

Politics and Implementation Challenges in Indonesia's Curriculum Policy Transformation

Alhamuddin¹, Andi Murniati²

¹ Universitas Islam Bandung, Bandung, Indonesia; alhamuddinpalembang@gmail.com

² Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Kasim Riau, Pekanbaru, Indonesia; andi.murniati@uin-suska.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

Curriculum reform in Indonesia is shaped by complex political, social, and economic dynamics. This study investigates how political factors influence curriculum changes, identifies challenges in implementation, and offers recommendations for more effective and inclusive development. A mixed-methods approach was used, combining a literature review of relevant policy documents and previous research with a teacher-focused survey. The survey explored educators' perspectives on the practical challenges of implementing curriculum reforms. Findings indicate that curriculum change in Indonesia is heavily influenced by political interests, including those of government bodies, political parties, and community leaders. Implementation challenges are pronounced, with disparities in regional infrastructure and educational resources, insufficient teacher readiness, and frequent policy shifts. Moreover, limited public involvement in the curriculum development process contributes to resistance, particularly in areas sensitive to cultural and social norms. The study highlights that without inclusive stakeholder participation and stable policy environments, curriculum reforms risk inefficiency and rejection at the grassroots level. Teachers often lack the support and resources necessary for effective implementation. To address these challenges, curriculum development must prioritize inclusive collaboration, equitable distribution of educational resources, and consistent teacher training. Ongoing evaluation and adaptable policy design are essential to align the curriculum with societal changes while maintaining educational stability.



Corresponding Author:

Alhamuddin

Universitas Islam Bandung, Indonesia; alhamuddinpalembang@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

Education serves as a cornerstone of nation-building, playing a crucial role in improving the quality of human resources (Alhamuddin, 2016). Central to the education system, the curriculum not only guides instructional practices but also reflects the values, norms, and political ideologies that shape a nation's educational vision. Historically, curriculum development has been heavily influenced by prevailing political regimes, mirroring shifts in societal priorities. These political and ideological

influences continue to pose challenges in curriculum implementation, requiring adaptive and responsive strategies to maintain relevance and effectiveness.

As both a technical and ideological framework, the curriculum outlines what learners should acquire while embodying the collective goals of society and the state. It is not merely an instructional guide, but a product of negotiation among stakeholders, molded by dominant cultural values and political agendas (Nurdin et al., 2023). Consequently, curricula are frequently revised in response to evolving social, economic, and political contexts.

Political decisions play a crucial role in shaping curriculum policies, but frequent changes driven by shifting political agendas can lead to instability in teacher preparation and implementation challenges in schools. Educators often struggle to adapt to new policies, and inconsistent training further exacerbates these difficulties. The political motives behind curriculum changes, such as efforts to align education with ideological shifts or economic priorities, frequently create obstacles in the field, including a lack of clear guidelines and inadequate support for teachers. Rather than focusing on individual policymakers, understanding curriculum change requires examining the broader political structures and policy processes that drive educational reforms and their real-world implications (Catherine A. Broom, 2015; Enke et al., 2018; Putri & Suhardi, 2023).

In Indonesia, curriculum changes have occurred repeatedly in recent decades. From the 1947 Curriculum to the recently introduced Merdeka Curriculum in 2022 (Alhamuddin et al., 2020; Alhamuddin, 2019), each curriculum change reflects the demands of the times, the needs of society, and the goals that the government wants to achieve. However, curriculum changes are not only based on academic or pedagogical needs, but are also influenced by political interests (Suprpto et al., 2021a). The decision to change the curriculum often reflects the vision of the incumbent government and its political agenda (Putri & Suhardi, 2023; Suwirta et al., 2020).

In addition, in the Indonesian context, curriculum change policies have a strong political dimension. These changes are often considered as a tool to achieve certain goals, both ideologically and politically. Educational policies, including curriculum changes, cannot be separated from the political context that surrounds them. In some cases, the curriculum is designed to instill certain values that are in line with the government's ideology. For example, in some historical periods, governments used the curriculum to build nationalism, promote certain values, or even to instill support for ongoing political policies. This is reflected in the national education goals of the New Order and the Old Order (Alhamuddin et al., 2020; Suprpto et al., 2021a).

