

# **Implementation of Educational Planning: Optimizing the Curriculum to Improve the Efficiency and Quality of Education in the National Education System**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Educational planning is the intervention of government institutions, especially in directing and harmonizing national development. This study aims to examine how far education planning, especially in implementing the education curriculum in Indonesia. The method used is a qualitative method with triangulation in obtaining accurate data, in addition to obtaining secondary and primary data to support the accuracy of the researcher's data. It was found that almost 70% of educational units in Indonesia have implemented the Independent Curriculum. This curriculum gives greater freedom to schools to design learning programs that are in accordance with local needs, focusing on developing students' creativity and critical thinking skills, However, there are still around 30% of schools that have not implemented it, in its implementation there are challenges in education planning including 1) Low facilities and infrastructure 2) Opportunities for Educational Equity are still low 3) Curriculum changes that are so fast and many more, therefore cooperation between various parties must be optimized to achieve the goals of education planning in Indonesia.

Keywords: Educational Planning, Curriculum, Efficiency and Quality of Education

## **INTRODUCTION**

Educational planning is a crucial aspect in efforts to improve the efficiency and quality of education in the national education system. Education is a very important part in supporting national development, especially the development of competitive and quality human resources in various sectors of life. John Dewey (1950) in Suwarno Wiji (2019) that education as a reconstruction or in other words rearranging all experiences, it is hoped that these experiences can lead to future experiences. Education has the meaning of providing guidelines to a person's whole personality, and exploring and developing his talents. Education is believed to be a tool for national development in various sectors and as the key to success in the future. An international organization that plays a role in education, namely UNESCO (2011) in Permana Johar (2019) stated that education planning is the intervention of government institutions, especially in directing and harmonizing national development. In addition, there are things that must be considered, especially the relevance of education to the needs of the community in order to encourage the productivity of national, cultural and social economic growth.

Etymologically, the term "curriculum" comes from the word "curriculum" in English, which means learning plan (Echols, in Rian Hidayat, 2019). The word "curriculum" itself comes from the Latin term "currere," which contains the meaning of running fast, advancing quickly, exploring, and striving (Hasibuan, 2010). In the context of education, the curriculum is understood as teaching objectives, learning experiences, tools for learning, and assessment methods that are designed and applied. The curriculum can also be interpreted as a written document that details the amount of education that students must obtain through learning experiences. In accordance with the National Education System Law No. 20 of 2003, the

curriculum is defined as a series of plans and arrangements related to objectives, content, subject matter, and methods used as guidelines in the implementation of learning to achieve certain educational goals.

Educational planning is very important to improve the effectiveness and quality of education in the national education system. The curriculum serves as the main catalyst in this situation, which not only determines the learning material but also directs the entire educational activity. Therefore, in order to achieve the expected educational goals, alignment between the applied curriculum and broader education policies is essential. Good planning for the education system allows all parts to function optimally. This will improve the quality of graduates and the relevance of education to the needs of the community. It is imperative that various parties, including governments, educators, and the community, work together to achieve these goals. Education planning in the field will be strengthened with policy support and government funding. In addition, teacher capacity building through training and professional development is also an important component in ensuring effective curriculum implementation. Therefore, effective education planning will contribute significantly to improving the quality of education across the country. The implementation of the Independent Curriculum began on a limited basis in 2021 at Driving Schools spread across 111 districts/cities. In 2022, the implementation of the Independent Curriculum for the Independent Pathway will also begin to be implemented. According to data from the Center for Curriculum and Learning (Puskurjar) of the Ministry of Education and Culture, almost 70% of educational units in Indonesia have now implemented the Independent Curriculum through the Driving School Program, Vocational Schools of Excellence, and Independent Pathways.

