A BRIEF COMPARATIVE VIEW ON BASIC EDUCATION IN INDONESIA AND JAPAN

By
Dinn Wahyudin and Deni Darmawan-UPI

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This paper highlights the initial steps done by curriculum policy developers in Indonesia and Japan in revitalizing the basic education program as passport for better life and meet with the challenge of changing technological, social, economic, national and global environment.
It elaborates how curriculum developers in 2 countries make decision in basic education program, especially in curriculum design, policy, implementation, and evaluation regarding to overall approach to basic education as a compulsory education program.
PURPOSE

- to have appreciation of similarities & differences in both countries in efforting the revitalization of basic education;
- to identify general trends in developing basic education program, in primary as well as junior secondary school.
- to brief cross-nationally analyse of each educational system in reforming basic education.
The national education system in Indonesia is generally aimed at elevating the intellectual life of the nation and developing the Indonesian people fully, i.e. as people who are devoted to God, have knowledge and skills, good physical and spiritual health, independent and fair.
Basic education offered in primary schools aims to provide ability to read, write, and do arithmetic, and to instill primary knowledge and skills that are useful for pupils in line with their development, as well as to prepare them to attend education in lower secondary school.
Basic education is also carried out in lower secondary schools and is aimed at expanding the knowledge & improvement of skills obtained in primary schools that are useful for students to develop their lives as individual, members of society, and citizens.
In 2007 school based curriculum (KTSP) was launched and introduced and implemented in all level of school included in primary as well as junior secondary school as basic education.

The educational system has shifted from centralized to decentralized based by giving more autonomy in planning, implementing, and evaluation of education program in districts as well as school level.
The educational goal for primary school: to provide children (6-12 years) with elementary general education suited to the relevant stages of their mental and physical development such as respect for individual child, and encourage to cultivate humanity and creativity.

The educational goal for lower secondary school: to provide children (12-15) with general secondary education suited to the level of their mental and physical development, based on education given in elementary school.
Primary school (shogakko) is 6 years in length (grades 1-6) and is for children between the age of six and 12. The vast majority of schools at this level are public (2003: 98.4%).

The Japanese educational system is a moderately centralized, single-track system. The government is responsible for setting national standards for curriculum development, for authorizing textbooks, and for ensuring the uniform use of textbooks in all schools.
In both countries (Indonesia and Japan), basic education is defined as passport for better life. They have stated basic education as compulsory education.

In Japan, internationalization as well as the development of information media are introduced during basic education.

In 2 countries, basic education focus on the development of basic foundation knowledge (literacy, numeracy, and life skills); child’s intellectual, emotional, spiritual and physical potential, and of critical thinking & problem solving skills.
In both countries, knowledge of life skills, respect for human dignity and human right, understanding of ecology and appreciation of the environment are put on curriculum.

In Japan, international understanding and development of one world view are also introduced.

In 2 countries, promotion of civic and moral values and ability to adapt change are also introduced in teaching learning activities.
One major difference among 2 countries is the existence of religious goals and the extend they are included in curriculum. In Indonesia, religious subject put into curriculum.

In Japan, curriculum development is generally centralized, while in Indonesia curriculum has been desentralized. But in the implementation, there is a varying degree of autonomy of local and school authorities.
In term of school day year, Indonesia is more having effective day than Japan. Indonesia has 240 effective day per year compare with Japan has 35 weeks per year.

In both countries, the involvement of a wide range of agencies and stakeholders is regarded as important factors to support education system.
There is ongoing commitment to basic education in Indonesia and Japan to develop school curriculum to meet the challenges of the changing technological, social, economical, national and global environment.

In both countries, basic education is defined as passport for better life. They have stated basic education as compulsory education.
In both countries, knowledge of life skills, respect for human dignity and human right, understanding of ecology and appreciation of the environment are put on curriculum. Eventhough, the implementation of curriculum in real teaching learning are vary among schools in 2 countries.

In Indonesia, effective days is officially more, but it need some improvement in implementing teaching learning to be more fruitful and effective.
“School Curriculum is only an instrumental device to gain education goal. It may depend on how school community to create, plan and implement the curriculum itself…”
THANK YOU