

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CURRICULUM AND EDUCATIONAL POLICY IN IMPROVING HUMAN RESOURCE QUALITY: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract

This study aims to examine in depth the relationship between curriculum and education policy in efforts to improve the quality of human resources (HR) in Indonesia. Using a literature review approach, this study analyses theories, concepts, and previous research findings related to curriculum development, education policy formulation, and their implications for HR quality. The findings indicate that synergy between adaptive curricula and responsive education policies is a key factor in shaping competent, innovative, and competitive human resources in the global era. Strategic policies that emphasise the relevance of curricula, the professionalism of educators, and equitable access to education can accelerate the sustainable transformation of human resource quality. This study recommends the need for evaluation and cross-sectoral collaboration in curriculum and policy development to produce high-quality human resources that align with societal needs and national development demands.

Keywords: Curriculum, Education Policy, Human Resource Quality, Education, Human Resource Development

Introduction

Education plays a central role in the development of a nation. Efforts to educate the nation are realised through education that is designed and implemented systematically. In the context of Indonesia, education is directed towards shaping individuals who are faithful, virtuous, healthy, knowledgeable, skilled, creative, independent, and responsible in accordance with national ideals as outlined in Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System (Putra, Liriwati, et al., 2020); (Aslan, Silvia, et al., 2020).

One of the main instruments in the education system is the curriculum. The curriculum is not only a guideline for implementing learning at the school level but also serves as a direction and benchmark for achieving national educational goals. Through the curriculum, the process of developing students' potential is designed in a structured manner to address the needs of current and future development (Hikmawati, 2022).

Since independence, the curriculum system in Indonesia has undergone numerous changes and improvements. These changes were implemented to ensure

that Indonesian education remains relevant to advancements in science, technology, as well as social and cultural dynamics. The curricula of 1947, 1952, 1964, 1968, 1975, 1984, 1994, 2004, 2006, and 2013 reflect the government's adaptive steps in aligning the education system with the challenges of the times (Mizani et al., 2020); (Aminullah & Dewi, 2024).

Education policies are the main support for the implementation and renewal of the curriculum. These policies serve as the legal basis and guidelines for all educational activities in Indonesia, including the development of teacher professionalism, the improvement of facilities and infrastructure, and the strengthening of leadership in educational institutions.

In practice, national education policies are designed top-down by the government and adapted to the needs of society and global developments. The existence of these policies greatly influences the success of the curriculum, both in terms of content, learning strategies, and evaluation of results (Hermawan, 2021).

However, Indonesia still faces various challenges in the implementation of the curriculum and education policies. The issues that arise include: inadequate implementation of the curriculum, low teacher professionalism, uneven distribution of educational facilities, and societal mindset that is not fully aligned with the spirit of educational reform (Utami, 2022). One of the prominent issues is the relevance between the curriculum and the needs of the job market and the demands of globalisation. Various international surveys, such as PISA, indicate that Indonesian students' competencies are relatively low compared to other countries. This highlights the importance of strengthening the curriculum in alignment with adaptive and effective educational policies (Hodijah & Nugraha, 2025).

The 2013 curriculum policy is one of the government's major efforts to improve the quality of human resources. This curriculum focuses on the development of balanced attitudes, knowledge, and skills, in line with the needs of the times and based on the eight National Education Standards.

However, changes in policy and curriculum should be implemented systematically and strategically. Frequent changes without adequate preparation of resources and understanding from teachers can lead to confusion in the field. The role of teachers as the primary implementers in schools is crucial in achieving the objectives of the curriculum and the impact of education policy (Indarta et al., 2022). Various studies indicate that synergy between responsive education policies and relevant curricula can produce graduates who are competitive, innovative, and of good character. This concept is crucial in preparing human resources capable of competing at both national and global levels. Therefore, collaboration between the government, educators, and the community must be strengthened in the process of developing and implementing curricula and education policies. Only with visionary policies that prioritise educational quality and effective curriculum implementation can the

improvement of human resource quality be achieved sustainably (Hutagaluh et al., 2020); (Hifza et al., 2020).

Thus, the relationship between curriculum and educational policy is an inseparable aspect in efforts to improve the quality of human resources in Indonesia. The integration of both plays a vital role in shaping the character, competencies, and competitiveness of the nation for a better future.

Research Method

The research method used in this study is library research, which is research conducted through searching, identifying, analysing, and synthesising various sources such as books, scientific journals, articles, and policy documents relevant to the topic of the relationship between curriculum and education policy in improving the quality of human resources (Eliyah & Aslan, 2025). This approach enables researchers to collect and present theories, concepts, and previous research findings to obtain a comprehensive overview of the research topic without conducting direct field data collection. All data are analysed systematically with the aim of highlighting findings, ideas, and trends in the literature to answer research questions objectively and in depth (Liberati et al., 2020).