In the New Order era, the curriculum was heavily influenced by the state ideology of Pancasila, which promoted a unified national identity and alignment with state policies. Similarly, during the Old Order, the curriculum was used to foster ideological support for the leadership and build loyalty to the regime (Sumiarti & Azizah, 2024). This political manipulation of the curriculum often resulted in the marginalization of different perspectives and the stifling of critical thinking, limiting educational freedom for teachers and students. In addition, the close relationship between political interests and curriculum design has led to a tendency for short-term policy changes that are less sustainable and less adaptive to the evolving needs of society and the global education landscape (Irsyad Zamjani, 2022). Therefore, while curriculum changes are necessary to address contemporary challenges, the political dimension must be carefully balanced with the goal of creating a holistic, inclusive and forward-looking education in Indonesia (Alvian & Ardhani, 2023).

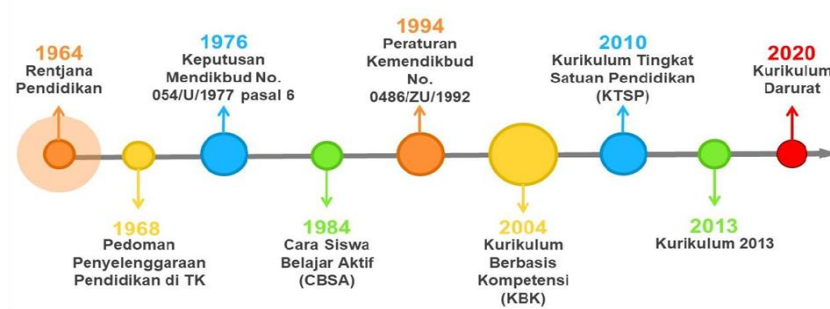


Figure 1. Curriculum Transformation

However, the implementation of curriculum changes in the field does not always run smoothly. Although curriculum changes are expected to improve the quality of education, many challenges must be faced in the implementation process. In Indonesia, some of the main obstacles in curriculum implementation include *First*, limited infrastructure is a significant obstacle in the implementation of the new curriculum. Many schools in remote areas still suffer from limited facilities, such as lack of classrooms, learning equipment and internet access. This condition makes it difficult to implement the new curriculum, which often demands the use of technology and modern learning methods.

Second, the lack of training for teachers is also an obstacle in implementing the new curriculum. Many teachers find it difficult to implement the learning methods demanded by the new curriculum due to a lack of adequate training. The lack of support from the government in providing training and guidance for teachers is one of the factors that led to the low effectiveness of curriculum implementation. *Third*, resistance from the community is also a challenge in implementing curriculum change. Some communities feel that the new curriculum is irrelevant to their needs or too burdensome for learners (Ndari et al., 2023). This often leads to resistance to the new curriculum and hinders the implementation process. In addition, the new curriculum is also often faced with budget constraints, making it difficult to be implemented evenly throughout Indonesia, especially in hated areas. This paper tries to see how politics relates to changes in the existing curriculum or, in other terms, how the minister changes the curriculum. Politics and curriculum have a very close relationship, because the curriculum is not only a teaching-learning guide, but also a tool that reflects the vision, values and interests of the government in power. However, what are the challenges of implementing the new curriculum in the field?

2. METHODS

This research used a mixed methods approach combining qualitative and quantitative methods to explore the politics and implementation challenges in curriculum policy transformation in Indonesia. A literature review was conducted to analyse the political dimensions that influence curriculum policy. Data was obtained from various sources such as scientific journals, books, policy documents and official government reports. This study aims to understand how political interests and decision-making influence the direction of curriculum policy change.

In addition, a survey was conducted to identify the challenges of curriculum policy implementation from the teachers' perspective. Respondents were selected using a stratified random sampling technique, including teachers from various levels of education and institution status, both public and private. The instrument used was a closed-ended questionnaire, designed to elicit information related to training, readiness and institutional support in implementing the new curriculum policy. Data collection techniques included two main sources. Qualitative data was obtained through document analysis focusing on official policies and education experts' opinions. Meanwhile, quantitative data was collected through an online questionnaire distributed to teachers. The data obtained was analyzed using two main approaches. For qualitative data, thematic analysis was used to identify key patterns and themes related

to curriculum politics, such as diverse interests, and their impact on policy. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to describe teachers' perceptions in general,

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Politics in Curriculum Policy

