2.1 Hierarchy of Program Evaluation Evidence	35
2.2 Direct and Indirect Model	49
2.3 Evaluation Hierarchy	55
3.1 Qualitative Data Analysis of Evaluation of the FEP Implementation	136
3.2 Convergence Model of Triangulation Model (Creswell & Clark, 2007:63)	138





## LIST OF ABBREVIATION

AENS	Agency of Educational National Standard
BALITBANGDA	<i>Badan Penelitian dan Pengembangan Daerah</i>
BOS	<i>Bantuan Operasional Sekolah</i>
CIPP	Context, Input, Process, and Product
ENS	Educational National Standard
FEP	Free Education Program
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDR	Indonesian Rupiah
MUBA	<i>Musi Banyu Asin</i>
SMAN	<i>Sekolah Menengah Atas Negeri</i>
SOFA	School Operational Funding Assistance
SOP	Standard Operational Procedure
SSP	South Sumatra Province
UU SISDIKNAS	<i>Undang-Undang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional</i>





## LIST OF APPENDICES

- A Excerpt of Governor's Regulation No. 31 of 2009
- B SSP Regional Regulation No. 3 of 2009
- C SSP Regional Regulation No. 16 of 2011
- D Excerpt of SSP Regional Regulation No. 17 of 2014
- E Regulation of the Mayor of Palembang No. 22 of 2011
- F Interview Protocol for School Heads
- G Checklist of School Activities and Funding Sources from 2010 to 2014
- H Interview Protocol with School Management Team
- I Summary Data of Interview with School Management Team
- J Teacher Questionnaire
- K Questionnaire for Teacher (Pilot Study)
- L Questionnaire for Student (Pilot Study)
- M Transcript of Interview with the School Head of SMAN 1 Palembang
- N Transcript of Interview with the School Head of SMAN 6 Palembang
- O Transcript of Interview with the School Head of SMAN 20 Palembang
- P Transcript of Interview with the Secretary of the Office of Education of South Sumatra Province





## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION



This section introduces the background and the rationale of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, limitation of the study, conceptual framework of the study, summary of the chapter, and definition of key terms used in this study.

#### 1.1 Background and Rationale

The Indonesian school system comprises basic education, secondary education, and higher education. Basic education consists of six years of Primary Schools and three years of Junior Secondary Schools, which were declared as Nine-Year Compulsory Education by the President of the Republic of Indonesia on May 2, 1994.





The secondary education consists of three years of schooling at General Senior Secondary Schools or Vocational Senior Secondary Schools.

In 1984 the Indonesian Government implemented the six-year-compulsory education for primary-school-age children (7-12 years old). This compulsory education meant that the pupils did not have to pay their school fee. And in 1994, the Nine Year Basic Education Program began to continue the compulsory education to the 13-15 year-old children. The following is the structure of the Indonesian education system.

School Age	Higher Education	Islamic S3 Program	S3 Program	Specialist 2 Program			
		Islamic S2 Program	S2 Program	Specialist 1 Program			
		Islamic S1 Program	S1 Program	D4 Program	D3 Program		
						D2 Program	
							D1 Program
		Middle Education	Islamic Senior Sec. School	Senior General Secondary School			Senior Voc. Sec. School
	Basic Education		Islamic Junior Sec. School	Junior Secondary School			
		Islamic Elemen. School	Elementary School				
Pre-school	Islamic Pre-school	Kindergarten					

Figure 1.1. Structure of the Indonesian Education System. Source: (translated) Ministry of National of Education, 2003







In July 2003, The Government of Indonesia enacted a new Law on National Education System. It imposes compulsory basic education, free of cost, for all Indonesian citizens, meaning that every seven to fifteen years old citizen shall have the right to receive basic education. Besides, it has important targets covering the expansion and equity, the improvement of quality and relevance, and the implementation of autonomy in higher education. In other words, all Indonesian citizens have access to education at all levels and all forms - formal, non-formal, as well as informal. In general, it provides educational rights and obligations for citizens, parents, community, and Government.

To sum up, the development of education in Indonesia is expected to provide more autonomy and responsibility to schools and to improve the education funding system efficiently, transparently, and accountably.



## 1.2 Free Education Program (FEP)

Free Education Program (hereinafter, FEP) is a policy proposed by the Governor of South Sumatra Province (hereinafter, SSP). It has been implemented since March 2009, decreed by the Governor's Regulation No. 31 of 2009 on Guideline of FEP Implementation in SSP (Attachment A). The SSP Regional Regulation was imposed to all over SSP to be implemented in every public and private school from primary to secondary schools (see Attachment B of the SSP Regional Regulation No. 3 of 2009). It is the government's commitment to support the program.





This Regulation was revised twice into the SSP Regional Regulation No. 16 of 2011 and SSP Regional Regulation No. 17 of 2014 (Attachments C and D).

