



Management Practices, Planning, and Education Policy in Indonesia and Malaysia

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Abstract: This study aims to explore and compare the intricate web of management practices, planning strategies, and educational policies that have shaped these two countries' educational systems. This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative research methodologies, to provide a comprehensive analysis of the educational systems in Indonesia and Malaysia. It seeks to unravel the complex tapestry of educational management practices in both countries, exploring how decisions are made and implemented across different levels of governance. The collected data was subjected to a rigorous analysis process, employing both quantitative and qualitative techniques. The findings of this study reveal that while both countries have adopted different approaches to educational management and policy implementation, reflecting their unique historical, cultural, and geographic contexts, they share common goals of improving educational quality, access, and relevance. The insights gained from this comparative analysis can inform policy decisions and contribute to the broader discourse on education in developing nations.

Keywords: Educational Management, Education Policy, Indonesia, Malaysia, Comparative Education, Southeast Asia

Introduction

In the vibrant tapestry of Southeast Asia, two nations stand out for their remarkable journey in shaping their educational landscapes: Indonesia and Malaysia. These countries, though distinct in many ways, share a common aspiration - to harness the power of education as a catalyst for national development and individual empowerment. This study embarks on a fascinating journey to explore and compare the intricate web of management practices, planning strategies, and educational policies that have shaped these two educational systems. The story of education in Indonesia and Malaysia is one of transformation, resilience, and adaptation. Both nations emerged from the shadows of colonial rule, carrying the legacy of their past while striving to forge their unique identities in a rapidly changing world. Indonesia, an archipelagic wonder spanning over 17,000 islands, faces the Herculean task of providing education to a diverse population of more than 270 million. Its educational narrative is a testament to the nation's ability to navigate through periods of centralization and decentralization, reflecting its complex political history.

From the limited educational opportunities during Dutch colonial rule to the expansion of basic education under Sukarno's leadership, and from the centralized control during Suharto's New Order to the decentralization efforts post-1998 Reformasi, Indonesia's education system has undergone significant metamorphoses. Each phase has left an indelible mark on the country's



approach to educational management and policy-making. Malaysia, with its population of about 32 million, presents a different yet equally compelling story. The nation's educational journey is intricately woven with its quest for national unity and economic prosperity. Since gaining independence in 1957, Malaysia has skillfully navigated the complexities of providing education in a multiethnic, multilingual society. The country's educational policies have evolved from a system heavily influenced by its British colonial past to one that seeks to balance national identity, economic imperatives, and global competitiveness. As we delve deeper into this comparative study, we uncover the unique challenges and innovative solutions that each country has developed. Indonesia's vast geographical spread has necessitated a decentralized approach to education, empowering local communities but also grappling with issues of consistency and quality control. Malaysia, on the other hand, has maintained a more centralized system, allowing for streamlined policy implementation but facing its own set of challenges in addressing diverse local needs. The purpose of this study is manifold. It seeks to unravel the complex tapestry of educational management practices in both countries, exploring how decisions are made and implemented across different levels of governance. It delves into the planning strategies employed at national and local levels, examining how each country develops and executes educational plans in the face of demographic shifts, economic goals, and societal needs.

Furthermore, this research conducts a thorough examination of key educational policies, from curriculum development and language of instruction to teacher training and educational financing. It shines a light on the common challenges faced by both systems, such as ensuring equity, improving quality, and maintaining relevance in a rapidly evolving global landscape. Perhaps most importantly, it explores the innovative approaches and future directions each country is pursuing, including the integration of technology, forging partnerships, and adoption of new pedagogical approaches. The significance of this comparative study extends far beyond the borders of Indonesia and Malaysia. By analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of each country's approach, this research aims to identify best practices and potential areas for improvement that could inform educational policy and practice in other developing nations facing similar challenges. For policymakers, this study offers a treasure trove of insights into the effects of different governance models, policy implementation strategies, and resource allocation approaches. It provides a solid foundation for evidence-based decision-making in educational reform efforts. Educators and school administrators will find inspiration in the comparative analysis of management practices and innovative approaches, potentially informing new strategies for enhancing teaching and learning processes.