Politics greatly influences curriculum changes because the curriculum is not just a learning guide, but a strategic tool to realize the government's vision and goals (Alhamuddin et al., 2020; Stewart, Bonser & Shirley Grundy, 2006). The curriculum serves as a means to instill ideologies and values that the government deems important. In Indonesia (Suwirta & Is, 2020), the curriculum often includes values such as Pancasila, Unity in Diversity and nationalism that aim to instill a sense of patriotism, morality and cultural identity. This is a political strategy to ensure that the education provided in schools reflects values that strengthen social stability and national unity. Thus, the curriculum is used as a tool to 'shape the younger generation in accordance with the expectations of the government and society (Alhamuddin et al., 2020; Alhamuddin, 2019; Catherine A. Broom, 2015; James Miles, 2020; Joseph, 2015; Kasuga, 2019; Mohamad et al., 2015; Nurdin et al., 2023; Prøitz et al., 2023).

The importance of curriculum as a strategic tool for the government in formulating its political goals can be seen in various eras of Indonesian history (Mohamad et al., 2015; Suwirta & Is, 2020). In the early days of independence, for example, the curriculum focused more on instilling the values of nationhood, nationalism and unity to build the identity of the newly independent nation. During the New Order, the curriculum changed to support the government's political goals of economic stability and development, emphasizing technical knowledge and skills-based education to support industrialization. Meanwhile, in the reform era, the education curriculum was more geared towards democratization, human rights and equal access to education, reflecting the major changes in Indonesian politics post-crisis (Catherine A. Broom, 2015; James Miles, 2020; Mohamad et al., 2015).

Table 1. The Comparison of Educational Objectives

Law 4 1950 on the Basics of Education and Teaching	Law 22 of 1961 on Higher Education	TAP MPRS No. XXVII / MPRS / 1966 on Religion, Education and Culture	Law 2 of 1989 on the National Education System	Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education
To foster decent, competent human beings and democratic citizens who have good morals and take responsibility for the welfare of society and the homeland.	"To establish a moral humanity with the spirit of Pancasila that will be responsible for the implementation of a socialist society in Indonesia that is fair and prosperous, materially and spiritually ..."	to develop true followers of Pancasila based on the provisions required by the Preamble and contents of the Constitution of 1945	to educate the life of the nation and develop an inclusive Indonesian humanity faithful and devoted to God Almighty and of character virtuous and noble, knowledgeable and skilful, with physical and spiritual health, stability and independence of personality, with a sense of social responsibility and national identity	aimed at developing students' potential in order to become faithful human beings fearful of God Almighty, noble, healthy, knowledgeable, skilled, creative, independent, who will become democratic and accountable citizens.

In addition, a change of government or leadership in the Ministry of Education often brings changes in the curriculum. Each new leader tends to have a different vision and priorities regarding education, which keeps the curriculum in flux. The government may update the curriculum to align it with 21st-century skills, such as digital literacy, critical thinking or global collaboration capabilities. This is done to adapt the education system to the challenges and opportunities of the times. However, too frequent changes can be negative, destabilising and confusing for teachers and students in schools, who are constantly faced with adapting to new curricula (Reis, 2018). Political decisions play a crucial role in shaping curriculum policies, but frequent changes driven by shifting political agendas can lead to instability in teacher preparation and implementation challenges in schools. Educators often struggle to adapt to new policies, and inconsistent training further exacerbates these difficulties. The political motives behind curriculum changes, such as efforts to align education with ideological shifts or economic priorities, frequently create obstacles in the field, including a lack of clear guidelines and inadequate support for teachers. Rather than focusing on individual policymakers, understanding curriculum change requires examining the broader political structures and policy processes that drive educational reforms and their real-world implications.

