

Systematic Analysis of National Education Policy: Comparative Study of Indonesia and Malaysia in the Context of Education Management

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the comparative national education policies of Indonesia and Malaysia, highlighting their strategies, challenges, and outcomes within the context of education management. Education policy plays a pivotal role in shaping human resource quality, influencing a nation's socio-economic progress. Both countries, sharing cultural and historical similarities, approach education with distinct frameworks. Indonesia employs a decentralized policy, granting local governments autonomy, while Malaysia adopts a centralized system emphasizing national integration and multicultural inclusivity. The research utilizes a qualitative method with a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach, analyzing secondary data from academic articles, policy documents, and relevant literature. The findings reveal that Indonesia's decentralized approach fosters community participation but faces challenges such as unequal teacher distribution, inadequate infrastructure, and policy inconsistencies. Conversely, Malaysia's centralized system supports uniformity but struggles with localized adaptability and socio-cultural disparities. Despite these differences, both nations share common challenges in literacy improvement, equity in education access, and the integration of technology in learning. The study underscores the importance of adaptive and inclusive policies, recommending enhanced collaboration between stakeholders, improved infrastructure, and targeted teacher training. This research provides insights to policymakers, educators, and academics to refine and harmonize educational strategies, leveraging mutual strengths to address global competitiveness and sustainable development.

Keywords : Education Policy, Indonesia, Malaysia, Decentralization, Centralization, Education Management

Introduction

National education policy has a very important role in the development of human resources, which is the main factor in a country's economic and social progress. Education not only provides knowledge, but also shapes an individual's outlook on life, which in turn influences their ability to contribute to the progress of the nation . Therefore, education is considered an investment that can improve the quality of human resources and encourage economic growth . The importance of national education policies can be seen from how countries such as Nigeria and Bangladesh make education a top priority in their development plans. Nigeria, for example, considers education as a key factor in human resource development, which is reflected in national development policies and planning . Likewise with the 2010 Bangladesh education policy, which is recognized as one of the best policies with a focus on human resource development to turn demographic challenges into opportunities .

An effective national education policy needs to cover various aspects, such as developing vocational education, improving teacher quality, and adapting the curriculum to labor market needs . This is important to produce a workforce that is skilled, adaptive, and competent in contributing to the country's development . In India, the National Education Policy 2020 emphasizes the importance of a multidisciplinary approach and skill development to create globally competitive human capital. This policy aims to change the education system from pre-school to university level by emphasizing the integration of local knowledge and digital literacy . It is hoped that the implementation of this policy can propel India towards educational excellence and social transformation by 2047 .

Meanwhile, education policy in Indonesia generally aims to make the nation's life more intelligent by ensuring that every citizen can access education regardless of social, economic, ethnic, religious or gender background . In the context of regional autonomy, strategic policies implemented include improving the quality of school-based education, community participation and the broader education system. The main challenges in implementing this policy include a lack of adequate infrastructure and limited understanding of the policy itself, which requires more effective teacher training and the development of educational facilities and infrastructure . Education policy also seeks to accommodate cultural diversity through pluralistic education, which allows students from various cultural backgrounds to learn together . However, education in Indonesia is still faced with various challenges, such as inequality in educational outcomes, inadequate teaching quality, and low tolerance for ethnic diversity .

The Jokowi government emphasizes increasing educational access and infrastructure, even though a number of educational problems have not been fully resolved . Therefore, collaborative and innovative efforts are needed to correct existing deficiencies and improve overall educational standards in Indonesia. Likewise in Malaysia, the education policies implemented have experienced various significant transformations in line with the development of the country's political, social and economic dynamics. Since gaining independence, Malaysia has continued to strive to expand access to education, create unity amidst ethnic diversity through a uniform curriculum and use of language, and build human resources to face global challenges . Under initiatives such as Vision 2020, education policy is moving towards liberalization, democratization, privatization, and decentralization of the education system . However, despite efforts to provide greater autonomy to higher education institutions, universities' dependence on

government support remains a key issue. Race and religion-based political factors also play a significant role in shaping education policy in this country. In addition, educational reform is directed at increasing the internationalization of higher education by developing strategic policies that support this goal. Overall, education policy in Malaysia reflects an effort to balance national needs with global demands, while maintaining a strong national identity.