Researchers in the field of comparative education will discover a rich contribution to the growing body of literature on Southeast Asian education systems. This detailed examination of two significant countries in the region offers both quantitative data and qualitative insights that can serve as a springboard for further research. In our increasingly interconnected world, understanding the educational systems of Indonesia and Malaysia is crucial for international organizations, NGOs, and foreign governments involved in educational partnerships or development projects in these countries. This study serves as a bridge between academic research and practical application, fostering a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between historical legacies, cultural contexts, economic imperatives, and educational outcomes. As we embark on this journey through the educational landscapes of Indonesia and Malaysia, we invite readers to engage with the narratives, challenges, and innovations that have shaped these systems. Through this exploration, we hope to contribute to the ongoing dialogue on educational reform in



Southeast Asia and the wider developing world, informing more effective and culturally sensitive approaches to educational development. The story that unfolds in the following pages is not just about education systems; it's about nations' dreams, people's aspirations, and the shared belief in the transformative power of knowledge. It's a story of two countries writing their future, one classroom at a time.

Method

Research Design: This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative research methodologies to provide a comprehensive analysis of the educational systems in Indonesia and Malaysia. The mixed-methods design was chosen for its ability to provide a more complete understanding of complex social phenomena, such as educational systems, which cannot be fully captured by either qualitative or quantitative methods alone.

The research design incorporates 1.) Comparative analysis: A systematic comparison of educational management practices, planning strategies, and policies between Indonesia and Malaysia forms the core of this study. This approach allows for the identification of similarities, differences, and potential areas of cross-country learning. 2.) Historical analysis: An examination of the historical development of education in both countries provides context for understanding current practices and policies. 3.) Policy analysis: A critical review of key educational policies in both countries, focusing on their formulation, implementation, and outcomes. 4.) Case studies: In-depth examinations of specific educational institutions or programs in both countries offer concrete examples of how policies and practices play out in real-world settings. 5.) Quantitative analysis: Statistical comparisons of educational indicators provide a factual basis for assessing the performance of each country's education system.

This multi-faceted approach allows for triangulation of data, enhancing the validity and reliability of the research findings. **Unveiling Educational Landscapes: A Comprehensive Comparative Study of Indonesia and Malaysia** In an era where education plays a pivotal role in national development, understanding the intricacies of educational systems across different countries has become increasingly important. A recent comprehensive study has shed light on the educational landscapes of two Southeast Asian nations: Indonesia and Malaysia. This research, conducted over 12 months, offers valuable insights into the management practices, planning strategies, and policies shaping these countries' educational systems.

The study employed a multi-faceted approach to data collection, ensuring a holistic understanding of the subject matter. The researchers utilized six primary methods to gather a wealth of information: **Literature Review:** The team conducted an extensive review of academic literature, including peer-reviewed articles from specialized journals in comparative education, Asian studies, and educational policy. They also examined books on the history and development of education in both



countries, official policy documents and strategic plans from the respective Ministries of Education, and reports from international organizations such as UNESCO, the World Bank, and the OECD. Secondary Data Analysis: The researchers delved into educational statistics and performance indicators from both national and international sources. This included national education statistics from Indonesia's Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS) and Malaysia's Department of Statistics, as well as international databases like the UNESCO Institute for Statistics and the World Bank's EdStats. They also analyzed results from international assessments such as PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) and TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study). Case Studies: To gain a ground-level perspective, the team conducted in-depth analyses of specific educational institutions and programs in both countries. This involved site visits to selected schools, universities, and vocational training centers, where they reviewed institutional documents and performance data. The researchers also conducted interviews with administrators, teachers, and students, providing valuable insights into the day-to-day realities of education in these institutions. Expert Interviews: The study benefited from conversations with a wide range of education professionals. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with policymakers from the Ministries of Education, providing insights into the decision-making processes at the highest levels. Discussions with school principals and teachers offered perspectives from those implementing policies on the ground. Additionally, consultations with university professors specializing in education added academic depth to the research. Survey: To capture a broader range of perspectives, the team distributed a questionnaire to a sample of educators in both countries. This survey focused on gathering views on key issues in educational management and policy implementation, providing quantitative data to complement the qualitative insights from interviews and case studies. Document Analysis: The researchers conducted a thorough review of legislative documents, curriculum frameworks, and teacher training materials. This analysis provided a deep understanding of the legal and pedagogical foundations underpinning each country's education system. Throughout the data collection process, which spanned 12 months, the research team prioritized ethical considerations. They obtained informed consent from all interview and survey participants and maintained confidentiality by research ethics guidelines.