The first revision of SSP Regional Regulation No. 3 of 2009 (p. 8) referred to the Article 11 of paragraphs (1) and (2) stating

- (1) *Dana Program Sekolah Gratis yang bersumber dari APBN dan APBD Provinsi disalurkan oleh Tim Management Program Sekolah Gratis Tingkat Provinsi langsung ke rekening sekolah/madrasah penerima.*
- (2) *Dana Program Sekolah Gratis yang bersumber dari APBD Kabupaten/Kota disalurkan oleh Tim Management Program Sekolah Gratis Tingkat Kabupaten/Kota langsung ke rekening sekolah/madrasah penerima.*

The English translation:



- (1) The Free Education Program fund derived from the State Budget and District/City Budget was directly distributed by the Provincial Management Team of Free Education Program to the bank account of the school/*madrasah* receiver.
- (2) Free Education Program fund derived from the District/City Budget was directly distributed by the District/City Management Team of Free Education Program the bank account of the school/*madrasah*.

In the SSP Regional Regulation No. 16 of 2011 (p.4), the above paragraphs were revised into the following:





- (1) *Dana Program Sekolah Gratis yang bersumber dari APBD Provinsi disalurkan langsung ke rekening sekolah oleh Pemerintah Provinsi untuk sekolah swasta, madrasah negeri/swasta, sedangkan untuk sekolah negeri non-madrasah dananya ditransfer ke kas daerah Kabupaten/Kota masing-masing.*
- (2) *Dana Program Sekolah Gratis yang bersumber dari APBD Kabupaten/Kota disalurkan oleh Pemerintah Kabupaten/Kota kepada masing-masing sekolah baik negeri maupun swasta dan madrasah negeri maupun swasta.*

The English translation:

- (1) The Free Education Program fund derived from the State Budget was directly distributed by the Provincial Government to the bank account of the private schools, public/private *madrasah*, and for non-*madrasah* public schools the FEP fund was transferred to each Regional Treasury of District/City.



- (2) The Free Education Program fund derived from the District/City Budget was distributed by the District/City Government to both public and private schools and *madrasah*.


However, the SSP Regional Regulation No. 17 of 2014 revised the SSP Regional Regulation No. 3 of 2009 for the second time effective 30 September 2014 concerning several articles and paragraphs. The revisions of the three regulations are given in Table 1 as follows.





Table 1.1

*Revision of SSP Regional Regulation*

Regulation No. 3 of 2009			Regulation No. 16 of 2011			Regulation No. 17 of 2014		
Chap	Article	Paragraph	Chap	Article	Paragraph	Chap	Article	Paragraph
I	1	1	I	1	remains	I	1	removed
		2			remains			remains
		3			remains			remains
		4			remains			remains
		5			remains			remains
		6			remains			remains
		7			remains			remains
		8			remains			remains
		9			remains			remains
		10			remains			remains
		11			remains			removed
		12			remains			removed
Regulation No. 3 of 2009			Regulation No. 16 of 2011			Regulation No. 17 of 2014		
Chap	Article	Paragraph	Chap	Article	Paragraph	Chap	Article	Paragraph
		13			remains			removed
		14			remains			remains
		15			remains			remains
		16			remains			remains
		17			remains			remains
		18			remains			remains
	2	II	remains	II	remains	II	2	remains
	3		remains		remains		3	remains
	2		remains		remains			remains
	1		remains		remains		4	remains
	2		remains		revised			
	3		remains		revised			
III	5	III	5	III	5	III	5	revised
	2		remains		removed			
	a		remains		6		1 a, b, c	
	b		remains				2 a, b, c, d	
	c		remains					
	d		remains					
IV	7	IV	7	IV	7	IV	7	remains
	2		remains		remains			
	8		remains		8		remains	
	1		remains		9		remains	
	2		remains				remains	
	3		remains				remains	
V	10	V	10	V	10	V	10	remains
	2		remains		remains			
	1		revised		11		revised	
	2		revised					
VI	12	VI	12	remains	VI	12	remains	
				remains			remains	
				remains				
VII	13	VII	remains	remains	VII	13	remains	
VIII	14	VIII	remains	remains	VIII	14	remains	
	15		remains	remains		15	remains	





The SSP Regional Regulation No. 17 of 2014 becomes the policy reference for this study, particularly the one concerning the implementation of FEP in public senior high schools in Palembang.

Meanwhile, to support the FEP implementation in Palembang City, the Mayor issued the Regulation of the Mayor of Palembang No. 22 of 2011 dated February 22, 2011 on school operational funding aid (Attachment E). It stipulated unit costs for operational expenses spent by a school.

The major aim of FEP is providing equal educational opportunities for school-age children ranging from primary level to secondary education. Providing equal educational opportunities means every school-age children must go to school they don't have to pay for it. In other words, FEP provides education for all, regardless of gender, social economic status, and religion.

In particular, the FEP aims to ease the burden on parents/guardians of students of the exemption from paying the school operational costs (SSP Regional Regulation of 2014, Article 1 paragraph (16), Article 4, Paragraphs (2), (3), and (4)). Article 1 Paragraph (17) stipulates the types of FEP activities that can be funded, namely personal and non-personal costs. The details are given in Chapter 2, Subheading FEP.

