



## Implications of New Order Education Policy on Human Resources Development in Indonesia

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### Abstract

This study examines the implications of education policies implemented during the New Order era on human resources in Indonesia. The New Order era, which lasted from 1996 to 1998, placed education as an important milestone in driving the national development agenda. Policies such as literacy eradication, compulsory education programs, and scholarships, had a major influence in increasing access to education and significantly reducing illiteracy rates. However, these policies also faced various challenges, including a greater focus on quantity than quality, and strong political influence in the education system. This study uses a qualitative method based on literature review to explore the successes and failures of education policies during that era. The results of the study show that the New Order education policies succeeded in expanding access to education, but were less than optimal in improving the quality of human resources as a whole. These findings provide valuable insights for the development of future education policies.

**Keywords:** National education, Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), New Order government, Pancasila, Educational policies

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### Introduction

Efforts to advance and educate the nation's life continue to be carried out, although along the way there are many problems and obstacles. Among them, there are movements that have no loyalty to the government so that they always try to thwart the government's efforts to improve the quality of national education. There are also groups that distort the outlook on life of the Indonesian nation as stated in Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution, namely the PKI (Indonesian Communist Party). Although in its movement rate it is in politics, in practice it has infiltrated the field of education. Thus, education in Indonesia has experienced several policies that are considered to have several interests <sup>[1]</sup>.

After the PKI was successfully crushed, the New Order government headed by President Suharto continued to reform and develop in all fields including education. MPRS Decree Number: XXVII/Tap/MPRS/1966 which contains the goal of education is to produce true Pancasila people based on the provisions desired in the opening of the 1945 Constitution, so that efforts to reform education are considered. Since 1959, Indonesia has been at the bottom of the wave of the USDEK manipol (Political Manifesto) (1945 Constitution, Indonesian Socialism, Guided Democracy, Guided Economy, and Indonesian Character). Manipol-Usdek as a "god" in political life and all fields of life including in the field of education. Presidential Decree Number 145 of 1965, the national goal of education in the Old Order era is in accordance with the USDEK manipol. The educational goals implemented are Panca Wardana (5 main points of development). This educational goal did not last long and was abandoned after the outbreak of the Gram 30/S/PKI incident in 1965 <sup>[2]</sup>.

The public began to realize that there was a political intention of the PKI stated in the educational objectives by using Pancasila as its shield. The issuance of the MPRS Decree Number: XXVII of 1966 revoked Presidential Decree No. 145 of 1965 and

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<sup>1</sup> Heni Yuningsih, "Politics of Government Policy on Islamic Religious Education in the New Order Era," Nur El-Islam 3, no. 1 (2016): 50–62, <https://www.neliti.com/publications/226411/politik-kebijakan-pemerintah-terhadap-pendidikan-agama-islam-di-masa-orde-baru>.

<sup>2</sup> Siti Fathiya *et al.*, "Transformation and Influence of Education Policy During the New Order Era in Indonesia," Dewaruci: Journal of Historical Studies and Teaching 3, no. 1 (2024).

Presidential Decree No. 19 of 1965 concerning the principles of the Pancasila national education system were declared no longer valid. At the end of 1965, the PKI was successfully crushed by ABRI and the people, but the PKI's politics had not disappeared because it was not dissolved by the government (President). The public's dissatisfaction with President Sukarno's lack of assertiveness led to ongoing demonstrations demanding Tritura, the contents of which were the prohibition of PKI politics in Indonesia, which resulted in the issuance of Supersemar on March 11, 1966. In 1966, there was a dualism of leadership between Suharto and Sukarno. The issuance of the MPR Decree Number: XIII/MPRS/1966 on July 25, 1966, which led Suharto to form a new cabinet, while the president held government power and was head of state. Sukarno as head of state and Suharto as head of state were in chaos, the MPRS held a special session on 7-12 March 1967 which resulted in Decree Number: XXXIII/MPRS/1967 concerning the revocation of President Sukarno's state and government powers and appointing Suharto as president <sup>[3]</sup>.

