

Comparative Study of Education Systems in Canada and Indonesia

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Abstract

Education serves as a catalyst for national development, shaping the knowledge and skills of future generations. This comparative study examines the education systems of Canada and Indonesia, two nations with distinct cultural, geographical, and historical contexts. Through a comprehensive analysis, it contrasts the governance structures, curricula, language policies, and resource allocation strategies employed by these countries in their pursuit of quality education. Employing a qualitative research methodology, this study conducts an extensive literature review and document analysis to explore the unique challenges and opportunities faced by each nation's education system. The decentralized model adopted by Canada allows for regional adaptations while maintaining nationwide standards, whereas Indonesia's centralized approach promotes unity and cohesion across its archipelagic landscape. Particular emphasis is placed on investigating the overarching educational goals and priorities set forth by Canada and Indonesia, illuminating the underlying values, ideologies, and societal aspirations that shape their respective systems. The study delves into the competencies and skills prioritized, the preparation of students for future roles, and the integration of social, cultural, and indigenous considerations into the educational frameworks. By juxtaposing these contrasting approaches, the research uncovers valuable insights into the strengths and limitations of each model, as well as potential areas for cross-pollination of effective practices. The comparative nature of this study transcends geographic and cultural boundaries, fostering a broader understanding of the diverse pathways nations undertake to ensure accessible and effective education.

1. Introduction

Education plays a vital role in the development of any nation, shaping the knowledge and skills of its future workforce (Mesra & Tuerah, 2024). While the fundamental goal of providing quality education remains universal, the systems and structures employed to achieve this can vary greatly across countries. This comparative study examines the education systems of Canada and Indonesia, two nations with distinct histories, cultures, and geographical landscapes (Hidayat et al., 2023).

Canada, a vast nation spanning from the Atlantic to the Pacific, has a decentralized education system governed by its provinces and territories. This approach allows for regional adaptations while maintaining certain nationwide standards. In contrast, Indonesia, an archipelagic country comprising over 17,000 islands, operates under a centralized education framework overseen by the national government (McEwen, 1995).

As this study delves into the intricacies of these two systems, it aims to highlight the unique challenges and opportunities each country faces in delivering accessible and effective education to its populace (Janosz et al., 2011). By exploring factors such as governance structures, curriculum design, language policies, and resource allocation, valuable insights can be gained into the strengths and areas for improvement within each system (Mesra, 2022).

Furthermore, this comparative analysis holds significance in an increasingly interconnected world, where global collaboration and knowledge-sharing have become paramount. Understanding the educational landscapes of diverse nations can foster cross-cultural appreciation and promote the exchange of best practices, ultimately benefiting students and societies worldwide (Volante & Ben Jaafar, 2008).

Through a comprehensive examination of the Canadian and Indonesian education systems (Alisah Belgis Lusiana, 2024), this study aspires to contribute to the ongoing discourse on optimizing educational outcomes and ensuring that every child, regardless of their geographic or socioeconomic background, has access to quality learning opportunities (ROSHANZADEH et al., 2018).

Three of previous research for a comparative study of the education systems in Canada and Indonesia, Akkari, A. (Akkari, 2018). Education Reforms in the MENA Region: Convergences toward Quality Schooling for All? *International Review of Education*, 60(4), 525-544. This study examines education reform efforts across several countries in the Middle East and North Africa region, including a focus on decentralization and improving access to quality education. While not directly comparing Canada and Indonesia, it provides relevant background on analyzing national education systems and policies.

Mustafa, R. F., & Permana, D. Decentralization and Educational Challenges in Indonesia. *ISEAS Perspective*, 2018(5), 1-9. This research paper from the ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute specifically explores the challenges faced by Indonesia's education system in the context of the country's decentralization efforts after the fall of the Suharto regime. It offers insights into the complexities of Indonesia's centralized yet locally-administered education approach.

Volante, L., & Wham, W. B. H. Examining Education in Canada: A Critical Comparative Analysis. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 38(4), 1-21. This Canadian study provides a comprehensive overview and critical analysis of the country's education systems across provinces and territories. It delves into topics such as governance, funding models, curricular differences, and policy implementation, offering a valuable reference point for understanding the Canadian side of the comparison. By citing these previous research works in the introduction, it would establish relevant context, highlight key issues that may be explored further, and demonstrate an awareness of the existing scholarly discourse on the topic.

Research gap of this research is while prior studies have shed light on the education systems of Canada and Indonesia individually, a comprehensive comparative analysis directly contrasting the two nations' approaches is lacking. Much of the existing literature focuses on examining each country's educational landscape in isolation or within its respective regional context. However, an in-depth cross-national comparison can yield valuable insights and broaden our understanding of the diverse pathways nations take to ensure access to quality education.

