



Education in Indonesia (Merdeka Curriculum) and Japan Curriculum : What's the Difference?

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is analyze of the differences in education between Indonesia, which has begun to develop an independent curriculum, and education in Japan. This study used the systematic literature review method. The population consists of 99 articles that discuss education in Indonesia and Japan, and were published between 2010 and 2022. From 99 articles, 29 articles were sampled. This study used documentation instruments in the form of articles published with criteria for selecting these 29 articles as samples, which were articles published in nationally accredited journals, indexed proceedings, and Scopus-indexed international journals and then analyzed using thematic analysis. The results obtained are that the significant fundamental differences in education in Japan and Indonesia lie in international education, character education, ethics and discipline and fields of study. The implication of this research is that in the development of a new curriculum, elements of culture and values are still prioritized as the characteristics and profile characteristics of graduates.

Article History

Received: 20-09-2022
Revised: 23-10-2022
Accepted: 19-11-2022
Published: 16-03-2023

Key Words:

Education; Merdeka Curriculum;
International Education; Character Education; Japan; Indonesia.

How to Cite: Prakoso, A., Andriansyah, E., Rafsanjani, M., Nurlaili, E., & Arif, A. (2023). Education in Indonesia (Merdeka Curriculum) and Japan Curriculum : What's the Difference?. *Jurnal Kependidikan: Jurnal Hasil Penelitian dan Kajian Kepustakaan di Bidang Pendidikan, Pengajaran dan Pembelajaran*, 9(1), 162-173. doi:<https://doi.org/10.33394/jk.v9i1.6992>



<https://doi.org/10.33394/jk.v9i1.6992>

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Introduction

Japan is a country that implemented character education in schools, which is called moral education, and contains education about citizenship as a character education for children in the world of education. The Japanese government has long designed character-based education for all levels of education since 1970 (Mulyadi, 2020). Japan divides into three parts of teaching civic education, namely moral education, social studies and special education. The National Standardized Curriculum Reform Council in Japan states that the aim of education at the elementary school level in Japan is to educate school students who are able to integrate into social life both as individuals and as members of society. Schools in Japan instill moral education through several areas of study, namely self-awareness, relationships with others, relationships with a group and society and relationships with the universe. The implementation of moral education in Japan is a shared responsibility which includes: schools, families, and society. These three elements are mutually integrated in developing character education for school-age children. This means that it is not only schools that have the greatest responsibility in forming a noble character for school children, but families and communities fill each other's roles in forming individuals who have a strong character in Japan (Cipta, 2017).

Japan is the country with the good education system in the world, because Japan already has many supporting facilities and qualified human resources. Japan is used as a benchmark by developing countries as a mecca for improving the quality of education (Johan, 2018). Other studies state that Indonesia is a country with poor quality education. PISA



revealed that Indonesia is currently on the 72nd list of 77 countries, with indicators of teacher competence and the education system that are still low in Indonesia (Sulfemi, 2019).

Indonesia is also included in assessments conducted by international institutions such as Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), and Program for International Assessment (PISA). TIMSS is implemented with the aim of monitoring the results of the education system on student learning achievement in Mathematics and Science which has been implemented routinely for four years from 1995 to 2015 (Aniswita et al., 2021). PIRS is a reading literacy test reference that is used throughout the world, especially in Indonesia. PIRS was applied in Indonesia in the assessment of Indonesian reading literacy for elementary school teachers in 2001, 2006 and 2011 (Pratiwiningsih, Bekti Nanda; Susilaningsih, Endang; Sudana, 2017). Referring to PISA research conducted by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 2015, the reading ability of 15-year-old Indonesian children is below the average of 72 other countries, with a score of 397. This figure is far behind neighboring countries such as Singapore, which became number one with a score of 535 (Puspitarini, 2019).

The level of education in Indonesia starts from the earliest level, namely Early Childhood Education, Play Groups. Play Group education is intended for children ranging from 0-6 years old, Play Group education is intended for children to further develop, grow both physically and mentally, and spiritual children. Furthermore, after Play Group, it will be continued with basic education, the level is from grade one to grade six, so the total time is six years, followed by three years in junior high school. Then it is continued with this secondary school of education known or called Senior High School for three years the time taken. This higher education is broader, because it includes Diploma, bachelor, magister, doctoral and specialists (Suryaningrum et al., 2016). The level of education in Japan starts from Primary Education, Secondary education, higher education and doctoral program (Aniswita et al., 2021).