The implementation of educational planning that aims to optimize the curriculum often faces various challenges that can interfere with the efficiency and quality of education. One of the main problems is the frequent changes in regulations, which creates uncertainty in the implementation of the curriculum. For example, in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, many schools are experiencing difficulties due to continuous revision and lack of in-depth understanding of the new policy. This has the potential to increase the learning load of students, who now have to face an increase in study hours from 46 to 50 hours per week, causing boredom and decreased interest in learning. In addition, the limitations of educational facilities and infrastructure are also a significant obstacle. Many schools still use unsuitable and hard-to-access buildings, which reduces community participation in education. These limitations have an impact on the effectiveness of learning, especially in the context of technology-based education where internet access is essential. On the other hand, the quality of teachers is also a major concern; Despite regulations regarding minimum qualifications, many educators have not met these standards, which has an impact on the quality of teaching and student learning outcomes. Ineffective curriculum management can also hinder the achievement of educational goals. Many educational institutions do not have a clear strategic plan to implement the curriculum optimally. This includes a lack of collaboration between education managers and educators in formulating policies and a lack of support from the government regarding funding and resources. All of these factors suggest that although educational planning has been well prepared, its implementation is often hampered by structural and cultural problems in the education system. Overall, to improve the efficiency and quality of education through curriculum planning, a more holistic and integrated approach is needed. This includes strengthening teacher capacity, providing adequate facilities and

infrastructure, and active involvement of all stakeholders in the curriculum planning and implementation process.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

In the preliminary stage, this is carried out by applying a qualitative descriptive approach. The activities carried out at this stage are to find the root of the problems that occur in the field regarding the implementation of educational planning in optimizing the curriculum in Indonesian Education. The field study activities aim to: 1) describe the importance of education planning in Indonesia, 2) analyze the extent to which the educational planning goals and curriculum implemented have been achieved, 3) prepare recommendations for educational planning conflicts on curriculum optimization in Indonesia. The type of data used in this study is primary data which includes data obtained directly in the field in the form of oral speech from several informants consisting of information from several samples in junior high school or high school in Malang City.

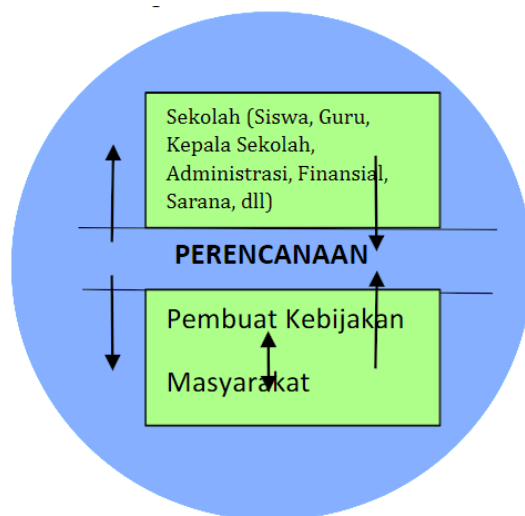
Furthermore, the data obtained is secondary data, namely data obtained to complement primary data in the form of school lesson plan documents, photos and other records that can be used as data sources. In this study, data collection techniques are also used, such as: 1) interviews, 2) observations, 3) documentation. The interview technique was carried out by interviewing informants in several schools in the city of Malang, this interview was conducted so that researchers could obtain accurate information about their learning plan, whether it was in accordance with the curriculum or not implemented at all. Interviews are conducted involving students, teachers and principals.

Observations are carried out with a triangulation approach, which is integrating observations with data from interviews and document analysis, which can ultimately increase the validity of the interpretation of research results. This triangulation serves to strengthen the findings by confirming or explaining information from various sources. After collecting data from various sources such as interviews, observations, and documents, the researcher conducted data reduction. The first step in the data reduction process is to group information based on specific themes or topics that are relevant to the research objectives. For example, these themes can include perceptions of conflicts, conflict resolution strategies, and the impact of educational planning. In addition, after data reduction, the researcher displays the data to convey the research findings to readers or the audience. The main purpose of data display is to provide a clear visualization or representation and describe the results of the research in a systematic and organized manner. The data display can present evidence or direct quotes from participants that support the research findings. The data display process carried out by the researcher helps strengthen the validity of the findings and shows the basis of the interpretation that has been carried out. By combining these steps, this research method not only provides an in-depth understanding of the implementation of educational planning through curriculum optimization, but also makes a significant contribution to the educational literature and planning practices in the field of education. This method is designed to produce reliable and relevant findings to support the improvement of overall school conditions in order to create a good climate