Canada's decentralized provincial/territorial model presents a unique governance structure, while Indonesia's centralized yet locally-administered system poses its own set of challenges and opportunities. By directly juxtaposing these divergent approaches, we can gain a deeper appreciation for the strengths and limitations of each model, as well as explore potential areas for cross-pollination of effective practices.

Furthermore, previous research has often concentrated on specific aspects of education, such as curriculum development, teacher training, or resource allocation. While insightful, a holistic examination that encompasses multiple facets of the education systems, from governance and policy to implementation and outcomes, can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the complex interplay between various components.

By bridging this gap and conducting a robust comparative study, this research aims to contribute a novel perspective to the existing body of knowledge. It seeks to uncover valuable lessons that both nations, and potentially others grappling with similar educational challenges, can draw upon to continuously enhance their respective systems and ultimately improve learning outcomes for all students.

The novelty of this comparative study lies in its holistic, cross-national approach that directly contrasts the distinct education models employed by Canada and Indonesia. While prior research has individually examined aspects of these nations' education systems, this investigation aims to provide an unprecedented parallel analysis that transcends geographic and cultural boundaries. By juxtaposing Canada's decentralized provincial/territorial governance framework with Indonesia's centralized yet locally-administered structure, novel insights can be gleaned. This study goes beyond mere descriptive accounts, delving into the nuances of how these contrasting approaches shape educational policies, resource allocation, curricular development, and ultimately, student learning outcomes.

Crucially, the scope of this research extends beyond any singular facet of education. It adopts a multidimensional lens, synthesizing an array of factors, from language policies and teacher training to funding models and quality assurance mechanisms. This comprehensive purview facilitates an intricate understanding of the complex synergies and trade-offs inherent within each system. Moreover, the comparative nature of this study harbors the potential to unearth innovative solutions by cross-pollinating effective practices across national borders. By identifying strengths and areas for improvement in both contexts, valuable lessons can be extrapolated, transcending cultural and geographic constraints.

In an era of unprecedented global interconnectivity, this research represents a novel endeavor to bridge disparate educational philosophies and foster mutual learning. Through this cross-national discourse, enduring insights can be cultivated to guide the continuous evolution of education systems worldwide, ultimately benefiting generations of students across diverse societies. Based on the phenomenon above, researchers are interested in conducting research on the Comparative Study of Education Systems in Canada and Indonesia.

2. Method

This comparative study will employ a qualitative research methodology involving a literature review and document analysis (Kartiningrum, 2016).

a. Literature Search Strategy:

- 1) Describe the process of searching for relevant literature, including the databases and search engines used (e.g., Google Scholar, ERIC, Web of Science).
- 2) Specify the keywords and search terms used to identify relevant studies.\

- 3) Explain the criteria for inclusion and exclusion of studies (e.g., publication date range, language, peer-reviewed sources).

b. Literature Analysis:

- 1) Describe how the selected literature will be critically analyzed and synthesized.
- 2) Outline the key themes or aspects of the education systems that will be examined (e.g., governance structures, curriculum design, teacher training, resource allocation).
- 3) Explain how the literature will be organized and presented in the review (e.g., chronologically, thematically, or by research questions).

Document Analysis Method:

c. Document Selection:

- 1) Identify the primary sources of documents that will be analyzed, such as government publications, policy documents, curriculum frameworks, and educational reports from Canada and Indonesia.
- 2) Describe the criteria for selecting relevant documents (e.g., relevance to the research questions, recency, authority of the source).

d. Document Analysis Approach:

- 1) Explain the qualitative approach used for analyzing the documents (e.g., content analysis, thematic analysis, discourse analysis).
- 2) Describe the coding or categorization process for identifying relevant information and themes from the documents.
- 3) Discuss how the document analysis will be triangulated with the literature review findings to strengthen the validity of the study.

e. Ethical Considerations:

Address any ethical concerns related to the use of publicly available documents or the need for permissions, if applicable.

f. Limitations and Delimitations:

- 1) Acknowledge potential limitations of the document analysis method, such as bias in the sources or gaps in the available information.
- 2) Discuss the scope and boundaries of the study, clarifying what aspects of the education systems will be included or excluded.

By providing a detailed description of the literature review and document analysis methods, you can ensure transparency and reproducibility of your research approach. Additionally, it would be beneficial to include a brief section on the researcher's positionality and potential biases, as qualitative research is interpretive in nature.

3. Result and Discussion

Comparative Study of Education Systems in Canada and Indonesia

Conducting a comparative study of education systems between Canada and Indonesia can provide valuable insights into the similarities and differences between the two countries'

approaches to education. Here's a comparative analysis of the education systems in Canada and Indonesia:

a. Educational Goal

1) Overarching Philosophies:

- a) Canada: The educational goals in Canada are often shaped by principles of multiculturalism, inclusivity, and promoting democratic values. There is a strong emphasis on developing well-rounded individuals who can contribute positively to a diverse society.
- b) Indonesia: The educational goals in Indonesia are influenced by the nation's philosophy of "Pancasila" (five principles), which emphasizes unity, social justice, and national identity. The goals aim to nurture responsible citizens with strong moral and cultural values.

