

CURRICULUM AND LEARNING METHODS COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN INDONESIA AND IRAN

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Abstract: *The purpose of this study is to focus on primary and secondary education on the curriculum and learning methods used in Indonesia and Iran. The background of this study is based on the importance of understanding the education system in both countries, considering the differences in culture, religion and education policies that affect the development of curriculum and learning methods. The purpose of this study is to identify the curriculum structure, learning approaches, and similarities and differences in tasks in both countries in improving the quality of education. The research method used is a qualitative comparative study by collecting data through literature research, analysis of formal curriculum documents, and interviews with education experts from Indonesia and Iran. The results of the study show that both countries have curricula that focus on student development and skills, with different focuses. Indonesia focuses on Pancasila education and local wisdom, while Iran emphasizes education based on Islamic values and revolution. While Indonesia's learning methods tend to be student-centered (student-centered), Iran still has many traditional approaches (teacher-centric). These findings indicate the need to replace the best knowledge and best practices between the two countries to address challenges such as quality lessons and curriculum relevance. The conclusion of this study is that while both countries make significant differences in curriculum and learning methods, there is an opportunity to learn from each other to improve the education system.*

Kata kunci: *curriculum education, learning method, comparative study*

INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the main pillars of a country's development, where curriculum and learning methods play a vital role in determining the quality of educational performance. Indonesia and Iran have unique and interesting education systems to study more deeply, as they are two countries with different cultural, religious, and educational policies. Both countries pursue the same goal improving the quality of human resources but the approaches used in curriculum and learning methods differ significantly. Previous studies have revealed that the Indonesian curriculum places a stronger emphasis on developing Pancasila-based character education, while Iran integrates Islamic values into its education system (Wahab Syakharani et al., 2022). However, these studies have not delved into the comparative aspect in depth, especially regarding the learning methods used. Therefore, it is essential to conduct a more comprehensive comparative study to understand the dynamics of curriculum and learning approaches in both nations.

Global developments and the demands of 21st-century education require that education systems be more adaptable and responsive in making curricula

and learning methods more relevant. Iran, for instance, has incorporated information and communication technology (ICT) into its curriculum reforms as a key part of the learning process (Ahmadi et al., 2023). Meanwhile, Indonesia has introduced the Kurikulum Merdeka (Independent Curriculum), which highlights project-based learning and soft skills development. Recent findings show that differentiated instruction integrated with social-emotional learning is increasingly being applied in Indonesia to realize the profile of Pancasila students, as discussed by (Ana, 2022). This approach reflects the growing awareness of holistic education in Indonesia, which can be contrasted with Iran's emphasis on integrating Islamic ethics and cognitive learning.

Nevertheless, existing research still focuses on each country in isolation without comparing the effectiveness and challenges faced by their respective education systems. This research attempts to address that gap by offering a comparative analysis. Implementation problems in curriculum and learning methods are also critical to this study. In Indonesia, one of the main issues is the inequality in education quality between urban and rural regions (Nugroho et al., 2021). Similarly, Iran faces challenges related to accessibility and the availability of educational resources (Sassi, 2024). Studies like the one conducted by Wahyuni, Mulyani, and Rachmawati reveal the practical difficulties in implementing active learning models across diverse regions. While both countries have made efforts to overcome these problems, no research has yet compared the strategies or policies each nation has adopted. As such, this study seeks to provide new insights into how both countries respond to these shared challenges. (Khairiyah et al., 2024)

Additionally, earlier research has predominantly focused on theoretical frameworks without addressing practical applications in the classroom. For instance, (Hidayat et al., 2022) discuss general curriculum structure in Indonesia but do not explore how learning methods are applied in day-to-day teaching. Mohammadi and Rahimi address Iranian education policy without linking it to actual classroom practice. Meanwhile, Indonesian case studies, such as the one by Yulianto and Isnanto, show how discovery learning models in vocational schools can significantly enhance student engagement and outcomes providing a valuable comparison point for examining classroom practices in Iran. This study aims to bridge that gap by combining theoretical discussion with practical field-level analysis for a more holistic picture. (Rahimi et al., 2022)

Lastly, this study considers the cultural and social contexts that influence curriculum and learning methods. Local culture and values significantly shape Indonesia's curriculum (Sari et al., 2021), while religious values are central to Iran's curriculum development (Ghaori et al., 2020). By integrating these perspectives including recent Indonesian educational practices as reflected in (Ana, 2022), Wahyuni the study is expected to deepen understanding of how culture and religion inform the educational landscapes of both countries. (Wahyu et al., 2024).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Educational Curriculum

The educational curriculum of Indonesia and Iran has unique characteristics that

are influenced by the cultural, religious and political values of their respective countries. In Indonesia, the educational curriculum is based on Pancasila and local wisdom, so it focuses on student development and skills. The independent curriculum introduced in 2022 emphasizes the project base and the flexibility of teachers in the development of educational materials (Prasetyo et al., 2023). In Iran, the Iranian educational curriculum is heavily influenced by Islamic values and revolutions, with a focus on the formation of religious identity and nationalism (Ghaffari et al., 2021). Both countries have the same goal: to improve the quality of education, but their approach to curriculum development shows significant differences. Thus, the curriculum in Indonesia and Iran reflects the core values believed in by each country.