The educational outcomes that we enjoy today are certainly a continuation of the educational process in the past. Various problems in the field of education are challenges for policy makers, from the central to regional levels. The problems that occur are not only about the quality and quantity of education, but also concern the interests of the bureaucratic elite and educational elite in this country. Quoted from Mukodi, (2016), that education is always linked to the politics of leadership in power. Thus, the laying of the foundations of education by a government regime is essentially based on the politics of a nation. Likewise, the direction and goals of national education in Indonesia are always dynamic and adaptive according to the interests of the rulers. History shows that the world of education in Indonesia from one regime to the next is full of dynamics and problems. Among them are issues of the concept and direction of education, the unclear policies and systems that surround it, and poor teaching methods and evaluations (Mukodi, 2016). This also has an impact on the output and outcomes produced by the education system.

Education is humanizing young people. So education is carried out by humans (adults) with serious efforts and appropriate strategies and tactics for the success of education. The implementation of education takes place in the family as informal education, in schools as formal education and in society as non-formal education and lasts a lifetime. The implementation of education, in addition to being carried out by the community itself, is also carried out by the government, or at least gets assistance from the government. Education that gets assistance from the government ultimately results in a process of mutual influence. On the one hand, the government situation is influenced by the characteristics of education graduates, and on the other hand, the government also influences the world of education. The characteristics of education, its direction and goals are then determined by the political characteristics determined by the government.

The New Order era was one of the important periods in the

history of Indonesian national development, including in the field of education. The New Order government, which was in power from 1966 to 1998, placed education as the main pillar in supporting the national development agenda. Through various policies, such as literacy programs, compulsory education, and scholarships, the government sought to improve the quality and quantity of human resources (HR) as the main capital for economic and social development.

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However, education policies during the New Order era were not free from criticism. The focus that often emphasized quantitative aspects rather than qualitative aspects, as well as strong political control, created various challenges in their implementation. Although a number of programs succeeded in increasing access to education, their impact on improving the quality of human resources is still debated. The difference between the success and failure of these policies provides a complex picture of how education during the New Order era affected human resource development in Indonesia.

#### A. Method

This article is the result of library research, namely a study used to collect information and data through the library.<sup>4</sup>Mestika Zed defines library research as a series of research activities carried out by utilizing library sources to obtain data and then processing the research materials until research results are obtained.<sup>5</sup>Literature research is identical to an event, either in the form of an action or writing, which is researched to obtain accurate facts by finding the origin and the real cause <sup>[6]</sup>. According to Arikunto, literature review includes processing research materials by reading and taking notes and collecting information from various sources <sup>[7]</sup>. Then, according to Sari, the data collection technique in symbolic verbal form is to collect manuscripts that will be analyzed <sup>[8]</sup>.

The primary sources in this study were obtained from books on the History of Islamic Civilization by experts that have been published, including the work of Samsul Munir Amin published in 2018, the work of Samruddin Nasution published in 2022, the work of Asmal May published in 2015, the work of Badri Yatim published in 2008 and other works. While secondary sources consist of articles published in various accredited national and international journals.

The approach taken in this study is a qualitative approach where the research data is presented verbally rather than through statistical tests in its data analysis. A series of actions related to reading and recording the required data, processing research materials and collecting data from the library are literature study methods with a qualitative approach. According to Hartanto in the study, researchers conducted a

<sup>3</sup> Syaharuddin, Syaharuddin, and Heri Susanto. "History of Indonesian Education (Pre-Colonial Era of the Archipelago to Reformation)." (2019).

<sup>4</sup>Mirzaqon T and Budi Purwoko, History of Literature Regarding the Theoretical Basis and Practice of Expressive Writing Counseling, Jurnal BK Unesa, Vol. 8, No. 1, Year 2017, p. 20

<sup>5</sup>Zed, Literature Research Methods, (Jakarta: Obor Foundation, 2008, p. 45

<sup>6</sup>Hamzah, Library Research Methods, (Malang: Literasi Nusantara Abadi, 2020), p. 7

<sup>7</sup>Arikunto, Research Procedures: a practical approach, Jakarta: Rineka Cipta, 2019, p.23.