The fund is derived from the sharing between the province budget and kabupaten/city budget and distributed quarterly every year. In 2011 and 2012, the percentages of proportion sharing of FEP Fund between SSP Government and



Palembang City were 83%:17% and 82%:18% respectively (SSP Government, 2012).

Since 2009, FEP has been executed by both provincial and district/city governments. The parties work together to run the program. The increase of the economic growth in the province was up to more than 6% from 2009 to 2011 indirectly support the FEP implementation to run well. More people also support the program due to its benefits for education.

However, the implementation of FEP actually brought about supporting and hampering factors. The supporting factor was that the FEP was a top-down program initiated by the Governor of South Sumatra Province that made it had a solid legitimacy politically. Meanwhile, the hampering factor was that the people knew that the program was introduced in the province of South Sumatra during the campaign of the governor general election. In other words, some people had no sense of belonging to the program.

Although FEP has been implemented since 2009, it still creates a dilemma for schools and teachers. They face various problems such as insufficient financial allocations, facilities, and infrastructures for operating their schools. Based on some preliminary interviews with SMA principals, the amount of FEP fund given to a school depends on the number of the students each schools has. The fewer students it has, the less amount of fund it will get. What is more, the number of part-time teachers also affects the use of the fund due to the fact that they are paid with the fund and this payment usually has a greater portion than any other use of



the fund. Consequently, schools get difficulty in improving and developing their facilities such as a library, laboratories, etc., since they need more fund to do more than they have now.

There are an increasing number of low-income students confronted with significant financial barriers that limit their ability to access and keep on their education. The data of Agency of Statistics Center (2013) show that the number of poor people in SSP in March 2009 was 116,787,000 or 16.28% of the number of SSP population. Many of these students will be deprived of the opportunity to continue their study because of their financial constraints. Still, low-income families struggle to get access to their education. Subsequently, the issues on social justice, prosperity, and education become considerably sensitive to them. Consequently, the government policies on the educational institutions,

particularly primary and secondary schools, highly consider low income families to gain social justice, prosperity, and education equality. The World Bank (2011) stated that in Indonesia the primary school net enrollment rates are below 60% in poor districts compared to more well-off districts that have universal enrollment. Net enrollment rates for secondary education have experienced a steady climb (currently 66% in Junior Secondary and 45% in Senior Secondary) but are still low compared to other countries in the region. Indonesia has almost universal primary enrollment but at the junior secondary level improvements are slower. Only 55 percent of children from low-income families are enrolled in junior secondary schools.





According to the data of Balitbangda Sumsel (2012), from 2008 to 2010 the participation rate of senior high school students increased almost 20%. While in Kabupaten MUBA, from 2003 to 2007 the rates also increased from 21.83% to 70.21% consecutively.

From 2007 to 2010, in South Sumatra Province the total number of new senior high school students decreased quite significantly in those periods. From 2007/2008 to 2008/2009 there were more than 2400 students who did not continue their study, whereas from 2008/2009 to 2009/2010 there were more than 1500 students who could not continue their study. The following table shows the trend of public and private applicants by province for general senior secondary schools from the years 2007 to 2010.



Table 1.2

*Trend of Public and Private Student Enrollment by Provinces in Sumatra for General Senior Secondary School, 2007/2008-2009/2010*

No. <i>Provinsi</i> Province	2007/2008			2008/2009			2009/2010		
	<i>Negeri</i> Public	<i>Swasta</i> Private	<i>Jumlah</i> Total	<i>Negeri</i> Public	<i>Swasta</i> Private	<i>Jumlah</i> Total	<i>Negeri</i> Public	<i>Swasta</i> Private	<i>Jumlah</i> Total
8 <i>Sumatera Utara</i>	82,855	62,772	145,627	87,224	58,506	145,730	77,856	55,703	133,559
9 <i>Sumatera Barat</i>	53,254	7,679	60,933	52,312	7,855	60,167	51,087	7,710	58,797
10 <i>Riau</i>	37,321	10,675	47,996	37,020	9,917	46,937	33,065	10,136	43,201
11 <i>Kepulauan Riau</i>	7,331	1,658	8,989	8,413	1,424	9,837	8,229	1,449	9,678
12 <i>Jambi</i>	22,751	4,864	27,615	22,326	4,355	26,681	21,778	4,365	26,143
13 <i>Sumatera Selatan</i>	50,376	28,332	78,708	48,970	27,317	76,287	48,213	26,545	74,758

Source: *Kemendiknas : Statistik Pendidikan SMA 2010*

In regard to FEP, the government is expected to support it and becomes the government's commitment (Kompas, 2009). Fitriyah, a parliament member, (cited in Sriwijaya Post Digital, March 15, 2012), stated that FEP was a total failure due to the fact that its implementation is not optimal. He pointed out that the shared fund for the