Based on the explanation above, it shows that the challenges in implementing education policies cannot be ignored. Policies that are not appropriate to the local context and community aspirations can hinder the development of quality human resources. Therefore, policy makers must consider local dynamics and ensure policies can be implemented effectively. Education also plays a role in protecting children's rights and ensuring an independent life. Although human resource development is the main goal of education policy, policy design must take into account the local context and community aspirations. The right to education is achieved not only through policy, but is also the result of social and political struggles.

Facing global challenges, such as technological changes and labor market dynamics, national education policies must continue to evolve. Quality education that is relevant to the needs of the times is the key to creating an educated society, ready to face the challenges of the future. Therefore, the government and stakeholders must be actively involved in formulating effective policies, monitoring their implementation, and committing to continuously improving the national education system. Indonesia and Malaysia, as two ASEAN member countries, have many similarities in the characteristics of their education policies. With interrelated histories and cultures, both face similar challenges in developing education systems to improve the quality of human resources amidst global competition. Education budget allocation is one of the main focuses in both countries. In Indonesia, this budget is guaranteed by the constitution to support the quality and accessibility of education. Meanwhile, Malaysia is trying to reduce socio-economic disparities through increasing education funding, although infrastructure and human resource challenges are still the main obstacles.

Both countries implement a dynamic standardized curriculum, oriented towards the holistic development of students. However, there are significant differences in implementation, especially regarding decentralization. Indonesia provides more autonomy to schools, while Malaysia tends to maintain centralization in policy making. This management approach influences policy adaptation at the local level. In character education, Indonesia and Malaysia have different approaches. Character education in Indonesia still needs to be strengthened in terms of goals and strategies, while Malaysia has integrated character education in a more structured way into its system. Likewise, in literacy policy, Indonesia refers to the 2013 Curriculum, while Malaysia adapts its literacy policy to its multi-ethnic diversity. These differences reflect the influence of the respective social and cultural contexts.

Overall, an appropriate national education policy can be a major driver in human resource development which in turn contributes to economic growth and societal welfare. With the right investment in education, countries can develop quality human resources capable of competing at the global level and contributing to sustainable development. Additionally, despite many similarities, significant differences in Indonesian and Malaysian education policies provide opportunities for mutual learning and collaboration. By understanding these differences, both countries can optimize their policies to prepare future generations who are more competent in

facing global challenges. Based on this explanation, researchers are interested in digging deeper by analyzing national education policies from both countries, Indonesia and Malaysia. It is hoped that the aim of this research will provide an overview of education management governance so that in the future the two countries will be able to provide a good, effective and efficient national education system.

Research Methods

The research method used in this research is a qualitative method with a systematic literature review (SLR) approach. This approach was chosen to explore in-depth information from various scientific literature related to research topics in a systematic, transparent and organized manner. This research aims to understand and analyze national education policies in Indonesia and Malaysia in the context of education management. Using this method, data is collected through literature studies from journal articles, research reports, related regulations, and relevant books, which are then filtered based on previously determined inclusion and exclusion criteria. The main aim of this research is to provide a more comprehensive insight into the differences and similarities in education policies in the two countries and provide policy recommendations that can improve the quality of the national education system. It is hoped that the results of this research will be an important reference for policy makers, academics and other stakeholders in improving and developing the education system at the national and international levels.