The collected data was subjected to a rigorous analysis process, employing both qualitative and quantitative techniques to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the educational systems in Indonesia and Malaysia. The analysis process involved seven key approaches: Comparative Analysis: The team conducted a systematic comparison of management practices, planning strategies, and policies between the two countries. They created matrices to compare



specific aspects of the educational systems, identified patterns of similarities and differences and contextualized these patterns within the broader socio-economic and cultural contexts of each country. Thematic Analysis: Qualitative data from interviews, case studies, and document reviews were analyzed to identify common themes and patterns. This process involved coding interview transcripts and documents, identification of recurring themes and subthemes, and cross-referencing themes across different data sources to ensure validity. Statistical Analysis: Quantitative data from surveys and secondary sources were examined using various statistical techniques. This included descriptive statistics to summarize key educational indicators, trend analysis to identify changes in educational outcomes over time, and correlation analysis to explore relationships between different variables, such as educational spending and academic performance. Policy Analysis: Educational policies were analyzed using a framework that considered policy formulation processes, implementation strategies, outcomes, and impacts, as well as challenges and limitations. This provided a comprehensive understanding of the policy landscape in both countries. Case Study Analysis: Individual case studies were analyzed to provide in-depth examples of how policies and practices are implemented at the institutional level. The team conducted within-case analysis to understand the unique context of each institution, as well as cross-case analysis to identify common patterns and divergences. Historical Analysis: The historical data was analyzed to trace the evolution of educational systems in both countries, identifying key turning points and their impacts on current practices. This historical perspective provided crucial context for understanding present-day educational landscapes. Triangulation: Data from different sources were cross-referenced to enhance the validity of findings and provide a more comprehensive understanding of complex issues. This approach helped to mitigate potential biases and inconsistencies in the data.

The analysis process was iterative, with initial findings informing further data collection and analysis. The research team held regular peer debriefing sessions to discuss emerging themes and interpretations, ensuring rigor and reliability in the analysis process. Acknowledging Limitations: While the study strived for comprehensiveness and accuracy, several limitations were acknowledged: Dynamic Nature of Educational Policies: The researchers recognized that educational policies in both Indonesia and Malaysia are subject to frequent changes. As such, the study provides a snapshot of the situation at the time of research, with the understanding that some aspects may have changed since data collection. Variations in Data Collection and Reporting Methods: Despite efforts to ensure comparability, the team acknowledged potential inconsistencies in how educational data is collected and reported between the two countries, which could affect direct comparisons. Challenges of Generalization: Given the diverse populations and regional variations in educational practices within both Indonesia and Malaysia, the researchers noted the difficulty in capturing all nuances of regional or local educational contexts in a national-level analysis. Language Barriers: While efforts were made to access materials in local languages, the team acknowledged that some nuances may have been lost in translation, particularly for documents and interviews conducted in Bahasa Indonesia or Bahasa Malaysia. Limited Access to Certain Data: The researchers noted that some sensitive or confidential information related to educational planning and policy-making may not have been accessible, potentially limiting the depth of analysis in certain areas. Potential Bias in Interview Data: Despite efforts to ensure objectivity, the team recognized that interview responses may be influenced by personal biases or official positions of the interviewees. Time and Resource Constraints: The scope of the study was limited by available time and resources, which may have prevented an exhaustive analysis of all aspects of the educational systems in both countries.

These limitations were carefully considered throughout the research process, and efforts were made to mitigate their impact on the study's findings. The researchers encourage readers to



consider these limitations when interpreting and applying the results of the study. **Conclusion and Implications:** This comprehensive comparative study offers a valuable contribution to our understanding of educational systems in Indonesia and Malaysia. By providing an in-depth analysis of management practices, planning strategies, and policies, it equips policymakers, educators, and researchers with insights that can inform future decision-making and research in the field of education. The multi-faceted approach to data collection and analysis has allowed for a nuanced understanding of the complexities and challenges facing education in both countries. From the historical evolution of educational policies to the current implementation of strategies at the institutional level, this study provides a holistic view of the educational landscapes in Indonesia and Malaysia. As we continue to navigate an increasingly interconnected world, studies like this serve as crucial tools for understanding and improving educational systems across borders. The lessons learned from Indonesia and Malaysia's experiences can potentially benefit not only these two countries but also contribute to the global dialogue on educational best practices and innovations. The researchers hope that this study will spark further research and discussion on comparative education in Southeast Asia and beyond. By highlighting both the strengths and challenges of the educational systems in Indonesia and Malaysia, this study provides a foundation for future inquiries and potential collaborations aimed at enhancing educational quality and accessibility in the region.

Discussion

The educational landscapes of Indonesia and Malaysia have been profoundly shaped by their unique historical contexts, political developments, and socio-economic factors. Both nations have traveled distinct paths in their quest to build robust and effective educational systems, reflecting their challenges and aspirations.