Frequent curriculum changes can have a variety of negative impacts, especially in terms of the stability and effectiveness of education in schools. One of the main problems that arises is the instability of the education system. When the curriculum changes frequently, either due to changes in government policy or changes in leadership in the education sector, teachers and students are forced to constantly adapt to the new system (Putri & Suhardi, 2023). This leads to confusion among educators and learners, who have to adjust to frequently changing learning materials, teaching methods and evaluations. For teachers, rapid and continuous curriculum changes can increase their workload. Teachers need to learn the new curriculum, adjust lesson plans and prepare teaching materials to suit the changes (Kandiko Howson & Kingsbury, 2023; Porcenaluk et al., 2023). This adaptation process takes time and effort and often interferes with their focus on optimal teaching. Moreover, if curriculum changes are not accompanied by adequate training or mentoring, teachers may find it difficult or even stressful to carry out their duties (Nurdin et al., 2023). As for students, rapid curriculum changes can be confusing for them. They may have to adjust to a different way of learning or the material being taught with a new approach. This not only impacts their understanding of the material, but also their comfort level and confidence in the learning process. They may find it difficult to keep up with the frequently changing learning flow, which can affect their motivation and academic performance.

In addition, too frequent changes in the curriculum can also reduce consistency in achieving long-term educational goals. If the curriculum changes constantly, it is difficult for the education system to create uniformity in the quality of education across the country. This can hamper efforts to improve and strengthen the education system as a whole. This is because unplanned or hasty changes often neglect the evaluation and reflection needed to ensure that the changes are truly effective. The confusion created by frequent curriculum changes can also have an impact on the overall quality of education. Instead of allowing teachers to develop more effective teaching approaches and students to delve deeper into the material, constant curriculum changes distract from learning itself. Therefore, while it is important to update the curriculum to keep up with the times, changing it too quickly without careful planning can reduce the quality and stability of education.

Curriculum change also involves a political process (Catherine A. Broom, 2015), where various parties are involved in policy formulation, including ministries, academics, political parties and community leaders. Because it involves various parties with diverse interests, the curriculum is often the result of a compromise between these interests. For example, debates about the content of religious education or national history often arise, as each group wants the values, they consider important to be included in the curriculum. As a result, curricula often not only contain academic material, but also reflect the results of political negotiations. In the context of curriculum transformation, to create a better curriculum, the development process should involve a more open and participatory approach. This means that in addition to involving the ministry of education, various other stakeholders, such as

academics, education experts and practitioners in the field, should also be included. However, while community participation is important, this process needs to be focused on relevant academic substance and oriented towards developing the skills needed by students to face future challenges. A curriculum that is overly influenced by certain political or ideological interests can actually reduce the quality of education, as the main purpose of education should be to prepare young people with the skills and knowledge needed in their lives (Catherine A. Broom, 2015; Putri & Suhardi, 2023; Suwirta & Is, 2020).

It is also important to ensure that the curriculum developed accommodates the needs of 21st-century skills, such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and digital literacy. These skills are indispensable in an increasingly connected and dynamic world, where technology and innovation are rapidly evolving. Therefore, the curriculum should be oriented towards developing students' potential as a whole, rather than focusing solely on academic aspects (Prøitz et al., 2023). Thus, in addition to delivering subject matter, the curriculum also plays a role in shaping the character of students who are able to adapt and innovate. However, curriculum changes cannot be made carelessly and hastily. A curriculum that changes too often can cause confusion for both teachers and students, who find it difficult to adapt to a system that is always changing. For this reason, every curriculum change needs to be done with careful planning and in-depth evaluation. Evaluation of the existing curriculum should be done regularly to ensure that it remains relevant to the development of education and the needs of society. This evaluation should cover various aspects, including the quality of teaching, student achievement, and the impact of the curriculum on the development of skills needed in the world of work.

Maintaining a balance between local and global values in the education curriculum. Indonesia's diverse cultures, religions, and traditions require a curriculum that reflects the nation's identity while preparing students for an increasingly globally connected world. A curriculum that accommodates this diversity will help students to appreciate differences while preparing them to compete internationally. In this case, education must integrate local values that strengthen the nation's character with skills that are relevant to global developments. With these steps, the curriculum in Indonesia can evolve into a more relevant, inclusive and sustainable education system. Education based on critical thinking, 21st-century skills, and national character will produce young people who are ready to face the challenges of an increasingly complex and changing world. In addition, curriculum development that is done wisely and carefully will prevent education from being influenced by political interests that are only temporary and do not support the progress of the nation in the long term.