## RESULT

### THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATIONAL PLANNING

Referring to the Ministry of National Education (2006) in the work Permana Johar (2019), educational planning is defined as educational activities that focus on the future to achieve change. Here, change is a central issue for every educational institution. Husni Karna (2015) added that change is a fundamental element for humans. From the definitions that have been mentioned, it can be concluded that educational planning has a crucial role in management, especially in educational institutions or schools. Further explanation can be seen in figure 1.1.



Picture. 1.1: The Role of Educational Planning. (Matin, 2019)

Based on figure 1.1, it can be seen that the role of educational planning lies in a central position, likened to a sandwich. A planner has a very important position, surrounded by schools or educational institutions that include students, teachers, principals, administrative departments, finances, and infrastructure that support the teaching and learning process. In addition, there are policymakers, in this case the government, who play a role as a policy maker in the education sector. In addition, the community also plays an important role, because policies are formed through the relationship between the political system and the social control system that exists in society (Matin, 2019).

In this study, one of the examples of observations that we made was at the MA Alitihad Malang school, where there also carried out the education planning process well, the educational planning process at MA Al-Ittihad Poncokusumo Malang was carried out with a structured and sustainable approach, starting from needs analysis to program implementation. In the early stages, the institution conducts a needs analysis to identify various factors that affect education, including student aspirations and societal demands. This step is very important to determine the direction and focus of the educational planning to be implemented. Once the needs are identified, the next step is to formulate goals and objectives. The educational planning objectives at MA Al-Ittihad are determined based on the school's vision and mission, which emphasizes the formation of students who are faithful, knowledgeable, and have good morals.

This mission includes developing a positive attitude towards science as well as improving life skills that are relevant to the needs of society. Furthermore, in the stage of formulating policies and priorities, the school formulates strategies that will be used to achieve these goals. This strategy includes the development of relevant curriculums, the provision of quality human resources, and the improvement of educational facilities. MA Al-Ittihad also integrates non-academic activities such as entrepreneurship training and extracurricular activities to support the development of student competencies. After the plan is prepared, the implementation stage is carried out by involving all stakeholders in the school. Principals and teachers are responsible for implementing the plan in the daily teaching and learning process.

Learning activities are designed to be engaging and interactive, by actively involving students in the educational process. Finally, the educational planning process at MA Al-Ittihad does not stop at the implementation stage; There is also an evaluation stage to assess the success of the program that has been implemented. This evaluation is important to determine whether the set goals are being achieved as well as to make improvements if necessary. Thus, educational planning at MA Al-Ittihad is dynamic and responsive to the changing needs of students and society.

Based on the above research, it can be concluded that the goals of effective educational planning have a significant impact on the quality of an institution. In addition, planning is a strategic step that needs to be taken by every institution, especially in the field of education. Therefore, good management of educational planning will bring many benefits, and it is believed that proper planning has a great influence on the achievement of educational goals. Some of the benefits of educational planning according to Thahir Muthahharah, et al. (2021) include: First, it assists management in adapting to change, which is in line with Husni Karna's (2015) opinion that change is a key factor for educational institutions or schools; Second, the ability to overcome various problems in the institution or school environment; Third, providing an overview of tasks in the academic and non-academic sections; Fourth, creating efficiency in education budgeting.

## **CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION**

The curriculum changes emerged in response to the development of great thinking and desire to improve the delivery of education in Indonesia. Therefore, those who have authority in education regulations in Indonesia create innovations in the form of curriculum changes, which often occur in line with cabinet shifts or changes in the education minister. Since its inception, there have been a total of ten changes to the curriculum, with the aim of making it better and ideal when implemented (Yulia Rizki Ramadhani, 2021). However, in reality, the changes that are taking place so quickly are actually a challenge for the world of education. In addition to its suboptimal and optimal implementation, education practitioners, including educators and students, experience difficulties in adapting and understanding the new curriculum that continues to change in one educational period.