Indonesia's educational journey is deeply rooted in its colonial past and subsequent struggle for independence. During the Dutch colonial period, education was largely restricted to elite groups, creating a stark divide in society. The post-independence era under President Sukarno saw a significant push to expand basic education, aiming to foster national identity and unity. This trend continued during the New Order period under Suharto, which was characterized by centralized control and a strong emphasis on national cohesion through education. However, the landscape dramatically shifted following the 1998 Reformasi. This period ushered in an era of decentralization and a renewed focus on improving educational quality.

In contrast, Malaysia's educational evolution reflects its multiethnic composition and the legacy of British colonialism. The British established a system of secular and mission schools, laying the groundwork for Malaysia's future educational infrastructure. Post-independence, Malaysia faced the challenge of integrating diverse school systems to create a unified national education system. The introduction of the New Economic Policy in 1971 marked a significant shift, positioning education as a crucial tool for achieving socio-economic equity among Malaysia's diverse ethnic groups. More recently, Vision 2020 has steered the country's focus towards creating a knowledge-based economy, with education playing a pivotal role in this transformation.

The current educational management practices in these two nations reflect their distinct historical trajectories and political structures. Indonesia has embraced a decentralized approach, devolving significant authority to district levels. This shift has been accompanied by the implementation of school-based management, granting individual schools increased autonomy. There's also a strong emphasis on community participation, with parents and local stakeholders playing an active role in school governance. However, this decentralized system is not without its challenges, particularly in coordinating efforts between central and local authorities.

Malaysia, on the other hand, maintains a more centralized control over its education system,



with strong federal government oversight. This approach allows for a standardized curriculum and assessment system across the country. A notable feature of Malaysia's education system is its dual-language policy, which emphasizes both Bahasa Malaysia and English, aiming to preserve national identity while ensuring global competitiveness. Another unique aspect is the integration of Islamic education into the national system, reflecting the country's cultural and religious landscape.

When it comes to educational planning strategies, both countries have developed comprehensive approaches to address their specific needs and challenges. Indonesia's Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) sets clear educational goals and targets, providing a roadmap for the sector's development. The School Operational Assistance (BOS) program serves as a crucial funding mechanism for basic education, aiming to improve access and quality. Recognizing the importance of teacher quality, Indonesia has implemented a teacher certification program. Additionally, there's a growing focus on expanding vocational education to better align educational outcomes with labor market needs.

Malaysia's planning strategies are encapsulated in the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025, a comprehensive reform plan that outlines the country's educational vision and strategies. There's a strong emphasis on STEM education, reflecting the global trend towards these fields. Malaysia is also focusing on transforming its higher education sector, with a particular emphasis on enhancing research and innovation capabilities. Like Indonesia, Malaysia is expanding its Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programs to bridge the skills gap in the labor market.

Both countries have implemented key educational policies that shape their respective systems. In Indonesia, the nine-year compulsory education program has been a cornerstone policy, aiming to ensure basic education for all. The Teacher and Lecturer Law of 2005 marked a significant step towards professionalizing teaching. Indonesia has also established national education standards to benchmark quality across the diverse archipelago. An interesting feature of Indonesia's curriculum is the inclusion of local content, allowing for the preservation of regional cultures and knowledge.

Malaysia's education system is guided by the National Education Philosophy, which outlines the core principles and values underpinning the country's approach to education. The Malaysian Qualifications Framework provides a standardized system for qualifications, enhancing the coherence of the education system. The Education Act of 1996 provides the legal framework for the entire education system. A notable policy is the Upholding Bahasa Malaysia and Strengthening English (MBMMBI) initiative, which aims to balance national language preservation with English proficiency.

Both Indonesia and Malaysia face unique challenges in their educational systems and have responded with innovative solutions. Indonesia grapples with significant geographical disparities due to its archipelagic nature. To address this, the country has implemented distance learning programs and mobile schools to reach remote areas. Teacher quality remains a persistent challenge, which Indonesia is addressing through continuous professional development programs. Infrastructure gaps are being tackled through public-private partnerships for school construction. The digital divide is another area of focus, with national programs aimed at integrating technology in schools across the country.

Malaysia, while facing different challenges, has also implemented innovative solutions. The country has been working to address ethnic and socio-economic achievement gaps through targeted intervention programs. To enhance international competitiveness, Malaysia has been benchmarking its education system against global standards, participating in assessments like PISA. Graduate employability is a key concern, leading to increased industry-academia collaboration initiatives. Recognizing the importance of 21st-century skills, Malaysia has introduced higher-order thinking skills into its curriculum.