<sup>8</sup>Sari, "Library Research in Science Education Research", Journal of Science Research and Science Education, Vol. 6, No. 1, 2020, p.45

literature review study where the main objective was to build a theoretical basis that could be achieved by collecting references consisting of several stages then combined to make decisions<sup>[9]</sup>.

Bungin said that the qualitative approach, in addition to being based on phenomenological and humanistic philosophy, also bases its approach on empirical philosophy, idealism, criticism, vitalism and rationalism. In positivist thinking, the qualitative approach is seen as a critique of postpositivism<sup>[10]</sup>.

A qualitative approach is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observable behavior<sup>[11]</sup>. Saryono further explained that qualitative research is research that is used to investigate, discover, describe, and explain the quality or characteristics of social influences that cannot be explained, measured or described using a quantitative approach<sup>[12]</sup>.

Data collection in library research is done first with documentation to find data in the form of notes, transcripts, books, newspapers, magazines, inscriptions, agendas and so on. This documentation is very important in qualitative research because the document contains the data. Second through observation which is used to observe and record what is contained in the sources used<sup>[13]</sup>.

Analyzing qualitative data leads to content analysis. According to Frankle and Wallen in Sari, content analysis is a study that focuses on the actual content and internal features of the media. This technique can be used by researchers to study human behavior indirectly through communication analysis such as books, texts, essays, newspapers, novels, magazine articles and so on<sup>[14]</sup>. Content analysis is carried out in six stages of work, namely (1) processing and preparing data by sorting and organizing data; (2) reading all data; (3) coding all data by collecting pieces of text; (4) describing the setting (domain), people (participants), categories and themes to be analyzed; (5) description; (6) interpretation<sup>[15]</sup>.

## B. New Order Education Policy

The New Order was a period of government in Indonesia from March 11, 1966 until the transition of the presidency, from President Suharto to President Habibie on May 21, 1998. The transition from the Old Order to the New Order brought consequences for changes in political strategy and national education policy. Basically, the New Order was a total correlation to the Old Order which was dominated by the PKI and was considered to have distorted Pancasila<sup>[16]</sup>. During the New Order, education was not the main goal. The New Order chose economic improvement and development

as its main goal and implemented its policies through an administrative structure dominated by the military. In achieving this mission, the discipline of economics (including macro and micro economic analysis tools) became the spearhead, whereas during the Old Order, economics was neglected<sup>[17]</sup>.

## During the New Order era, education policy in Indonesia experienced many changes, including:

- 1) Continuing the literacy eradication program which in 1972 was further developed by providing specific skills.
- 2) Implementing community education so that they have mental, spiritual and skill abilities.
- 3) Introducing out-of-school education that is oriented towards important matters related to social, economic and cultural life as practical needs
- 4) Introducing educational innovation activities, for example Real Work Lectures (KKN), opening of open schools and universities, compulsory education, and so on
- 5) Development of the young generation through the Intra-School Student Organization (OSIS), Campus Student Organization, Indonesian National Youth Committee (KNPI), or other youth organizations
- 6) The implementation of the foster parent program began in 1984<sup>[18]</sup>.

### 1. Centralized System

Centralization comes from English which is rooted in the word Center which means center or middle. Centralization is deciding all authority to a small number of managers or those in the top positions in an organizational structure. Centralization was widely used in the old government in Indonesia before regional autonomy<sup>[19]</sup>.

This system became the main education policy in the New Order Government. The centralistic education policy will make it easier for the government to monitor and control the process of implementing education. Because the New Order government realized that education is the most strategic means of increasing community empowerment in various fields. In order for community empowerment through education to lead to targets and goals according to the government, all education planning must be determined and controlled by the center<sup>[20]</sup>.

As a conclusion, the education policy during the New Order era was directed at standardization. At this time there was no place for differences of opinion, thus giving birth to pseudo-discipline and giving birth to a copycat society. At this time economic growth was made the commander. The relevance

<sup>9</sup>Hartanto, "Literature Study: Development of Learning Media with AutoCAD Software", Journal of Building Engineering Education Studies, Volume 6, Number 1, 2020.

<sup>10</sup>Bungin, *Qualitative Research Methodology Methodological Actualization Towards a Variety of Contemporary Variants*, Jakarta: Rajawali Pers, 2022, p.245.