Discussion

Description of National Education Policy

The national education system in Indonesia has experienced various changes along with the development of education decentralization policies and curriculum adjustments. Since 1947, the national curriculum has been revised eleven times, reflecting political dynamics and central government policies which continue to try to adapt education to the needs of the times . However, these changes often create confusion among teachers and affect student achievement. The education decentralization policy began in 1999 with the ratification of Law no. 22 concerning Regional Government and Law no. 25 concerning Financial Balance between Central and Regional Governments. This step gives greater authority to local governments to manage education, including in curriculum development and involving stakeholders . Even so, the Ministry of National Education still has significant control over the educational curriculum.

Implementation of decentralization involves reform at the school level through school-based management and school-based teacher professional development. The aim is to increase school autonomy in decision making and encourage community participation . However, its implementation faces challenges such as curriculum problems, limited human resources, unequal funding, and lack of educational infrastructure . Although this policy aims to improve the quality of education, its implementation is hampered by a lack of transparency and accountability in the administration of education services. Education costs that must be borne by households also remain high, while social and geographic disparities in access to education are still pronounced. This emphasizes the importance of increasing government budget allocations for basic education as well as better monitoring of public policy in this sector .

The impact of decentralization on student learning outcomes also shows varying results. Although it is hoped that it will be able to improve the quality and efficiency of education, curriculum reform has so far not provided a significant increase in student achievement . In addition, gaps in the quality of education between regions remain a challenge even though decentralization has been going on for almost two decades . This policy also seeks to improve local economic performance, competitiveness, empowerment of educational outcomes and public services. However, the success of decentralization requires government commitment to strengthen organization, inter-institutional coordination, and professional development of teachers . Even though decentralization gives authority to regional governments, the central government still plays an important role in coordinating and supervising its implementation .

Apart from that, Malaysia with the concept of national education functions as an important element in forming national identity and strengthening integration in a culturally diverse society. Since its introduction Malaysian Education Blueprint 2013-2025, the government has focused on strengthening moral and religious education in an effort to instill the values of unity and foster harmonious relationships between students. Moral education for non-Muslim students and Islamic education for Muslim students are designed to complement each other in the school curriculum, aiming to produce balanced individuals and contribute to the progress of the nation . However, the implementation of multicultural education policies faces various challenges. The racial riots in 1969 became a milestone that encouraged the development of educational policies aimed at uniting racially diverse communities. Initiatives such as Wawasan Schools and the Student Integration Plan for Unity have been introduced, but results can only be achieved if inclusivity and a multicultural spirit are truly at the heart of the national education agenda .

Education policy in Malaysia often reflects clashing aspirations in a multicultural society. Studies show that Malaysia's plural society is still in an arena of competing ideologies, with a determination to build a united and harmonious nation .In this case, mastery of two languages, namely English and the national language, is one of the main focuses in the educational blueprint, as a strategy to meet local and global needs .The structure of the Malaysian education system, which is influenced by the dynamics of racial relations, the political need for reform, as well as geographic diversity, are also factors that need to be considered .Vernacular schools, which were initially built to respect ethnic uniqueness, apparently reinforce racial segregation at the primary education level. Ambitious reforms such as those stated in the blueprint often encounter challenges in their acceptance and implementation, so that the results are often not optimal . On the other hand, the internationalization of higher education has become one of the focuses of reform, with the aim of promoting the use of English while supporting educational policies that are adaptive to globalization . Multiculturalism in Malaysian education is the result of a long negotiation process between various ethnic groups represented by political parties, with the aim of maintaining national harmony and integration .

Education has a strategic role in creating unity among students. Educational aspirations in Malaysia emphasize the importance of social and systemic inclusiveness as a path to stronger unity . However, the complex educational structure, with schools based on ethnicities such as Malay, Chinese, and Tamil, adds to the challenges in creating a cohesive national identity and deep integration . Overall it can be concluded that decentralization of education in Indonesia is an important step in providing regional autonomy and increasing community participation.

However, implementation challenges indicate the need for collaborative strategies between central, regional and educational institutions. With a more integrated approach, the benefits of decentralization can be felt evenly throughout Indonesia. Besides that, national education in Malaysia faces big challenges in accommodating cultural and ethnic diversity. Although various policies have been attempted to promote unity, the success of such efforts depends largely on their acceptance and effective implementation at all levels of society. Therefore, national education remains an area that requires continued attention and efforts to achieve the desired national integration.