On the kemendikbud.go website, the transition from the 2013 Curriculum (K13) to the Independent Curriculum in Indonesia is a significant step in efforts to improve the quality of education. This process began on a limited basis in 2021 and has shown quite encouraging progress. The implementation of the Independent Curriculum began with Driving Schools in 111 districts/cities in 2021, followed by an independent path in 2022. As of August 2023, almost 70% of education units in Indonesia

have implemented the Independent Curriculum. This curriculum gives schools greater freedom to design learning programs that suit local needs, focusing on developing students' creativity and critical thinking skills, however, there are still about 30% of schools that have not implemented it, even though they have been informed about the new curriculum through various training programs and learning communities.

At MA Al-Ittihad Malang, researchers made observations on the curriculum that has taken place at the school, we found that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum at MA Alitihad, which switched from the 2013 Curriculum (K13), is a strategic step to improve the quality of education and the relevance of learning. The Independent Curriculum gives schools the flexibility to design a curriculum that suits the local needs and character of students, in contrast to K13 which is more structured and focuses on teaching materials. At MA Alitihad, the implementation of the Independent Curriculum emphasizes a student-centered learning approach, where teachers function as facilitators who support students' creativity and independence in the learning process.

One of the key changes is the integration of project-based learning, which allows students to be actively involved in the learning process. By allocating 20% of the total lesson hours for the project, students can apply their knowledge in a real context, thereby improving social skills and character according to the Pancasila student profile. In addition, MA Alitihad also organizes training for teachers to understand and apply the principles of the Independent Curriculum effectively, including the development of more flexible teaching and evaluation modules. Overall, the transition from K13 to the Independent Curriculum at MA Alitihad aims not only to improve teaching methods but also to create a learning environment that is more inclusive and responsive to the needs of students in the modern era. In addition, there are steps in preparing for the implementation of the Independent curriculum at MA Alitihad, namely 1) Basic understanding of the Independent curriculum, 2) Analysis of Student Needs and Potential, 3) Curriculum Design, 4) Teacher Training, 5) Curriculum Implementation, 6) Collaboration with Stakeholders, 7) Continuous Adjustment. The steps are detailed in the table below:

Steps	Information
Basic understanding of the Independent curriculum	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Independent Curriculum is more focused on competency development and project-based in learning, in addition to</li> <li>2. The Merdeka curriculum also provides flexibility for educational units to adjust the curriculum to the basic needs of students and regional potentials that are different from the previous curriculum.</li> </ol>

Analysis of Student Needs and Potential	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conduct surveys to find out students' interests, talents, and needs</li> <li>2. Consider the Local Context or regional needs that can be integrated into the curriculum</li> </ol>
Curriculum Design	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The curriculum must be able to be adjusted to the allocation of time, subjects and local content based on the results of the analysis</li> <li>2. Designing projects relevant to daily needs to improve critical and creative skills</li> </ol>
Teacher training	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Organizing training for educators to understand the principles of the Independent curriculum, including differentiated learning and authentic assessment</li> <li>2. Involve teachers in the curriculum development process so that they are responsive and committed to the implementation of the curriculum</li> </ol>
Curriculum Implementation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Creating lesson plans that are in accordance with the principles of the Independent curriculum and reducing the burden of teacher administration</li> <li>2. Implement mechanisms to monitor curriculum implementation and conduct periodic evaluations of its effectiveness</li> </ol>
Collaboration with Stakeholders	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Involve parents and the local community in developing a curriculum to enrich learning resources and learning contexts</li> </ol>
Continuous Adjustment.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Make continuous adjustments based on feedback from students, teachers, and other stakeholders to ensure the curriculum remains relevant and effective</li> </ol>

With these Steps, MA Alitihad can effectively apply the curriculum from K13 to the Independent curriculum, after the steps are implemented, the principal should review the extent of the teaching methods and teaching materials used to support the principles of the Independent curriculum.