<sup>11</sup>Moleong, *Qualitative Research Methods*, Bandung: PT Remaja Rosdakarya, 2017, p.23.

<sup>12</sup>Saryono, *Qualitative and Quantitative Research Methodology in the Health Sector*. Yogyakarta: Nuha Medika, 2013, p.11.

<sup>13</sup>Bungin, *Research Paradima*, Bandung: Rosda Karya. 2003, p.42. Also read Harun, 2007, *Qualitative Research Methods for Training*, Bandung: Mandar Maju, 2007, p.70; Arikunto, *Research Procedures: a practical approach*, Jakarta: Rineka Cipta, 2019, p.51.

<sup>14</sup>Sari, op. cit., p. 2

<sup>15</sup>Creswell, *Research Design, Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*, Fourth Edition. Sage Publicaton, translated by Achmad

Fawaid and Rianayati Kusmini Pancasari, Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2014, p.263. Compare with Creswell, *Qualitative Research in Education*. Pekanbaru: UNRI Press, 2011. Also read Bungin, *Qualitative Research Methodology Methodological Actualization Towards a Variety of Contemporary Variants*, Jakarta: Rajawali Pers, 2022, p.247.

<sup>16</sup>Yuningsih, "Government Policy Politics Towards Islamic Religious Education During the New Order Era."

<sup>17</sup>Yuningsih.

<sup>18</sup>Ulil Amri, Rifma Rifma, and Syahril Syahril, "Consistency of Education Policy in Indonesia," *Edukatif: Journal of Educational Sciences* 3, no. 5 (2021): 2200–2205, <https://doi.org/10.31004/edukatif.v3i5.778>.

<sup>19</sup>Rira Nuradhawati, "Dynamics of Centralization and Decentralization in Indonesia," *Jurnal Academia Praja* 2, no. 01 (2019): 152–70, <https://doi.org/10.36859/jap.v2i01.90>.

<sup>20</sup>Amri, Rifma, and Syahril, "Consistency of Education Policy in Indonesia."

of education was considered by adjusting the content of education to the needs of development of the required human resources <sup>[21]</sup>.

## 2. Expansion of Access to Education

The expansion of access to education during the New Order in Indonesia was one of the major policies aimed at increasing educational equality and encouraging human resource development.

During the New Order in Indonesia, education policy underwent significant changes aimed at improving the quality of education and spreading access to education throughout the country. The influence of education policy during the New Order can be seen from several main aspects:

### a. Equalization of education

Presidential Instruction Number 10 of 1973: This program is an effort to equalize education by building Elementary Schools (SD) massively throughout Indonesia. This was done to overcome the disparity in education between urban and rural areas.

Compulsory Education Program: In 1984, the government launched a 6-year compulsory education program which was later expanded to 9 years in 1994. The aim was to ensure that every child received basic education.

### b. Curriculum Development

The curriculum implemented during the New Order underwent several significant changes. The 1968 Curriculum and the 1975 Curriculum emphasized nationalistic education and character building.

The 1984 curriculum introduced the Active Student Learning Method (CBSA) approach which emphasized student activeness in the learning process.

### c. Vocational Education

The New Order government also focused on vocational education to meet the need for skilled and work-ready workers. Vocational High Schools (SMK) were strengthened and developed to produce graduates who were ready to enter the workforce.

### d. Teacher Quality Improvement

Teacher training and quality improvement is one of the priorities. The government carries out various training programs to improve teacher competence and holds teacher certification programs.

### e. Funding and Investment in Education

The New Order government significantly increased the education budget to support various education programs and policies. This included building school infrastructure, procuring books and learning tools, and improving teacher welfare <sup>[22]</sup>.

## 3. Human Resource Development Orientation

During the New Order (1966 – 1998), human resource development became one of the main focuses to support the grand development plan, especially through education, including:

### a. Teacher Potential Development

The competency improvement program covers pedagogical, professional, social, and personality aspects, which are aimed at ensuring that teachers not only teach, but also provide

meaningful and relevant learning.