Based on previous research on comparative education in Japan and Indonesia, we know the strengths and weaknesses of the two countries. The not-yet-maximal application of ethical values in education in Japan with the modernization of people's lifestyles makes it necessary to improve the education system in Japan (Cynarski & Jong-Hoon, 2021). Indonesia is developing a new curriculum with the name independent curriculum which is still in the implementation stage and needs input in its development, so it is important that this research is carried out as a reference for the improvement of the two countries.

In this research, it aims to describe the implementation of education in two different countries in Asia so that recommendations can be obtained for improving the education of the two countries, namely Indonesia and Japan. Japan is known as a country that has a strong culture that unites with every community in the country, as well as Indonesia which has a strong culture. This article is interesting because it compares the two implementations of education so that it can be used as material to add insight for each country in implementing education in order to achieve optimal results (Lubis, 2019).

Research Method

This study used the systematic literature review method. The literature study method consists of collecting library data, reading, taking notes, and managing research materials (Zed, 2014). In this Literature review, the researcher comprehensively summarizes the research that has been conducted on a specific topic to show the reader what is already known about the topic and what is not known, to seek a rationale for the research that has been done



or for further research ideas (Denney & Tewksbury, 2013). In this study, the population consisted of 99 articles that discussed education in Indonesia and Japan, and were published between 2010 and obtained 31 samples. This study used documentation instruments in the form of articles published with criteria for selecting these 29 articles as samples were articles published in nationally accredited journals, indexed proceedings, and Scopus indexed international journals and then analyzed using thematic analysis.

Results and Discussion

The following will explain a comparison between the education system in Indonesia and the education system in Japan:

Table 1. Comparison of Indonesian and Japanese Education Systems

Aspect	Indonesia	Jepang
<i>International Education at the High School Level to College</i>	educational cooperation between private and government institutions, costs a lot because there are only private schools	Super global high school and international baccalaureate programs in private and public
<i>Character Education Concept</i>	Most have not implemented character education policies and administration	Considered important and have special treatment.
<i>Environmental Education based on local wisdom</i>	Still at the development stage in the independent curriculum	It has been developed from the start through the kikigaki program
<i>Basic Education Focus</i>	Focus on characteristics that are adapted to the vision of various schools	Focus on moral education and personality
<i>School time</i>	7 hours	6 hours
<i>Ethics and Discipline</i>	It has been implemented since kindergarten	Ethics education began to be applied, for example, in extracurricular martial arts
<i>Field of Study Lessons in the School</i>	Many fields of study	Fewer and focus on areas that are passionate
<i>Student Mindset</i>	More often in memorization and just starting to be developed towards critical thinking skills through experience (Independence Curriculum)	Problemsolving and critical thinking in learning
<i>Transportation</i>	Motorcycles and private cars	Walk, bike, public transport
<i>School supplies</i>	The use of luxury goods is in accordance with the economic conditions of the family	Wear special shoes for school and use a bag provided by the school
<i>Lunch menu</i>	According to student tastes, free without school interference in determining standard food menus.	Eating the same food with the teacher in class by applying high nutritional quality.
<i>School Cleanliness</i>	Using a student picket system and	Every time they come home



	there are still school cleaners.	from school they work together to clean the school without any janitors.
<i>School uniforms</i>	Different colors and uniform models. (e.g. red, white, batik and scouts)	Wearing clothes like sailors and military
<i>The Role of Society in Education</i>	Just developing education with community participation through an independent curriculum.	Society has an important role and is included in the educational process since the 19th century
<i>Policies Related to SDGs</i>	Focus on improving infrastructure, services and character education. The implementation of free education is only for the underprivileged community.	Improving education with special needs. Implementation of free education for the level of early childhood education to early education.

An explanation of the differences in the Indonesian and Japanese education systems in table 1 will be explained further as follows.

International Education at the High School Level to Higher Education.

International education is a country's effort to prepare schools and tertiary institutions with a curriculum equivalent to an internationally recognized curriculum, one example is the Cambridge curriculum. Through International Education, the governments of Indonesia and Japan have strived to build a skilled workforce that combines global competence and national identity. However, the Indonesian government implements International Education in Educational Cooperation Institutions, thereby limiting International Education to children from wealthy families. Meanwhile, the Japanese government's International Education policy is more varied, with the Global Super High School and International Baccalaureate programs, and is more popular because International Education is implemented not only in private schools but also in public schools. Furthermore, the two countries use different management techniques for international programs (Arfani & Nakaya, 2019).