Besides serving as a tool to instill national ideologies, curricula are also frequently updated in response to global challenges. Technological changes, environmental issues, and the transformation of the world economy encourage the government to include materials that are relevant to international developments. However, the government also seeks to maintain national identity in the curriculum so that learners still have a foundation of local values amid global changes (Kasuga, 2019; Prøitz et al., 2023). This shows how the curriculum becomes a political strategic response to global dynamics, where the government tries to maintain a balance between global competence and national interests

The government also uses the curriculum as a tool to ensure social stability and strengthen state control in education. The curriculum allows the government to regulate what materials are taught in schools, so that education does not only focus on academic aspects, but also moulds learners into citizens who are in line with the vision of national development. This is one way for the government to utilize education as a tool of social control, where the younger generation is moulded to have an understanding and attitude that supports government policies. In addition, the curriculum also serves to achieve broader political goals, such as educational equity and increased social equality. Through a specially designed curriculum, the government can address educational inequality by giving more attention to remote areas or underprivileged groups. In this context, curriculum change is not only about fulfilling academic demands, but also a form of political effort to address social inequalities and ensure that all communities have equal access to quality education (Nurdin et al., 2023).

In these ways, politics heavily influences curriculum change, making the curriculum more than just a technical document; it becomes a tool that reflects the government's interests, vision and agenda. For the government, curriculum change is one way of ensuring that education is in line with national development and social stability, suggesting that the curriculum is a representation of the political strategies and goals it seeks to realize through the education system. The relationship between politics and curriculum transformation in Indonesia is very close, as the education curriculum is often a reflection of the political policies taken by the government in each era. Since independence, curriculum change in Indonesia has been influenced not only by developments in education but also by political needs arising from social, economic and ideological changes in the country. Each change of government brought changes in the direction of education, which were reflected in curricula designed to reflect the values and political priorities of the government of the day. In this context, the education curriculum in Indonesia functions as an instrument to achieve certain political goals, such as strengthening national identity, supporting economic development, regulating social control, and responding to global challenges and democratization. Therefore, curriculum transformation in Indonesia cannot be separated from the political dynamics that have always influenced the direction and goals of national education, making it a tool that focuses not only on academic achievement, but also on the formation of national character in accordance with the prevailing political vision.

The relationship between politics and curriculum change in Indonesia reflects a complex dynamic, where education policy is not only based on academic needs but also influenced by political interests, ideologies and social pressures. Curriculum change is often a tool to reflect or implement a particular political agenda, both at national and local levels. As Apple (1993) states, the curriculum is a political arena where dominant values, ideologies and power battle it out to determine what is deemed worthy of being taught in schools.

In Indonesia, political influence is evident in curriculum changes, especially when there is a change of government. Governments often view the curriculum as a tool to achieve political stability or reflect their political vision and mission. For example, the change from Curriculum 2006 (KTSP) to Curriculum 2013 (K13) reflected an attempt to prioritize character- and competency-based education, in line with the direction of national development at the time. However, as Holst et al. (2020) and Wulandari (2022) argues, too frequent and inconsistent curriculum changes can create "reform fatigue" among teachers and educational institutions, which ultimately hinders the purpose of reform itself.

In addition, the curriculum development process often involves compromises between different parties with different interests. For example, debates about religious education and history materials often reflect the tug-of-war between conservative and progressive groups. In this context, Tony Becher & Stuart Maclure (2024) emphasizes that curriculum is not just a collection of teaching materials, but also a form of "social reproduction," in which certain values are reinforced or undermined. The obstacles arising from political relations and curriculum change in Indonesia are not only technical but also social and cultural. Curricula are often a terrain of conflict between groups that have different visions of national identity, the values that should be taught and the future direction of education. This results in curricula not only reflecting academic needs but also the outcome of complex political negotiations (Hussain et al., 2024; Salonen-Hakomäki et al., 2024).

The solution to this challenge is to ensure that the curriculum change process is transparent and participatory (Lam, 2023; O'Connor & Penney, 2021). By involving various stakeholders, including teachers, parents, students and civil society, curriculum change can better reflect the real needs on the ground rather than simply being a political tool (Suprpto et al., 2021b). In addition, continuous and evidence-based evaluation should be an integral part of the curriculum change process, so that any changes can have a significant positive impact on the quality of education in Indonesia.