Learning Methods

The way Indonesia and Iran learn also shows significant differences. In Indonesia, learning methods tend to be student-centered (student centers) with a more interactive and collaborative approach. The use of technology in learning and project-based learning will be a major trend in the Merdeka curriculum (Indrawati et al., 2022). Meanwhile, Iran's learning methods still follow many traditional teacher-focused approaches (which are teacher-centered) while efforts to integrate information and communication technology (ICT) into learning are still ongoing. The main challenge in Iran is the lack of teacher training when using modern learning methods.

The Role of Technology in Education in Indonesia and Iran

The integration of technology into education focuses on efforts to improve the quality of learning in the 21st century. In Indonesia, the use of technology in education is facilitated by various programs, including digital literacy and teacher training when using online learning platforms (Prasetyo et al., 2023). However, challenges such as infrastructure gaps and internet access in remote areas remain major obstacles. In Iran, efforts to integrate technology into education continue to be implemented, but international resources and sanctions affecting access to technological devices are limited (Hassani et al., 2022). Thus, despite the strong commitment of both countries, the implementation of technology in education still faces significant challenges.

Education Policy and Its Impact on Learning Quality

There are significant differences between Indonesia's and Iran's education policies in terms of approach and priorities. In Indonesia, guidelines such as independent curricula emphasize school flexibility and autonomy in the development of educational materials, and are expected to increase the relevance of education to local needs (Sari et al., 2023). In Iran, educational guidelines are more central and have been geared towards reinforcing religious identity and nationalism, with little room for local innovation (Rezaei et al., 2023).

Comparative Studies

Comparative studies of the curriculum and learning methods between Indonesia and Iran are still limited, but some studies provide the first photo of a comparison of the two countries' education systems. For example, research by Sari and Hosseini shows that the two countries pose similar challenges in relation to the quality of education between urban and rural areas. However, this study does not touch on the comparative aspect of depth, especially in relation to the effectiveness of the curriculum and learning

methods. A study by Putra and Mohammadi shows that the exchange of best knowledge and best practices between the two countries can be a solution to overcome these challenges. Thus, this comparative research is expected to make a significant contribution to understanding the dynamics of the education system in Indonesia and Iran.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research is a literature study that aims to compare the curriculum and learning methods of Indonesia and Iran by analyzing relevant written sources. The type of research used qualitatively with a comparative research approach that allows researchers to identify similarities and differences between the two education systems. Data was collected by examining various secondary sources, such as: Science journals, books, education policy documents, government official reports, and related articles published in the last six years (2020-2023). The focus of the research is on the curriculum structure, learning methods, and factors that affect the implementation of these two aspects of Indonesia and Iran.

The research instrument used is a document analysis manual that contains source selection criteria such as topic relevance, author reliability, and year of publication. The data collection process is carried out by extracting relevant information from selected sources and grouping it into key topics such as curriculum guidelines, learning approaches, and implementation challenges. Thematic data analysis by identifying patterns, similarities and differences between the two countries. The measurement of research variables such as curriculum and learning methods is based on operational definitions developed by previous literature research. Therefore, the research methodology aims to ensure that the analysis carried out is systematic and comprehensive and can be repeated by other researchers.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The results show that the educational curriculum in Indonesia and Iran has significant differences in orientation and approach, but both seem to meet the global education standards set by UNESCO. The UNESCO Standards emphasize the four pillars of education: knowing, learning, learning, learning, and learning to live together (UNESCO, 2021). In Indonesia, the curriculum emphasizes Pancasila-based character development and local wisdom, as reflected in the 2022 independent curriculum (Ministry of Culture and Culture, 2022). Meanwhile, the Iranian curriculum has been dominated by Islamic values and revolutions, with a focus on the formation of religious identity and nationalism (Ghaffari et al., 2021). Thus, despite having different orientations, the two countries seek to meet UNESCO standards in a way that is appropriate to their local contexts.