Indonesian is a compulsory subject because it is related to national identity as part of the national curriculum. Whereas in Japan it achieves this with a credit transfer system and multiple teaching media. This also influences the opinions of students and parents regarding International Education. Students and parents from both countries share the same views regarding college preparation, noting that international education creates difficulties for entering domestic universities while also serving as preparation for entrance exams for studying abroad. Indonesian and Japanese parents also reported that they considered the International Education curriculum to be superior to the national curriculum. In addition, Japanese parents noted its superiority in terms of experience with other cultures. Regarding identity, parents in both countries are concerned that their children will lose their national identity when they become global individuals. (Arfani & Nakaya, 2019).

The Concept of Character

Implementation of character education in schools, both at the early childhood level, junior and senior high schools and universities, has various strategies. The strategies used in implementing character education are 1) integrating values and ethics in subjects; 2) internalization of positive values instilled by all school members (principals, teachers and



parents); 3) habituation and practice; 4) giving examples and role models; 5) creating an atmosphere of character in schools and 6) acculturation. Meanwhile, the implementation of character education is carried out through integration between character building and school and extracurricular learning and management (Syamsurrijal, 2018).

This study describes the deficiencies in the implementation of character education in Indonesia, with the results showing that most schools do not have policies and administration regarding character education, most schools have an environment that supports the implementation of character education, most teachers do not have good competence, some most schools have used the curriculum and most teachers have not used assessments that are suitable for character education and some communities have not supported the implementation of character education (Syamsurrijal, 2018).

In Japan character education is considered important to be given special treatment, including: 1) Post It Acknowledgments or what is called Arigatou Posuto Itto in Japanese. These kinds of stickers are usually used with the intention of saying thank you to friends who have lent items or have shared their supplies. Even though it looks like something small, this little thing teaches children or the community not to forget to thank people who have helped us. 2) The Environmental Security Map in Japanese terms is called the Chiiki Anzen Mappu. This concept is taught in schools in Japan to educate students to care about the environment around them. The map is the work of the students with the intention of reminding people who see it that for example on a road there are many bends so that everyone can be careful. 3. Gotong Royong, this type of education is usually in the form of dividing picket schedules to clean up the classroom where the schedule is posted on the wall. 4) Educating to Always Have Goals, teaching by making targets from students written under the student's photo. These targets are in the form of simple targets, for example the target to get up early, not to be late for school, and so on. This target can also be a monthly target or an annual target. 5) Handwritten Newspapers, also known as Tegaki Shinbun, where students make these newspapers with an attractive design or layout. 6) Sharpening Empathy, where one of the forms is not giving long and boring speeches to students. How to accustom children to these things, they are taught to have a high work ethic, obey rules, be disciplined, and have high creativity (Syamsurrijal, 2018). Dynamic efforts to shape the character of the two nations are also carried out through a chronological exploration of the experiences of Japan and Indonesia in two dimensions there are administration and curriculum. Nationalization, localization and internationalization perspectives are applied. Despite the stark differences in national character, the two countries have envisioned the role of nationalism in their civics education curricula from an early stage.

Given Indonesia's heterogeneity, the nation's character has experienced a transition from time to time from the independent-spiritual period to development and consolidation, democratic/local initiatives, and religious/national standard patriotism. Japan's more homogeneous national character has transitioned over a longer period of time from a period of Westernization/ modernization to Confucianism/emperor-centered, democracy and peace-building, public- oriented, and love of country and territory/re-patriotism. The character of the nation has changed dynamically according to national goals and priorities, reflecting the historical background of each country. These aspects produce a unique national character from the citizenship education of each country, especially regarding globalization (Arfani & Nakaya, 2020).



Environmental Education based on local wisdom

Environmental education is very important at this time because apart from being an effort to preserve the natural environment, it is also an effort to save local wisdom and culture related to environmental preservation. Environmental education can not only be carried out through formal learning in schools as well as counseling and training, but also through a social approach by studying existing local wisdom that has been proven capable of month-year protecting and preserving the environment from generation to generation. A technique also began to be developed in Japan, called kikigaki, to pass on knowledge about environmental preservation from the older generation to the younger generation. Kikigaki literally means listening and writing. This method has also begun to be developed in several places in Indonesia. This provides an opportunity for young people to learn the history of actors or permits while living or working close to the environment. Kikigaki includes two functions, as the preservation of the natural environment, as well as human and environmental history and the culture that surrounds it. Therefore environmental education based on local wisdom through kikigaki needs to be developed in Indonesia because it has the opportunity to be enriched with the experience and culture that exists in Indonesia (Effendi, 2019).