## **CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS**

Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 of 2003 states that the purpose and function of education is to improve abilities and form a dignified national character and civilization, with the aim of educating people's lives. In addition, education aims to develop the potential of students so that they can become individuals of faith and piety, good morals, healthy, knowledgeable, skilled, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens (Article 3 of the National Education and Education Law (SISDIKNAS Law). However, there are challenges in carrying out educational planning, especially in implementing the curriculum, including the following:

1. Low facilities and infrastructure

In reality, this situation is very different from the conditions on the ground. In various regions in Indonesia, there are still many schools that do not meet the set standards, such as school buildings that have collapsed and are not suitable for use. Although the quality, facilities, and access to education in urban and rural areas have the same opportunities, the success of education is still influenced by the quality of education itself, facilities that include facilities and infrastructure, economic conditions, and other factors (Muhammad Ali, 2017).

2. Opportunity for Educational Equity Still Low

Based on Article 31 Paragraph 1 of the 1945 Constitution, it is stated that every Indonesian citizen has the right to a proper education. This needs to be a serious concern, considering that this year is the end of the national education development design period which aims to increase global competitiveness. The vastness of the territory of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia causes challenges in the equitable distribution of education. Many areas are difficult to reach and have minimal road access. This educational inequality creates a new problem, namely the gap between education in cities and in remote areas, so that the independent curriculum cannot be implemented in these areas.

3. Rapid Curriculum Changes

The growth of great ideas and ambitions to improve the education system in Indonesia has led to curriculum changes. The government and related institutions in charge of regulating education in our country periodically create curricular innovations whenever there is a change in the cabinet or a change in the Minister of Education. Since 2021, there have been 10 changes to the curriculum, all of which are targeted to make the curriculum better and more effective when used (Yulia Rizki Ramadhani, 2021). Unfortunately, these changes are too rapid and often not optimal in implementation. Education professionals, including teachers and students, find it difficult to adjust and understand the ever-changing curriculum in a short period of time.

The above challenges create problems in implementing and designing education planning, so there must be solutions to get alternatives in dealing with education cases, including

1. Improving Educational Infrastructure

One of the important steps is to improve educational infrastructure. The government needs to allocate sufficient funds for the construction and renovation of schools, especially in remote areas. This includes the provision of basic facilities such as proper school buildings, classrooms, libraries, and laboratories. In addition, it is important to equip the facility with relevant teaching materials and technology so that students can learn in a conducive environment

2. Equitable Distribution of Education and Education Assistance Programs

To increase educational equity, educational assistance programs for underprivileged families must be strengthened. This could include scholarships, tuition subsidies, and the provision of books and stationery. In addition, the government can introduce transportation programs to facilitate students' access to schools, especially in remote rural areas

3. Continuing Training for Educators

Rapid curriculum changes can result in confusion for educators and students. Therefore, there is a need for continuous training for teachers to understand and implement the new curriculum effectively. The development of teaching materials in accordance with the latest curriculum must also be carried out so that the teaching and learning process remains relevant and effective. In addition, there needs to be a periodic evaluation of the curriculum to ensure that the changes are in accordance with the needs of students and the times.

By implementing these solutions in an integrated manner, it is hoped that the challenges in education in Indonesia can be overcome and the quality of education can be significantly improved. Challenges are not an obstacle to the welfare of education in Indonesia, but the challenges actually make education in Indonesia will develop more by following a very dynamic tempo, therefore it is expected for all circles, both educators, educators, students and the community to assist and the government in advancing education planning in Indonesia.

## **CONCLUSION**

The implementation of effective education planning is the key to optimizing the curriculum and improving the efficiency and quality of education in the national education system. Through a systematic approach, educational planning must take into account the needs and characteristics of students, technological developments, and the demands of the ever-changing job market. By designing a curriculum that is flexible and relevant, and involves various stakeholders such as educators, parents, and the community, we can create a learning environment that supports the development of students' competencies holistically. In addition, regular evaluation and adjustment of the curriculum is essential to ensure that the education provided not only meets national standards but is also able to compete at the global level. Thus, careful educational planning will contribute to the creation of a generation that is ready to face future challenges and play an active role in nation building.

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