Comparison of Educational Management Governance in Two Countries

Education is one of the main pillars in a country's development, and effective educational management is an important factor in achieving educational goals. Indonesia and Malaysia, despite having similarities in history and culture, show differences in educational management, especially at the elementary school level. Differences and similarities can be seen in aspects of planning, organizing, implementing and controlling education management. In Indonesia, the education decentralization policy allows regional autonomy in education management. However, regulatory dualism between the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Religion creates challenges, especially in the development of Islamic education technology. In contrast, Malaysia uses an integrated management system under one institution, which allows the integration of science and technology from basic education.

Education policies in border areas also show significant differences between the two countries. In Nunukan, North Kalimantan, Indonesia, policy implementation faces various obstacles that hinder the fulfillment of the right to education as part of constitutional rights. Meanwhile, in Sabah, Malaysia, a welfare-based approach has succeeded in improving the quality of human resources through improving infrastructure and quality of education. In Islamic education, Indonesia and Malaysia have similarities in the planning, implementation and evaluation stages of learning. However, the basic philosophy of creating an Islamic education curriculum is different, reflecting each country's unique approach to religious teaching.

At the higher education level, a comparison of institutions in the two countries shows variations in policies, curriculum structures, and teaching methodologies. Research in this area provides an overview of the strengths, challenges and opportunities for collaboration between the Indonesian and Malaysian higher education systems. Education equality in remote areas is also an important issue. Indonesia applies a decentralized approach, while Malaysia uses a centralized system. Both states adopted financial aid programs to support students from low-income families. However, obstacles such as limited facilities and human resources remain a common challenge. At the higher education level in Indonesia, the quality of institutions is often hampered by poor governance, including the dominance of certain groups that hinder reform. However, improvement efforts can occur when reformist elements succeed in leading change from the top to the bottom. Student management in special education schools shows differences in approach. In Malaysia, students are permanently grouped based on skill interests, while in Indonesia the grouping is done based on the level and type of disability.

Apart from that, the implementation of education policies in Indonesia and Malaysia

shows a number of similarities and differences in efforts to improve access and quality of education. In Indonesia, education policy is influenced by regional autonomy which allows adjustments based on local needs. One example is the Independent Campus Learning Program (MBKM), which provides flexibility to universities and students in designing study programs . In contrast, Malaysia implements a centralized education system, where policies are set by the central government and applied uniformly throughout the country . Both countries face similar challenges, such as limited infrastructure, human resources, and social and cultural barriers. In Indonesia, this challenge is exacerbated by inadequate policy understanding among implementers, which causes inconsistent implementation. Malaysia also experiences difficulties in reaching remote areas effectively .

To increase the participation of students from disadvantaged families in remote areas, both countries adopted financial aid programs . In Indonesia, the free education policy through school operational assistance has reduced the burden of education costs and increased access. Meanwhile, Malaysia prioritizes literacy policies by paying attention to multi-ethnic life and is supported by institutions such as the Malaysian National Literacy Agency . Indonesia also focuses on literacy through the 2013 curriculum to improve students' abilities. Community participation is an important element in implementing education policies in both countries. In Indonesia, education based on community participation is implemented to support effective policy implementation. In higher education, both countries implement student-based learning, such as Problem-Based Learning (PBL) and Project-Based Learning (PjBL). Malaysia emphasizes the use of technology in learning through platforms such as MYGURU, while Indonesia emphasizes a holistic approach .

Overall, a comparison of education governance between Indonesia and Malaysia reveals that although there are some similarities, differences in policy approaches and implementation have a significant impact on the quality and accessibility of education. It is hoped that the results of this study can become a basis for improving educational management in the future. Additionally, despite different policy approaches, Indonesia and Malaysia demonstrate a strong commitment to improving education. Implementation challenges require innovative and collaborative solutions involving government, society and educational institutions. Through joint efforts, it is hoped that the quality of education can continue to improve in both countries.