Basic Education Focus

The basic education system in these two countries is of course different. In Japan, basic education is education after kindergarten and before junior high school, between the ages of 6-12 years. This is of course different from the age limit conditions in several countries which apply a minimum age limit of elementary school students of 7 years. Basic education in Japan does focus on moral and personality education which is not taught through special subjects, but is practiced in everyday life. Basic education in Japan does focus on moral and personality education which is not taught through special subjects, but is practiced in everyday life (Puspitarini, 2019). In Indonesia the pattern of education is currently experiencing many changes since the 1998 reform. The education system is no longer centralized or decentralized, since the introduction of School-Based Management (SBM) and educational autonomy, each education unit has the freedom to determine the pattern of education to be implemented, although this has not been fully implemented, especially in public schools. As for private schools in Indonesia, they have started to do better school development, and have even expanded cooperation with various countries. Currently, both public and private schools have almost the same quality of education, and each has characteristics that are tailored to the school's vision. Opportunities for collaboration with various parties are starting to open up, because school-based management seems to require every school to involve the community and the business world to collaborate in developing schools (Puspitarini, 2019). In its development, the independent curriculum exists to restore the post-covid 19 transitional curriculum which is directed at a more flexible curriculum that gives teachers flexibility in teaching and according to student characteristics (Aletheiani, 2021).

School time

School hours in Japan start from 8.00 to 15.00, in Indonesia it starts from 07.15 to 15.15 so in Indonesia it is one hour longer. In Japan, if students arrive late they will be asked for an agreement and didn't it again, in Indonesia students are given punishments such as standing on flagpoles, picking grass, etc. (Montanesa & Firman, 2021). Education in Japan continues to develop collaborative education after school between schools and the community



, it was introduced since 2009 and continues to carry out educational reforms with due regard to future policy focus (Bae & Kanefuji, 2018; Kanefuji, 2018). The length of time working for a teacher affects the psychological level of the teacher (Bannai et al., 2015) and certainly influences how the teacher treats his students in class.

Ethics and Discipline

Students in Japan only take subject exams when they are in fourth grade or the equivalent of a 10-year-old child, because at the age of three, children are given an important understanding related to procedures for daily behavior and polite values. Education in Japan has begun to apply Japanese traditional values, one of which is in an extra curriculum similar to martial arts in Japan which maintain ethics and traditions in competing and facing opponents (Cynarski & Jong-Hoon, 2021). In Indonesia, discipline has been applied to students since kindergarten, over time this discipline began to decline. Discipline still needs to be improved as well as ethics which are experiencing a decline, even in Indonesia it is very difficult for children to queue when shopping. (Montanesa & Firman, 2021).

Field of Study Lessons in the School

The fields of study studied at schools in Japan are fewer than the subjects in Indonesia, so that students can focus more on the subjects they enjoy. Japan applies learning by linking one field of study to another with the lesson study method developed in education (Baba et al., 2018; Kusanagi, 2021; Makinae, 2019). In Indonesia, students are expected to be able to master many subjects, this makes students feel pressured and feel bored at school (Montanesa & Firman, 2021).

Student Mindset

Students in Japan are taught more about how to solve a problem/problem solving, and to think more critically in the learning process (Arani et al., 2010; Ishibashi & Uegatani, 2022; Yeung et al., 2023). In Indonesia, children are more often invited to memorize by teachers at school (Montanesa & Firman, 2021). Post-covid-19 curriculum changes are directed at a flexible curriculum with student-centered learning. Students are directed to the ability to think critically and find learning through the experiences they get in the way they choose to find it. Efforts to realize the success of the independent curriculum by using learning methods with case-based and project-based approaches that emphasize learning through the process, not just students' final grades (Christwardana et al., 2022; Zen et al., 2022).

Transportation

Students in Japan are advised to walk to school, use bicycles or use public transportation (Hino et al., 2021; Yoh et al., 2022). In Indonesia, many students bring motorbikes and cars to school. In Japan, children walk or ride bicycles to be healthier and more enthusiastic about going to school (Montanesa & Firman, 2021).