Results and Discussion

Improving Human Resource Quality

Improving the quality of human resources (HR) is a top priority in the national development of a country. Excellent human resources are believed to be an important pillar in achieving national competitiveness amid increasingly fierce global competition. Without quality human resources, economic, social, and technological development will stagnate and find it difficult to develop sustainably (Hermawan, 2021).

Efforts to improve the quality of human resources must begin with an understanding of the essential indicators that shape human resource quality. These indicators include knowledge, skills, abilities, understanding of the work field, education, work ethic, creativity, adaptability to change, discipline, and work ethics. Quality human resources are also measured through productivity, communication, and behaviour in facing global challenges and changes (Ali, 2024).

Education plays a central role in creating quality human resources. Effective education not only equips students with knowledge but also trains them in critical thinking, problem solving, and builds a character that is adaptable to changing times (Borzoei, 2023). Therefore, the education system must continue to be adapted to the demands of the latest science and technology. In addition to formal education, vocational training and competency certification programmes are important strategies for improving the skills and professionalism of the workforce. The government continues to promote training for the workforce, vocational training, and certification

to ensure that skills are in line with current industry needs. Regular certification also ensures that human resource competency standards remain relevant (Fitri, 2023).

Equitable access to education and training is a challenge in Indonesia, which has a vast geographical area. The disparity in the quality of education between urban and rural areas is still very pronounced, so efforts to equalise access to quality education are a key focus of national human resource development policies (Jf & Latif, 2020).

Government programmes such as the Kartu Indonesia Pintar (KIP) Kuliah, Kartu Prakerja, and LPDP scholarships are concrete solutions to open opportunities for disadvantaged communities to access higher education and vocational training. These initiatives aim to reduce poverty and improve the overall quality of life through better education (Tasbih & Andriani, 2024).

Improving human resource quality is not only about knowledge but also strengthening soft skills such as leadership, initiative, collaboration, and communication. Continuous training programmes that include soft skills development are a key requirement in the digital era and Industry 4.0. Work mentality, ethos, and professional behaviour are also vital elements in building high-quality human resources. Good character, discipline, responsibility, and commitment to work will increase productivity and foster a conducive and innovative work environment (Widodo, 2020).

In the era of globalisation, the ability to adapt to technological changes is very important. Strengthening digital literacy and mastery of information technology are urgent needs so that Indonesian human resources can compete internationally. Digital education and the use of technology in the teaching and learning process must also be further improved. Human resource development must also consider physical and mental health aspects. Physical and mental well-being will shape healthy, resilient individuals who are ready to face the pressures and challenges of the workplace. A healthy work environment, employee health programmes, and work-life balance are essential components of strategies to enhance human resource quality (Fitri, 2023).

Creativity and innovation are equally important competencies. Education and training systems should provide ample opportunities for students and workers to innovate, take risks, and think outside the box. An economy based on creativity and innovation is a crucial foundation for a nation's competitiveness in the future. Another challenge in improving human resource quality is the skills gap between educational outcomes and industry needs (skills gap) (Maysaroh, 2022). The education sector must establish close collaboration with the business and industrial sectors to ensure graduates are job-ready and aligned with industry demands. Education-industry collaboration can be realised through internship programmes, joint training initiatives, and competency-based recruitment (Nuryanto, 2023).

Human resource development policies must pay attention to equity, social inclusion, and strengthening the role of women in the workforce. Increasing the participation of women and vulnerable groups in the workforce provides significant

potential for economic growth and ensures social justice (Jenita et al., 2022). Improving the quality of human resources also requires continuous policy support from both the central and regional governments. An adaptive regulatory system, adequate funding, and regular evaluation of all programmes and educational curricula are essential to ensure that human resource development targets are effectively achieved. It is also important to provide recognition and incentives for local talent who excel, as well as to build an ecosystem that supports young innovators and entrepreneurs. This supportive environment fosters a competitive spirit, increases motivation, and ensures the sustainability of human resource quality improvement in the future (Hayati et al., 2024).

Lastly, the development of high-quality human resources is an investment in the nation's future. With human resources that are highly capable, productive, innovative, and of good character, Indonesia is not only able to catch up with others but also ready to become an independent and competitive nation on the global stage. Synergy between education, training, community involvement, and multi-sector collaboration is the key to its success.

The Relationship Between Curriculum, Education Policy, and Human Resource Development

Quality education is a fundamental pillar in building excellent and competitive human resources (HR). The existence of curriculum and education policy within the education system determines the direction, content, and objectives of creating HR that meets the needs of the times. Indonesia, with its diverse societal dynamics, prioritises the integration of curriculum and education policy as a key element in efforts to enhance HR quality (, 2020); (Aslan, Hifza, et al., 2020).

Systemically, the curriculum serves as a strategic instrument in the learning process. It determines the content, competencies, and character traits that need to be instilled in students. With the advancement of globalisation and technology, the national curriculum in Indonesia continues to be adapted to build 21st-century skills, such as critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration. This alignment is regulated through adaptive education policies to ensure that the education process remains relevant and efficient (Aslan & Wahyudin, 2020); (Rachmawati et al., 2020).

