



The Role of Education and Public Awareness in Supporting National Development in Indonesia

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Abstract

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Indonesia's national education, as mandated in the 1945 Constitution, aims to "educate the life of the nation" while internalizing the values of faith, devotion, and noble character (Article 31, Paragraph 3). Education and national development have a reciprocal relationship: education produces high-quality human resources as the foundation of development, while development provides policies and facilities that support educational quality. However, public awareness of education as a long-term investment remains low due to short-term financial orientation, limited understanding of the intrinsic value of education, and unequal distribution of educational infrastructure. The level of education strongly influences social welfare by expanding employment opportunities, increasing social mobility, and promoting economic growth. Conversely, low-quality human resources result in low economic productivity, high unemployment, inequality, and weak global competitiveness. Through a comprehensive literature-based study, this article analyzes the interconnection between education, public awareness, and national development, while offering strategic policy recommendations to strengthen Indonesia's educational framework.



1. Introduction

Education is a fundamental foundation for national progress, as mandated in the 1945 Constitution (UUD 1945), which asserts that the goal of national education is to intellectualize the life of the nation. Article 31 paragraph (3) of the UUD 1945 states that education is conducted with the aim of enhancing faith, piety, and noble character in the context of intellectualizing the life of the nation. Thus, education functions not only as a means of knowledge transfer but also as an instrument for shaping the character, morals, and spirituality of citizens. In the context of national development, education plays a strategic role as the main driver in creating productive, innovative, and competitive human resources (HR). The relationship between education and development is reciprocal; education produces skilled and knowledgeable labor capable of driving economic growth, while development provides the infrastructure, policies, and facilities that support the improvement of education quality (Affandi et al., 2019).

Nevertheless, in social reality, public awareness regarding the importance of education is still relatively low. Most families still view education merely as a means to obtain short-term employment, rather than as a long-term investment that can bring about significant changes to social and economic life (Potter, 2018). This paradigm is reinforced by the uneven distribution of infrastructure and the disparity in educational quality between regions, making access to quality education a constraint for many groups (Laufer et al., 2021). The educational level of an individual has a strong correlation with community welfare. Higher education tends to increase employment opportunities, income, and social mobility, while

simultaneously reducing poverty rates (Andrews et al., 2017). Furthermore, education contributes to shaping social and political awareness, expanding citizen participation, and improving the overall quality of community life.

The low quality of HR is a major inhibiting factor in the process of national development. Labor with limited skills tends to be less productive and finds it difficult to adapt to technological advancements, which ultimately reduces national competitiveness and widens economic inequality (Gries et al., 2017). On the other hand, issues related to the quality of educators, curricula that are not fully adaptive to the needs of the times, and a weak literacy culture further worsen the quality of national education. Sustainable development can only be realized through a holistic education system, one that does not only stress the cognitive aspect but also fosters character, ethics, and environmental concern. Therefore, education needs to integrate moral, cultural, and spiritual values as the main pillars of forming the nation's personality. In line with this, Natalia et al. (2021) state that the internalization of Pancasila values in the education system plays a crucial role in strengthening national character, social solidarity, and the moral resilience of society.

Considering these various issues, this research aims to analyze the relationship between education and national development through a literature review approach of various research findings over the past five years. This study also attempts to identify the challenges posed by low public awareness of education as a long-term investment and its implications for the quality of human resources. The results of this research are expected to contribute to the formulation of national education policies that are more inclusive, sustainable, and oriented towards improving the

quality of Indonesia's human resources, as the primary basis for realizing equitable and highly competitive national development.

2. Methods

This research applies the library research method with a descriptive-analytical approach. This method was chosen to examine in depth the connection between education, public awareness, and national development through the review of various relevant scientific sources. The literature review approach allows the researcher to integrate theories, research findings, and policies related to education and development within a specific time frame. The research stages begin with the process of literature collection from credible sources from Google Scholar or Elsevier to indexation reputable national and international journals, and academically recognized scientific publications.