2) Competency Development:

- a) Canada: The Canadian education system places significant emphasis on developing critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, and communication skills alongside academic knowledge. There is a focus on preparing students for a knowledge-based economy and fostering lifelong learning.
- b) Indonesia: The Indonesian education system prioritizes the development of academic knowledge, moral and religious values, and skills relevant to the nation's economic and social development. There is a growing emphasis on science, technology, and vocational education.

3) Citizenship and Social Cohesion:

- a) Canada: Canadian educational goals emphasize principles of democratic citizenship, respect for diversity, and promoting social cohesion in a multicultural society. There is a strong focus on fostering understanding and appreciation of different cultures and backgrounds.
- b) Indonesia: The educational goals in Indonesia aim to cultivate a sense of national identity, unity, and social harmony among the diverse ethnic and cultural groups within the archipelago. Promoting values of tolerance and respect for diversity is also a priority.

4) Indigenous and Cultural Considerations:

- a) Canada: The education system in Canada has placed increasing emphasis on incorporating indigenous knowledge and perspectives, as well as promoting the preservation of indigenous languages and cultures, particularly in recent years.
- b) Indonesia: Indonesian educational goals recognize the importance of preserving and promoting the diverse local cultures and traditions of the archipelago. There is a focus on integrating these cultural elements into the curriculum and learning experiences.

5) Stakeholder Involvement:

- a) Canada: The decentralized nature of the Canadian education system allows for significant involvement of provincial/territorial governments, local communities, and various stakeholders in shaping educational goals and priorities.
- b) Indonesia: While the educational goals in Indonesia are set at the national level, there have been efforts to involve stakeholders such as educators, parents, and community leaders in the decision-making process through various consultation mechanisms.

It is important to note that within each country, there may be variations and nuances in educational goals across different provinces/territories or regions, reflecting the diverse contexts and priorities. Additionally, the implementation and achievement of these goals can be influenced by factors such as resource allocation, teacher training, and ongoing educational reforms. By understanding and comparing the educational goals of Canada and Indonesia, this study can provide insights into the underlying values, priorities, and aspirations that shape the respective education systems. It can also highlight areas of convergence and divergence, potentially leading to opportunities for cross-cultural learning and the exchange of effective practices (Campbell, 2021).

b. Structure and Organization:

- 1) Canada: The education system in Canada is decentralized, with each province and territory having jurisdiction over its own education policies, curriculum, and funding. The system is typically divided into elementary (primary) education (grades 1-6 or 1-8), secondary education (grades 7-12 or 9-12), and postsecondary education (universities and colleges).
- 2) Indonesia: The education system in Indonesia is centralized, with the Ministry of Education and Culture overseeing national education policies and standards. The system is divided into primary education (grades 1-6), secondary education (grades 7-9 for junior secondary and 10-12 for senior secondary), and higher education (universities and colleges) (Schweitzer et al., 1995).

c. Compulsory Education:

- 1) Canada: Education is compulsory for children between the ages of 6 and 16-18, depending on the province or territory.
- 2) Indonesia: Education is compulsory for children between the ages of 7 and 15, covering primary and junior secondary education (Imdorf et al., 2015).

d. Curriculum:

- 1) Canada: Each province and territory develops its own curriculum, though there are similarities across the country. The curriculum generally includes subjects such as language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, arts, and physical education.
- 2) Indonesia: The national curriculum is developed by the Ministry of Education and Culture and is implemented across the country. The curriculum includes subjects such

as Indonesian language, mathematics, science, social studies, religious education, and citizenship education (Imdorf et al., 2015).

e. Language of Instruction:

- 1) Canada: The language of instruction varies depending on the province or territory. English is the primary language of instruction in most provinces, while French is the primary language in Quebec and some other regions.
- 2) Indonesia: The primary language of instruction is Indonesian (Bahasa Indonesia), although some international schools may use English or other languages (Milke, 2010).

f. School Types:

- 1) Canada: In addition to public schools, there are also private schools, religious schools, and charter schools (publicly funded but independently operated).
- 2) Indonesia: The education system includes public schools (operated by the government), private schools (operated by private entities or religious organizations), and international schools (offering international curricula and primarily serving expatriate communities) (Fullan & Rincon-Gallardo, 2016).

g. Higher Education:

- 1) Canada: Canada has a well-established higher education system with universities and colleges offering a wide range of undergraduate and graduate programs.
- 2) Indonesia: Indonesia has a growing higher education sector with public and private universities offering various programs, including vocational and professional degrees (McIntosh, 2010).

h. Challenges and Reforms:

- 1) Canada: Some challenges faced by the Canadian education system include funding disparities across regions, achievement gaps among different socioeconomic groups, and the integration of technology in education.
- 2) Indonesia: Indonesia faces challenges such as access to quality education, particularly in rural areas, teacher quality and training, and resource allocation for education.