3.1 Curriculum Implementation Challenge

Curriculum implementation in Indonesia often faces complex and diverse challenges in terms of systems, human resources and social support. One of the biggest challenges is the mismatch between the designed curriculum and the real conditions on the ground, especially in relation to the capacity of human resources and the existing infrastructure in many schools. Many schools, especially those in remote areas, still lack adequate facilities, such as proper classrooms, technological facilities and other teaching resources that support a modern curriculum. This inequality in the quality of education between regions creates large disparities in the implementation of the curriculum across Indonesia. Although the new curriculum emphasizes more modern skills and knowledge, in many areas, especially in rural and border areas, there is insufficient support to ensure that the curriculum can be implemented effectively. For example, many teachers do not have the skills or access to technology needed to implement a technology-based curriculum. Meanwhile, in big cities, more complete facilities and infrastructure allow for better curriculum implementation.

To address educational inequality, the government must prioritize the equitable distribution of resources, with particular attention to disadvantaged and remote areas. Ensuring equal access to educational facilities—including the integration of technology in under-resourced schools—is critical for the effective implementation of the competency-based curriculum and the development of 21st-century skills. Moreover, expanding ongoing teacher training programs is essential to equip educators with the skills needed to deliver the new curriculum effectively. Targeted and intensive training in regions with a shortage of qualified teachers is necessary to promote equity in education quality across Indonesia (Sklar, 2018).

Another significant challenge lies in teachers' readiness to adapt to frequent curriculum changes. As the primary agents of educational delivery, many teachers lack adequate preparation and support to manage these rapid transitions. When curriculum reforms are introduced without proper orientation, confusion arises among both teachers and students. In Indonesia, teacher education continues to face challenges related to the quality and relevance of training programs, which often do not align with the demands of newly introduced curricula. Many educators are left to navigate these changes without sufficient guidance or resources.

Survey data reveals that a lack of teacher training is perceived as a major obstacle in implementing the new curriculum. Of those surveyed, 59.9% agreed and 26.6% strongly agreed that inadequate training hinders successful implementation—amounting to over 86% of respondents. These findings underscore the urgent need for ongoing, relevant professional development opportunities to ensure teachers are well-prepared for curriculum reforms. A lack of understanding regarding curriculum content, coupled with the heavy administrative burden placed on educators, further impedes effective teaching and learning outcomes (Chimbunde & Moreeng, 2024).

It is important for the government to provide more in-depth and regular training for teachers on the new curriculum (Alhamuddin et al., 2023; Heyneman & Loxley, 1983; Porcenaluk et al., 2023). Such training should include an understanding of the material to be taught and teaching techniques that are in line with the times and the needs of 21st-century skills. In addition, support in the form of teaching aids and digital resources that can facilitate teaching should also be provided to teachers at all levels of education (Kandiko Howson & Kingsbury, 2023; Porcenaluk et al., 2023). Mentoring programs between more experienced teachers and new teachers can also be a solution to accelerate adjustment to curriculum changes.

Bureaucratic aspects and frequent policy changes are also major challenges in curriculum implementation. The instability of education policies makes curriculum changes inconsistent and poorly planned, leading to confusion among teachers and students. Often, new education policies are not properly implemented at the local level due to a lack of coordination between central and local governments. A more stable and well-planned education policy is essential for the curriculum to be implemented effectively. When policies change frequently, it is not only the implementation of the curriculum that suffers, but also the adaptation process required by the entire education ecosystem.

This is especially problematic when a new curriculum is introduced without adequate transition or enough time to prepare teachers and schools.

The government needs to make sure that Education policies are designed with greater stability and consistent implementation across Indonesia. Curriculum development should be accompanied by an in-depth evaluation of the readiness of schools across the country and full support from local governments in its implementation. In addition, education policy should be based on the results of more in-depth research, rather than just responding to short-term political dynamics (Kandiko Howson & Kingsbury, 2023; Sklar, 2018).

On the other hand, another significant challenge is resistance to change. Many people, including teachers, parents and communities, feel unprepared for or disagree with curriculum changes that are perceived as too fast or not in line with local social and cultural conditions. For example, certain topics in the curriculum, such as history, religion or local culture, often led to debates between groups with different views (Ndari et al., 2023). Changes in the curriculum not only affect the way teaching and materials are taught, but can also risk being offending certain social and cultural sensitivities. A curriculum that overemphasises one particular value or view, especially in a diverse context such as Indonesia, can create resistance from groups who feel that their values are marginalized. This hinders the goal of inclusive and holistic education (Meng et al., 2023).