The inclusion criteria used in literature selection cover four main aspects: scientific publications published in the last five years to maintain data relevance and research context; focus of the study on the fields of education, human resources (HR), and national development; availability in Indonesian or English; and containing theoretical or empirical discussions that support the analysis of the relationship between education and development. After all the literature is collected, the data is categorized based on key themes related to the research focus. This classification includes: (a) education as a form of human capital investment, (b) the relationship between education and economic and social development, (c) the role

of public awareness in encouraging educational advancement, and (d) challenges in equitable access to education and improving the quality of HR.

The analysis is carried out using the content analysis approach, which is a qualitative analysis technique that interprets the content of scientific documents through the identification of patterns, trends, and interconnections between themes. This approach helps the researcher build a systematic and logical scientific narrative regarding the strategic role of education in national development, while also revealing the inhibitory factors in this process. Furthermore, a narrative synthesis process is carried out, which is the stage of combining and integrating various findings from the analyzed literature to form a comprehensive conceptual framework. Through this stage, the researcher examines how the literature explains the interaction between education, public awareness, and the dynamics of economic and social development.

This synthesis also forms the basis for formulating conclusions and policy recommendations relevant to the context of national development in Indonesia. To maintain the validity and reliability of the research results, every source used is verified through a review of the journal's credibility, the suitability of the research methodology, and the relevance of the topic to the study objectives. Thus, this research serves not only as a summary of previous research findings but also as a conceptual analysis that interprets the fundamental relationship between education and national development. Through this comprehensive literature review approach, it is hoped that a deeper understanding of the role of education as a key factor in

driving national progress and improving the quality of Indonesia's human resources will be obtained.

3. Results

Education as the main pillar of national development asserts that the quality and equitable access to education are fundamental factors in realizing the aspirations of the UUD 1945, which is to intellectualize the life of the nation. Literature review indicates that when education is widely accessible and of high quality, the resulting Human Resources (HR) are capable of becoming agents of social and economic transformation at both local and national levels. In the context of Indonesia, the concept of education as human capital investment has long been the basis for development policies (Affandi et al., 2019). Education is no longer viewed as a consumptive burden but as a strategic asset that provides long-term returns in the form of increased productivity, innovation, and national competitiveness. Various studies also affirm that an increase in educational attainment contributes significantly to economic growth, poverty reduction, and improved community welfare.

In the framework of the reciprocal relationship between education and development, the literature shows that the development of educational infrastructure such as the provision of school facilities, access to electricity and internet networks, and transportation are key supporting factors so that quality education can reach remote areas. Laufer et al. (2021) highlights that interregional disparities in the development of the education sector are a major obstacle to achieving equitable national education access. Schools in remote areas still face

limited facilities, a shortage of quality teaching staff, and inadequate learning resources. This condition creates a “vicious cycle” where communities in underdeveloped areas have low awareness of the value of education, making access to quality education increasingly difficult, the resulting HR weak, and development in these areas continuously lagging.

Public awareness of education as a long-term investment is a crucial aspect frequently discussed in the literature. Many families still view education merely as a fast track to income, rather than as a long-term process that builds human potential comprehensively. In the study of educational policy and economics, this phenomenon is known as discounting the future, which is the tendency of the community to value instant returns more than long-term benefits (Lin & Wang, 2017). Moreover, the perception that places education only as a means to obtain formal employment often leads to a pragmatic attitude, where the community feels sufficient with minimal schooling. A lack of understanding of education’s role in shaping life skills, ethics, and social welfare causes some members of society to consider higher education not an urgent necessity.

The cause-and-effect relationship between the level of education and community welfare is further reinforced by various empirical findings. Individuals with higher education levels tend to have greater incomes, better access to health services, and more active social participation. Andrews et al. (2017), for instance, found that individuals who complete upper secondary education or higher are more inclined to adopt better healthy eating patterns compared to those with low education, indicating that education affects the quality of life holistically. Research

in Indonesia also proves that an increase in educational level is closely related to a decrease in poverty rates and an increase in social mobility. HR with higher education is more adaptive to technological advances, more proactive in innovation, and possesses the ability to adapt to global challenges.