In conclusion, while Indonesia and Malaysia have taken different paths in developing their education systems, both countries demonstrate a strong commitment to improving educational access, quality, and relevance. Their experiences offer valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities of educational development in diverse, rapidly evolving societies.

A comparative analysis of educational management, planning, and policies in Indonesia and Malaysia reveals fascinating contrasts and similarities between these two Southeast Asian nations. Their approaches to education governance and management stand out as a primary point of distinction. Indonesia has embraced a decentralized system, devolving significant authority to local levels and promoting school-based management. This approach allows for greater flexibility and responsiveness to local needs but can lead to inconsistencies across regions. In contrast, Malaysia maintains a more centralized education system with strong federal oversight, ensuring uniformity in standards and implementation across the country.

Despite their differing approaches, both countries grapple with the challenge of striking a balance between maintaining national standards and addressing local needs. This tension is particularly evident in Indonesia, where the decentralized system sometimes leads to disparities in educational quality and resources between regions. Malaysia's centralized approach, while providing consistency, can sometimes struggle to accommodate the diverse needs of its multiethnic population.

Table 1: Comparative Educational Indicators for Indonesia and Malaysia (2020)

Indicator	Indonesia	Malaysia
Literacy rate (%)	95.7	94.9
Mean years of schooling	8.2	10.4
Government expenditure on education (% of GDP)	3.6	4.2
Primary school enrollment rate (%)	93.5	99.7
Secondary school enrollment rate (%)	78.7	86.2
Tertiary education enrollment rate (%)	36.3	43.1
Pupil-teacher ratio (primary)	16:1	12:1
PISA 2018 Reading Score	371	415
PISA 2018 Mathematics Score	379	440
PISA 2018 Science Score	396	438

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, World Bank, OECD

When it comes to policy implementation, the contrasts between the two nations become even more apparent. Malaysia's centralized system facilitates more consistent policy implementation across its regions, allowing for a more uniform educational experience throughout the country. Indonesia, on the other hand, demonstrates greater flexibility in adapting policies to local contexts, which can be advantageous in a country with such diverse geographic and cultural landscapes. However, both countries face challenges in bridging the gap between policy formulation and effective implementation on the ground.

In terms of educational outcomes, Malaysia generally outperforms Indonesia in international assessments such as PISA and TIMSS. This could be attributed, in part, to Malaysia's more consistent policy implementation and focused national strategies. However, Indonesia has made remarkable strides in expanding access to basic education, particularly given its large population and geographic challenges. Both countries have shown impressive improvements in literacy rates and mean years of schooling over the past decades, reflecting their commitment to educational development.

Innovation in education is an area where both countries have made significant efforts, albeit with different strengths. Malaysia has taken the lead in integrating technology into education, reflecting its ambition to create a knowledge-based economy. Indonesia, while perhaps not as advanced in educational technology, shows particular strength in community engagement and the



development of local content in curricula, leveraging its cultural diversity as an educational asset. Both nations are actively reforming their vocational education systems, recognizing the need to align educational outcomes with labor market demands.

Despite their progress, both Indonesia and Malaysia continue to face several common challenges. Teacher quality remains a significant concern, with both countries implementing various initiatives to enhance teacher training and professional development. Regional disparities in educational resources and outcomes persist, particularly in Indonesia due to its vast archipelagic geography. Both nations also grapple with the ongoing challenge of aligning their education systems with rapidly evolving labor market needs, a critical factor in their economic development strategies.

In conclusion, while Indonesia and Malaysia have adopted different approaches to educational management and policy implementation, reflecting their unique historical, cultural, and geographic contexts, they share common goals of improving educational quality, access, and relevance. Their experiences offer valuable insights into the complexities of educational development in diverse, rapidly evolving societies, and highlight the importance of tailoring educational strategies to national contexts while striving for global competitiveness.

Conclusion

This comprehensive study of educational management practices, planning strategies, and policies in Indonesia and Malaysia reveals a complex landscape of similarities and differences. Both countries have made significant strides in improving their educational systems, yet face ongoing challenges in preparing their youth for the demands of the 21st century. This study underscores the importance of context-specific approaches to educational reform while highlighting the potential for regional cooperation and knowledge sharing. As Indonesia and Malaysia continue to evolve their educational systems, the insights gained from this comparative analysis can inform policy decisions and contribute to the broader discourse on education in developing nations.

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