Education policies serve as a regulatory framework that supports and guides educational transformation towards national goals. Through policies such as the 2013 Curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum, the government promotes more contextual, interactive, and competency-based learning. Similar policies also prioritise character and moral development at all levels of education (Hikmawati, 2022).

Synergy between the curriculum and education policies occurs at the formulation and implementation stages. The central government, local governments, and various education stakeholders collaborate in curriculum development, setting national education standards, and supervising implementation in schools. The result is

diversity in learning models and curriculum innovation in accordance with the characteristics of educational units and the needs of students (Aminullah & Dewi, 2024).

One of the crucial factors in improving the quality of human resources is access to and equity in education. Policies such as the Indonesia Pintar (Smart Indonesia) Program, LPDP Scholarships, and the School Operational Assistance (BOS) system are designed to ensure that all segments of society have equal learning opportunities. This addresses disparities between economic, geographical, and social groups, thereby strengthening the national human resource base (Utami, 2022).

Teachers and educational staff are also a key focus in policy and curriculum synergy. Teacher quality is continuously improved through certification programmes, competency training, and professional incentives. High-quality teachers play a role in effectively implementing the curriculum, guiding, and maximising the potential of students (Putra, Setianto, et al., 2020); (Hifza & Aslan, 2020).

Strengthening technology in the education sector is an important part of contemporary policy. School digitalisation expands access to information and learning resources, enables distance learning programmes, and promotes digital literacy among the younger generation. These digital policies also support the flexibility of project-based curricula and creative activities (Indarta et al., 2022).

Improving the quality of human resources also prioritises vocational education and job skills. Vocational curricula, the revitalisation of vocational schools, and the integration of the business world through internship programmes are policy outcomes that target graduates who are ready to work, adaptable, and globally competitive (Ali, 2024).

Strengthening higher education through curriculum adjustments, institutional accreditation, and improving the quality of lecturers serves as the foundation for research and innovation. As a result, university graduates are expected to become leaders of change, innovative, and competitive at the international level. Education policies also continue to respond to internal challenges such as demographic changes, as well as external challenges in the form of technological disruption and global uncertainty. Education is directed towards maintaining the sustainability of future human resources through character training, strengthening work ethic, and digital literacy from an early age (Putra & Aslan, 2020).

On the other hand, an implementative curriculum plays a role in building non-academic competencies such as leadership, communication, and cooperation. Academic knowledge must now synergise with soft skills so that graduates are ready to face various dynamics in life and the world of work.

The integration of curriculum and educational policies is demonstrated through cross-sectoral collaboration—government, educational institutions, the business world, and society. The sustainability of this collaboration creates a supportive,

innovative learning environment that fosters a spirit of achievement among students (Rahmadayanti & Hartoyo, 2022).

Curriculum evaluation and adjustment, as well as educational policies, are conducted regularly based on national surveys, scientific research, and stakeholder input. The principle of educational decentralisation allows regions to adapt the curriculum to local contexts without compromising national standards. The quality of human resources can ultimately be measured through indicators of productivity, competitiveness, work ethics, and individual creativity. Countries with integrated curriculum and education policies have proven to produce innovative and adaptive human resources, strengthening the nation's position in the global economy (Lestari & Habibah, 2023).

However, challenges remain regarding disparities in education quality across regions, inadequate educational infrastructure, and the readiness of human resources in education management. Addressing these issues requires sustained policy commitment and the effective implementation of the curriculum at all levels of education (Fitri, 2023).

Looking ahead, the close relationship between curriculum and education policy will increasingly determine the direction of human resource development in Indonesia. The synergy between the two will not only produce intellectually intelligent graduates but also those who are character-driven, innovative, and ready to become part of the global community.

In conclusion, the symbiosis between curriculum and education policy is highly strategic for accelerating human resource quality. The implementation of a dynamic curriculum and transformative education policy support are the cornerstones for national progress and the realization of outstanding human resources in Indonesia.

Conclusion

Curriculum and education policy play a very strategic role in improving the quality of human resources (HR). A relevant, adaptive, and structured curriculum can be an effective tool for instilling 21st-century competencies and character in students, such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and digital literacy. Meanwhile, education policies provide direction, legal foundations, and regulatory frameworks to ensure that curriculum implementation and development align with contemporary needs and global demands.

Strong synergy between curriculum and education policy has proven to contribute to equitable access to education, improved teacher quality, technology utilisation, and strengthened vocational and higher education. Various strategic programmes, such as teacher certification and the Merdeka Curriculum, have demonstrated positive impacts in developing adaptive and competitive human resources. However, the success of these efforts also depends on continuous

evaluation, strengthening the role of teachers, and cross-sectoral collaboration to address implementation challenges in the field.

Thus, the relationship between curriculum and education policy is the cornerstone for the creation of high-quality human resources in Indonesia. Both aspects must continue to be developed and directed to adapt to global developments, societal needs, and the dynamics of the workforce, thereby realising a nation that is independent, innovative, and competitive at the international level.

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