Nevertheless, the low quality of HR remains a serious constraint in the process of national development. Many educators do not meet the expected pedagogical and professional competency standards, while the education curriculum is not entirely relevant to the needs of the times. The learning system also still focuses on cognitive aspects and learning outcome assessment that is not optimal in fostering creativity, ethics, and character. In this context, character education and religious values play an important role so that the resulting HR is not only intellectually superior but also moral and ethical. Parker (2017) emphasizes that education for sustainable development must integrate value education, environmental preservation, and character building so that the generated generation is not only academically intelligent but also socially and ecologically responsible.

In the national context, the literature on the internalization of Pancasila values in the education system is becoming increasingly relevant. Natalia et al. (2021) show that the application of Pancasila values in schools through curriculum and learning activities can strengthen national insight, student character, and their social responsibility. Values such as faith, justice, unity, and social responsibility can be integrated into the educational process to form moral integrity in achieving the goal of intellectualizing the life of the nation. Without strengthening these moral and

spiritual values, education risks becoming merely a technocratic process oriented only towards skills, without a foundation of ethics and human responsibility.

From a public policy perspective, various literature recommends a multisectoral approach that integrates education with economic development strategies. Investment in education needs to be strengthened through fiscal policy support, the provision of incentives to underdeveloped regions, scholarship programs for vulnerable groups, and a more proportional and equitable budget allocation. Some research asserts that the Indonesian government's priority should focus on the equitable access to education as the main strategy in overcoming social and economic gaps (Agustina et al., 2019). Furthermore, the implementation of inclusive education and the utilization of digital technology are believed to be a bridge to overcome infrastructure disparities between regions. The development of online learning systems and hybrid models is a potential solution so that quality education can reach communities in remote areas with minimal facilities.

The most fundamental challenge still faced is changing the community paradigm so that they view education not as a cost burden but as the main capital for the future (Slocum et al., 2019). The government needs to intensify educational literacy campaigns, strengthen collaboration with parents, local communities, and the private sector in providing scholarships, educational facilities, and social programs that support student success. Character education and the value of faith, as mandated in the UUD 1945, must be made the foundation of the national curriculum so that education is not merely oriented towards the mastery of technical

skills, but also fosters morality, spirituality, and social responsibility (Yuliansih et al., 2018).

By combining theoretical and empirical findings from various literature, it can be concluded that to realize the noble ideal of “intellectualizing the life of the nation,” synergy is required between improving the quality and equitable distribution of education, strengthening public awareness of the importance of education as a long-term investment, and consistent development policies in supporting access and quality of education. If these three aspects can be managed effectively and sustainably, then Indonesia’s HR will be able to become the driving force for inclusive, innovative, and highly competitive national development in facing global challenges.

4. Conclusion

National education, as outlined in the UUD 1945 namely intellectualizing the life of the nation through enhancing faith, piety, and noble character serves as the moral and intellectual foundation of national development. Literature analysis shows that education and national development have a reciprocal relationship: education creates quality HR, while development provides policies and supporting facilities for effective and equitable education. However, low public awareness of education as a long-term investment, as well as disparities in infrastructure and educational quality between regions, are major obstacles to realizing this goal.

The literature findings confirm that the higher the level of education, the greater its contribution to community welfare, social mobility, innovation, and

national competitiveness. Conversely, low HR quality weakens economic productivity and exacerbates inequality and unemployment. Therefore, an integrated policy strategy is urgently needed: equitable distribution of educational infrastructure, improvement of teacher quality and curriculum, internalization of moral and character values in accordance with the UUD 1945, and public literacy campaigns so that education is viewed as an investment for the future. Only with the synergy between public awareness, development policy, and improvement of educational quality can the goal of intellectualizing the life of the nation be realized and become the foundation for inclusive and sustainable national development.

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