The government should develop a curriculum that is more inclusive and sensitive to Indonesia's social, cultural and religious diversity. The curriculum should accommodate local values and cultural wisdom, while maintaining a balance with global demands. The curriculum development process should involve dialogue between various community groups to seek mutual agreement, so that the resulting curriculum can be accepted by all parties. Overall, the challenges in curriculum implementation in Indonesia are enormous and require a holistic approach. Solutions to these challenges involve strong collaboration between the government, the community and the education sector to create an education system that is more equitable, quality and relevant to future needs.

3.2 Teachers' Expectations in Curriculum Implementation

A survey involving 129 teachers was conducted to explore their perspectives on the effective and efficient implementation of the new curriculum. Of the participants, 114 (89.1%) were civil servants, while 14 (10.9%) came from private institutions. This diverse sample provides a well-rounded view of expectations and practical suggestions for improving curriculum practices in various educational settings.

Respondents offered thoughtful and comprehensive feedback, but several recurring themes emerged that warrant deeper analysis. One key issue highlighted was the importance of teacher training—not only to build a solid understanding of the curriculum but also to translate that knowledge into effective teaching practices. However, the effectiveness of the training programs currently in place came into question. If training is reduced to a formality or fails to address local contexts and challenges, its impact will remain limited. For training to be truly effective, it must be contextualized, interactive, and grounded in real classroom challenges. This level of professional development demands time, resources, and expert facilitation.

Another major concern was the administrative burden placed on teachers. Many respondents expressed frustration over the increasing volume of administrative work, which detracts from their primary responsibility of teaching. This points to a disconnect between policy design and on-the-ground realities. Without meaningful efforts to streamline administrative tasks, the ability of teachers to engage fully in student-centered learning will be compromised. While simplifying these requirements aligns with the goals of modern pedagogy, it remains unclear whether such changes can be realistically implemented within the current regulatory environment.

The importance of collaboration among various stakeholders—including school principals, parents, government agencies, and community members—was also emphasized. Teachers believe that

curriculum implementation cannot succeed without broad-based support. However, aligning the interests and commitments of these diverse groups presents a significant challenge. In many instances, the involvement of parents and communities tends to be passive or symbolic, rather than active and ongoing. Strengthening this collaboration will require more deliberate communication strategies and coordinated efforts to ensure all stakeholders play a meaningful role.

Technology integration surfaced as both a potential enabler and a challenge. While respondents generally supported the use of technology to foster innovative learning, they raised concerns about inequitable access, particularly in rural or under-resourced areas. A curriculum that relies too heavily on digital tools risks excluding students who lack the necessary infrastructure. This highlights the need for differentiated implementation strategies that account for regional disparities while still achieving curriculum goals.

Moral, religious, and ethical values were also consistently emphasized in the responses. Teachers view education as a critical vehicle for character development, not just academic success. However, integrating these values into daily learning experiences in a meaningful and authentic way remains a challenge. Curricula that focus too narrowly on technical content may neglect the holistic development of students, diminishing opportunities to instill empathy, integrity, and responsibility.

Ultimately, the feedback reflects a clear desire for a curriculum that is flexible, relevant, and adaptable to local conditions and societal changes. Realizing this vision will require strong cross-sectoral commitment, efficient resource allocation, and ongoing evaluation to ensure continuous improvement. The insights and critiques provided by the respondents serve as an important guide for policymakers, offering direction for reforms that can lead to meaningful and sustainable improvements in national education.

4. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study reveal that curriculum change in Indonesia is shaped not only by academic and pedagogical considerations but also by complex political dynamics. A significant gap exists between the expectations outlined in policy and the realities faced by schools in implementing the curriculum. This disconnect underscores the need for greater alignment between top-down reforms and on-the-ground educational practices. One of the main implications is that successful curriculum reform requires stable and consistent policy direction, comprehensive teacher training, and adequate budgetary support to ensure effective execution. However, a key limitation of this study is that it focuses primarily on teacher perceptions and does not fully capture the perspectives of other stakeholders such as students, parents, and policymakers. Future research should adopt a more inclusive approach by incorporating a wider range of voices and examining the long-term effects of curriculum implementation across diverse educational contexts. Additionally, fostering open dialogue among policymakers, educators, and communities is essential to ensure that future curriculum designs are both contextually relevant and practically feasible.

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