School supplies

At Japanese schools, when entering class, they use special shoes at school so that dirt does not get on the school floor, students also use bags provided by the school. In Indonesia, children use luxury goods to go to school and it shows which class of children is rich and lacking (Montanesa & Firman, 2021).



Lunch menu

Students in Japan eat the same food every lunch and also drink the same as their teachers in class. The lunch menu is also under the spotlight of the Japanese government by implementing nutritional quality standards that are consumed by students (Maruyama & Kurokawa, 2018; Nagura & Takahashi, 2018). In Indonesia students eat the food they like according to their tastes, in Indonesia children can freely choose whether they want to bring food from home or snacks from school (Montanesa & Firman, 2021).

School Cleanliness

In Japan, students come home from school at 3 in the afternoon. The children work together to clean up the school environment, which is called O-Soji. There is no school worker on duty to clean up the school environment. Schools in Japan implement a clean, hygienic and healthy school environment (Nohara et al., 2021; Sugita, 2021). In Indonesia, children clean their school in the morning before going to class (Montanesa & Firman, 2021).

School uniforms

Girls in Japan wear clothes like sailor clothes and men wear uniforms like the military, the clothes are thick and long sleeves. The use of Japanese student uniforms illustrates the political and social conditions of Japanese society by uniforming their clothing models, but it does not rule out the possibility of these uniforms developing to follow styles that are also trends in today's youth, for example the length of student skirts and so on (Choi, 2012; Lee et al., 2021). Indonesia has different uniforms such as red and white, batik, and scouts (Montanesa & Firman, 2021).

Role of the Community in Education

Forms of community participation in the implementation of elementary school education in Japan and Indonesia, namely: a) being a Tutor, b) being involved in the School Committee, c) being involved in the Association of Teachers and Parents, d) being a Volunteer (Volunteers), e) form a School Committee, and f) form a Parent and Child Association (Baharuddin & Bumbungan, 2018).

Elements of society who participate in the implementation of elementary school education in Japan and Indonesia, namely: a) parents/guardians of students, b) community leaders, c) alumni, d) school committee members, e) foundation owners, f) members experts, and g) students (Baharuddin & Bumbungan, 2018). Modernization in Japan has been carried out since the 19th century where students were the most important actors in Japanese development (Entrich, 2015). Education in Japan involves the community in the process and the education system in Japan plays an important role in society (Huang, 2020)

Steps for community participation in organizing elementary school education in Japan and Indonesia, namely: a) preparing/discussing/agreeing on programs, b) forming work teams/task units, c) sharing ideas/issues/ technical implementation of activities, d) coordinating in the program, e) participate in realizing the program in accordance with the duties and authorities, f) criticize/ monitor/ evaluate the implementation of the program, g) follow up on the findings of the assessment results, h) engage in strengthening the main children's (student) character learning at home, i) engage in the evaluation process by providing information to the school related to the development of their children or even the weaknesses they face in educating their children at home, and j) donating education funds for both physical and non-physical development such as outdoor activities with educational nuances held by the school (Baharuddin & Bumbungan, 2018).



Policies Related to SDGs

Policies that support SDGs by implementing free education from early childhood education to higher education, then Japan is also making efforts to increase special needs education. In Indonesia the policy is to increase the accessibility and quality of education, improve the quality of educators and educational support facilities, improve educational services, and strengthen and develop character education (Muslim et al., 2021). The implication of this research is that in the development of a new curriculum, elements of culture and values are still prioritized as the characteristics and profile characteristics of graduates.

Conclusion

From the reviewed articles, the research concluded that the significant fundamental difference between education in Japan and Indonesia lies in international education, character education, ethics and discipline. Education in Indonesia continues to develop itself, one of which is through improving the curriculum used, namely the independent curriculum with the aim of producing a Pancasila Student Profile with the values contained in the use of technology. It means modernization and Indonesia's readiness to move into a developed country by modernizing education but not abandoning the Pancasila values that students must have.

Recommendation

Recommendations for the minister of education in Indonesia should adopt international education which is directed at the level of foreign universities, improve the character of disciplinary ethics and further compress the number of fields of study and focus more on understanding material contextually which is internalized by Indonesian cultural values. For the Japanese government, ancient cultural values in Japan and religious elements need to be considered in curriculum development in Japan. This can be a preventive action on current Japanese culture so that it is more socialist like that in Indonesia.

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