Success Factors and Challenges of National Education Policy in Indonesia and Malaysia

The success of national education governance in Indonesia and Malaysia is influenced by various factors, including management strategy, funding and policy innovation. In Indonesia, the school-based management approach has had a positive impact, especially in schools and madrasas. This success was driven by the active participation of the school community, training in school clusters, and continuous mentoring. This program, which is based on government policy, focuses more on providing technical assistance rather than direct funding, making it easier to implement and manage by local partners .

Malaysia, with a more centralized approach, manages education policy in a structured manner. However, challenges such as limited facilities and socio-cultural barriers, especially in remote areas, are a major concern. To increase access to education, both countries have launched financial assistance programs for students from low-income families, especially in remote areas . Apart from that, the funding factor is a vital aspect in education governance. Indonesia often

faces budget constraints that affect the effectiveness of policy implementation. However, with regional autonomy, local governments are able to allocate funds according to specific needs. On the other hand, Malaysia, with its centralized system, has the advantage of more equitable distribution of funds, although it still faces challenges in ensuring their efficient use.

Policy innovation is another key factor. Indonesia implements community-based policies and continuous training which have improved the quality of education. Meanwhile, Malaysia relies on centralized policies to ensure consistent educational standards across the region, although adaptation to local challenges is required. The success of education policy in both countries relies not only on management and funding strategies, but also on the active involvement of government and society. Community support and collaboration between various stakeholders are important elements in overcoming obstacles. Regular monitoring and evaluation is also needed to assess the effectiveness of policies and make adjustments if necessary.

Despite differences in approach, both Indonesia and Malaysia show that a combination of appropriate management strategies, adequate funding and responsive, innovative policies can improve the quality of national education. This success is also largely determined by each country's ability to overcome local obstacles and maximize regional potential. The experiences of these two countries can be a reference for other countries facing similar challenges in education governance, with an emphasis on adaptive, inclusive policies and strong commitment from all parties involved. Besides that, national education management governance in Indonesia and Malaysia faces various challenges that affect the quality of education, such as regional disparities, teacher quality, and infrastructure conditions. In Indonesia, disparities between remote and urban areas are a major problem, especially in terms of educational facilities and teaching quality. Geographical factors with thousands of islands worsen accessibility, so that many remote areas have difficulty getting education equivalent to urban areas. The quality of teaching staff is also a crucial issue in both countries. In Indonesia, the unequal distribution of teachers and the low qualifications of some teachers in remote areas have a negative impact on the quality of education. Malaysia, despite having a more centralized education system, also faces similar challenges in teacher training and professional development.

Educational infrastructure is another important issue. In Indonesia, many schools in remote areas lack basic facilities such as adequate classrooms, learning equipment, and access to technology. In Malaysia, even though the infrastructure is relatively better, the gap in facilities between urban and rural areas remains an obstacle. In addition, the two countries' different policy approaches pose unique challenges. Indonesia, with its decentralized system, provides autonomy to local governments to manage education, but its implementation is often hampered by a lack of competent human resources and supporting infrastructure. In contrast, Malaysia with a centralized education system faces challenges in adapting education policies to the specific needs of each region.

To overcome these challenges, integrated efforts are needed. In Indonesia, the main priority is to improve the quality and distribution of teachers, improve educational infrastructure, and utilize information technology to bridge the gap between urban and remote areas. Meanwhile, in Malaysia, the main focus is teacher professional development and improving access and quality of educational infrastructure in rural areas. In addition, the Malaysian government needs to ensure that education policies are flexible and relevant to local needs. To

overcome these challenges requires a comprehensive and sustainable approach in both countries. By reducing regional disparities, improving the quality of teaching staff, and improving educational infrastructure, Indonesia and Malaysia can create a more inclusive and high-quality education system, providing equal opportunities for all students to achieve a decent education.