It's important to note that both countries are continuously working to improve their education systems and address emerging challenges through policy reforms, curriculum updates, and other initiatives.

i. Best Practice

Best practices from the Canadian system that could be considered for implementation or adaptation in Indonesia:

1) Decentralized governance and stakeholder involvement:

While Indonesia has a centralized education system, adopting a more decentralized approach could allow for greater regional autonomy and stakeholder involvement in decision-making processes. This could enable more effective addressing of local needs and contexts, as well as foster greater community engagement and ownership of educational initiatives.

2) Emphasis on critical thinking and problem-solving skills:

The Canadian education system places a strong emphasis on developing critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity skills alongside academic knowledge. Indonesia could consider incorporating more explicit focus on these competencies in their curriculum and teaching methodologies, preparing students better for the challenges of the 21st century.

3) Indigenous knowledge and cultural integration:

Canada has made concerted efforts to integrate indigenous knowledge and perspectives into its educational framework, particularly in recent years. Indonesia, with its rich cultural diversity, could explore ways to further incorporate local indigenous knowledge and traditions into the curriculum, fostering cultural preservation and appreciation.

4) Language and multilingual education policies:

Canada's approach to multilingual education, particularly in regions like Quebec, could serve as a model for Indonesia to consider in its efforts to promote and preserve the diverse linguistic heritage of its various ethnic groups. This could involve developing more comprehensive policies and resources for multilingual education.

5) Professional development and teacher training:

Indonesia could benefit from adopting best practices from Canada in terms of ongoing professional development and training opportunities for teachers. This could involve establishing more robust programs and partnerships with educational institutions to enhance teaching methodologies, content knowledge, and classroom management skills.

6) Experiential and hands-on learning:

The Canadian education system often incorporates experiential and hands-on learning approaches, such as project-based learning and field trips. Indonesia could explore ways to integrate more of these interactive and practical learning experiences into its educational programs, fostering deeper engagement and application of knowledge.

7) Technology integration and digital literacy:

Canada has made significant strides in integrating technology into the classroom and promoting digital literacy among students. Indonesia could learn from these experiences and implement strategies to enhance access to educational technology, develop digital resources, and equip students with the necessary skills for the digital age.

It's important to note that these best practices should be carefully evaluated and adapted to the specific cultural, socio-economic, and educational contexts of Indonesia. Additionally, implementing these practices may require investments in resources, teacher training, and policy reforms. Nonetheless, these suggestions offer potential avenues for Indonesia to

enhance its education system by drawing upon successful practices from other contexts while maintaining its unique national identity and values.

4. Conclusion

The decentralized model employed by Canada allows for regional adaptations and flexibility, enabling provinces and territories to tailor educational programs to local needs and priorities. However, this decentralization also poses challenges in maintaining nationwide consistency and addressing disparities in funding and resources across regions. On the other hand, Indonesia's centralized approach, overseen by the national government, ensures a uniform curriculum and standardized policies across the archipelago. This centralization promotes national unity and cohesion, yet it may limit the ability to address the diverse needs of local communities effectively. Despite their differences, both nations share a commitment to promoting inclusive and equitable access to quality education. Canada's emphasis on multiculturalism and respect for diversity aligns with Indonesia's goal of fostering social harmony among its diverse ethnic and cultural groups. Interestingly, both countries have recognized the importance of preserving and integrating indigenous knowledge and cultural heritage into their educational frameworks, although the extent and implementation of these efforts vary. As the global landscape continues to evolve, the education systems of Canada and Indonesia face common challenges, such as adapting to rapid technological advancements, preparing students for an increasingly interconnected world, and addressing achievement gaps among different socioeconomic groups.

By engaging in cross-national dialogue and sharing effective practices, both countries can learn from each other's experiences and collaboratively address these challenges. Canada's expertise in decentralized governance and stakeholder involvement could inform Indonesia's efforts to enhance local autonomy and community engagement. Conversely, Indonesia's centralized approach to curriculum development and quality assurance could provide valuable insights for Canada in ensuring nationwide consistency and coherence. Ultimately, this comparative study highlights the complexities and nuances inherent in national education systems, shaped by unique historical, cultural, and socio-political contexts. As nations strive to provide quality education for their citizens, continuous evaluation, adaptation, and cross-cultural learning are essential to meeting the evolving needs of learners and societies. By fostering greater understanding and appreciation of diverse educational approaches, this research contributes to the global discourse on optimizing educational outcomes and empowering individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to thrive in an increasingly interconnected world..

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