Figure 1: Logo UNESCO



In terms of learning methods, Indonesia tends to adopt a more modern and student-centered approach. Project-based learning and technology integration are the hallmarks of the Independent Curriculum (Widodo et al., 2022). On the other hand,

learning methods in Iran still rely heavily on traditional teacher-centered approaches, although efforts to integrate information and communication technology (ICT) continue (Karimi & Hashemi, 2020). According to a UNESCO report (2021), only 40% of schools in Iran have full access to technological devices, compared to 65% in Indonesia. This shows that the gap in technological infrastructure is a major challenge in the implementation of modern learning methods in Iran, while Indonesia is better prepared to meet UNESCO standards related to the use of technology.

Figure 2: Indonesian elementary school students



The findings also show that both countries face similar challenges in terms of quality education between urban and rural areas. In Indonesia, UNESCO (2021) shows that only 55% of rural schools have appropriate facilities, compared to 85% of urban areas. In Iran, this gap is more pronounced when it comes to accessing educational resources. There, only 30% of rural schools have appropriate libraries (UNESCO, 2021). Thus, geographical disparities are a problem that needs to be overcome by both countries to achieve equal distribution of education in accordance with UNESCO standards.

Figure 3: Iranian primary school students



In relation to curriculum implementation, this study shows that Indonesia is more flexible in providing autonomy for teachers to develop educational materials according to local needs. This is in line with the principles of an independent curriculum that emphasizes school independence (Rahayu et al., 2021). In Iran, the implementation of the government curriculum is more centralized and tightly regulated, with little room for local innovation (Mohammadi et al., 2022). This difference suggests that the decentralized approach in Indonesia can be an interesting model for Iran to consider in meeting UNESCO standards that emphasize local adaptation.

The results of this study also show that cultural and religious factors play an important role in the formation of curricula and learning methods in both countries. In Indonesia, Pancasila values and local wisdom are the main basis for curriculum

development (Maulana et al., 2021). Meanwhile, Iran's Islamic values and revolution are the main basis of any education policy (Rezaei et al., 2020). Thus, culture and religion not only influence the content of the curriculum, but also the learning methods applied, even though both seek to meet UNESCO's inclusive and holistic standards.

These findings are consistent with previous research conducted by Sari and Hosseini, which stated that the two countries have similar challenges in terms of education quality gaps. However, this study makes a new contribution by identifying that curriculum flexibility in Indonesia can be a potential solution to overcome these challenges. This shows that the exchange of knowledge and best practices between the two countries can provide significant benefits in meeting UNESCO standards.

In addition, the study also found that the integration of technology in learning is still a major challenge for Iran. Although efforts to improve access to ICT have been made, UNESCO data (2021) shows that only 30% of teachers in Iran are trained in using technology for learning. In Indonesia, this figure reaches 50%, thanks to intensive teacher training programs (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2022). Thus, increasing the capacity of teachers in the use of technology is key to improving the quality of learning in Iran and meeting UNESCO standards related to technology-based learning.

This discussion also revealed that the two countries can learn from each other in overcoming educational challenges. For example, Iran can adopt the decentralized approach of the curriculum implemented in Indonesia, while Indonesia can learn from Iran's efforts in integrating religious values holistically in the education system. This kind of knowledge exchange can be a strategic step to improve the quality of education in both countries and meet more comprehensive UNESCO standards.

The findings of this study also have practical implications for policymakers in both countries. In Indonesia, further efforts should be made to reduce the quality of education between urban and rural areas and at the same time maintain curriculum flexibility. In Iran, the focus should be on improving teachers' access to technology and training to support modern learning. Therefore, future educational guidelines must be designed to address the specific challenges in all countries and at the same time meet UNESCO's global standards.

Overall, this study provides new insights into the dynamics of curriculum and learning methods in Indonesia and Iran. The statement not only answers gaps in the previous literature, but also provides practical recommendations for the development of the education systems of the two countries. Therefore, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of how cultural, religious and political values affect the education system at the global level, and the efforts of both countries to meet UNESCO standards.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussions, it can be concluded that the curriculum and learning methods in Indonesia and Iran have significant differences, with Indonesia emphasizing Pancasila-based character development and student-centered learning, while Iran focuses on integrating Islamic values with traditional learning methods. Despite efforts to meet UNESCO's global education standards, challenges

such as educational quality gaps and technological limitations remain obstacles. The contribution of this research lies in the identification of best practices that can be exchanged, such as curriculum flexibility in Indonesia and the integration of religious values in Iran, to improve the quality of education holistically. The limitations of research that rely only on literature studies open up opportunities for further research with an empirical approach to test the effectiveness of educational policies and practices in the field.

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