Policy Recommendations Based on Comparison Results of Indonesian and Malaysian Education Management Governance

Based on the results of comparisons carried out by researchers regarding national education policies from the perspective of education management governance from the two countries, Indonesia and Malaysia, the following researchers present recommendations for national education policies based on gaps in national education policies that have been previously implemented in each country.

Table 1. Recommendations for National Education Policy

POLICY ASPECTS	INDONESIA	MALAYSIA	POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS
Education Management System	Decentralization	Centralization	Integrate decentralized elements to suit local needs while maintaining strong central oversight
Teacher Distribution	Unbalanced distribution of teachers, especially in remote areas	Similar problems relate to the training and professional development of teachers in rural areas	Teacher redistribution program with incentives, ongoing training and facilities for teachers in remote areas.
Education Infrastructure	Lack of basic facilities, especially in remote areas	Infrastructure is relatively better, but there is still a gap between urban and rural areas	Increase education budget allocation for infrastructure and procurement of educational technology in remote areas.
Multicultural Education	Includes cultural diversity, but implementation is still limited	Integrating multicultural values in the curriculum, but challenges in implementation	Develop a flexible multicultural curriculum and training for teachers to increase understanding of diversity.
Education Financing	Regional autonomy allows the allocation of funds according to local needs	Centralization makes it easier to distribute funds evenly	Increasing transparency and efficiency in the use of education funds through central and regional collaboration.
Technology in Learning	The use of technology is still limited in some areas	Using educational technology platforms such as MYGURU	Develop and expand access to an adaptive and inclusive national educational technology platform.

Increasing Access to Education	School operational assistance and free education policy	Priority on literacy policy by paying attention to multi-ethnic life	Combination of operational assistance policies with community-based literacy programs to increase access in the regions.
Educational Character	It is necessary to strengthen the goals and strategies of character education	Character education is well integrated into the system	Adapting character education strategies with local culture-based approaches and strengthening universal morals.
Curriculum and Literacy	Curriculum with emphasis on literacy	Literacy policies are adapted to the context of ethnic diversity	Refining the curriculum to increase literacy with an adaptive approach to local and global contexts.

Conclusion

The conclusion of a comparison of the national education policies of Indonesia and Malaysia shows that the two countries have different approaches in managing the education system, although there are some similarities due to similar cultural and historical contexts. In Indonesia, educational decentralization gives local governments autonomy to regulate education, allowing for policy adjustments based on local needs. However, challenges such as quality gaps between regions, lack of competent human resources, and limited educational infrastructure are still significant obstacles. A community-based approach is also applied to support the implementation of education policies, although implementation is not always consistent. In contrast, Malaysia adopts a more centralized system, where policies are determined by the central government and applied uniformly throughout the country. Malaysia's focus lies on integrating moral and religious education in the national curriculum system to create balanced individuals, as well as efforts to increase the internationalization of higher education. However, obstacles such as infrastructure gaps between urban and rural areas, as well as challenges in implementing multicultural inclusivity, remain a concern. Both countries face similar problems, such as limited facilities, human resources and socio-cultural barriers. In terms of funding, Indonesia is often hampered by budget constraints that affect policy effectiveness, although decentralization allows for adjustments to fund allocations according to local needs. Meanwhile, Malaysia has the advantage of more even distribution of funds through its centralized system, although it still requires efficiency in its use. Another similarity can be seen in financial aid programs to support students from disadvantaged families, where both countries seek to increase access to education. Apart from that, both also prioritize literacy policies, with approaches adapted to their respective social and cultural contexts. Overall, this comparison shows that despite fundamental differences in policy approaches, both Indonesia and Malaysia demonstrate a strong commitment to improving the quality of national education. Collaboration and learning opportunities between countries can be utilized to overcome existing challenges, such as regional disparities, teacher quality and educational infrastructure. With an adaptive and inclusive approach, both countries have the potential to create a higher quality and globally competitive education system.

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