### b. Periodic Mentoring and Evaluation

First Teacher mentoring in writing scientific journals and classroom action research (PTK) shows efforts to improve the scientific quality of educators. Both Teacher Performance Assessment (PKG) and supervision of the madrasah principal are carried out routinely to monitor the development of learning quality.

### c. Training and Workshops

Training involving experts from various fields is held to improve teachers' abilities in using technology and keeping up with the latest developments in learning methods.

### d. Awards and Incentives

Encouragement to achieve through competitions and awards aims to increase the motivation and individual quality of educators <sup>[23]</sup>

## C. Impact and Implications

The education policy implemented during the New Order era played a strategic role in shaping the direction of human resource (HR) development in Indonesia. With various flagship programs such as the eradication of illiteracy, compulsory education, and the provision of scholarships, the government attempted to improve the quality of life of the community through access to education. However, behind the success achieved, the policy also faced a number of obstacles and failures that affected the achievement of national education goals. The impact and implications of this policy were not only reflected in the development of HR, but also in the social, political, and economic dynamics at that time.

### 1. Success of Education Policy

#### a. Eradication of Illiteracy

Launched in 1972 to reduce illiteracy rates in Indonesia, especially in remote areas. By 1982, 90% of Indonesia's population was literate, positively impacting national literacy.

#### b. 6-Year Compulsory Education Program

Started in 1974 by establishing elementary schools (SD) in various regions. This program has succeeded in increasing school participation rates for children aged 7–12 years and providing basic reading, writing, and arithmetic skills.

#### c. Scholarship Program

Launched through the Supersemar Foundation in 1974 to support outstanding students with low economic conditions. Many students from low economic backgrounds have succeeded in continuing their education to higher levels and achieving success in their careers.

### 2. Failure of Education Policy

#### a. Educational Goals Not Yet Achieved

The goal of forming Pancasilaist people with noble character and intellectual intelligence was often used as a political tool by the New Order regime to maintain power.

Teachers and lecturers are prohibited from conducting research that conflicts with the government, reflecting tight controls on academic freedom.

#### b. Ineffective Curriculum

The curriculum often underwent changes (1968, 1975, 1983) without considering field conditions and educational needs.

<sup>21</sup> Amri, Rifma, and Syahril.

<sup>22</sup> Fathiya *et al.*, "Transformation and Influence of Education Policy During the New Order Era in Indonesia."

<sup>23</sup> Fathiya *et al.*

The curriculum tends to burden students with a lot of material but minimal in-depth understanding, so that learning outcomes are less than optimal.

#### c. National Examination Failure

The implementation of the National Examination does not reflect the equality of education quality, triggering data manipulation and cheating practices. As a result, graduates of education are not fully competent to compete in the world of work.

#### d. 9-Year Compulsory Education Program

Launched in 1984 as a continuation of a 6-year program, but was unsuccessful due to lack of field research and inappropriate implementation.

### 3. Impact on Human Resources Development

There are two impacts resulting from the government's education policies during the New Order era, namely:

- 1) The positive impact is increasing access to basic education, reducing illiteracy rates, and the success of several individuals who received scholarship support.
- 2) Negative impacts of inequality in the quality of education between regions, dependence of the system on political control, and minimal focus on improving skills relevant to market needs.

#### D. Conclusion

The education policy implemented during the New Order era had a significant impact on human resource development in Indonesia. Various programs such as literacy eradication, compulsory education, and scholarships, succeeded in increasing access to education and school participation rates, especially among people with lower-middle incomes who previously had difficulty accessing education. This success created an important foundation for literacy and basic human resource skills in Indonesia.

However, the policy Education in this era is also not free from weaknesses. Excessive focus on quantitative aspects without being balanced by attention to quality, frequent curriculum changes, and strong political control in the education system hinder the achievement of optimal educational goals. The inequality of access and quality of education between urban and rural areas is also a major challenge. In addition, the use of education as a political tool by the New Order regime shows that education policies are often not fully directed towards the interests of pure human resource development.

Overall, education policies in the New Order era made an important contribution in building the foundation of Indonesian human resources, but still left various relevant lessons for the development of more inclusive, quality, and politically free education policies in the future.

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