



The Concept of Education in the UK

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis sistem pendidikan di Inggris menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif dengan metode library research atau studi pustaka. Data yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini berasal dari berbagai sumber literatur seperti buku, jurnal ilmiah, dan laporan resmi yang membahas kebijakan pendidikan, struktur kurikulum, dan tantangan yang dihadapi oleh sistem pendidikan Inggris. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa sistem pendidikan di Inggris memiliki kurikulum yang terstruktur dengan baik dan berorientasi pada pencapaian akademis serta pengembangan keterampilan siswa. Namun, terdapat tantangan yang signifikan terkait dengan kesenjangan sosial ekonomi, yang memengaruhi akses terhadap pendidikan berkualitas, serta adopsi teknologi yang belum merata. Berdasarkan temuan tersebut, penelitian ini menyarankan adanya kebijakan yang lebih inklusif serta penguatan infrastruktur digital untuk mendukung keberhasilan sistem pendidikan di masa depan. Penelitian ini diharapkan dapat memberikan kontribusi dalam pengembangan pendidikan yang lebih adil dan merata di Inggris.

Kata Kunci: Konsep, Sistem, Pendidikan.

Abstract

This study aims to analyse the education system in England using the library research method. The data used in this study come from various literature sources such as books, scientific journals, and official reports that discuss education policies, curriculum structures, and challenges faced by the English education system. The results of the study indicate that the education system in England has a well-structured curriculum that is oriented towards academic achievement and student skill development. However, there are significant challenges related to socio-economic disparities, which affect access to quality education and uneven adoption of technology. Based on these findings, this study suggests more inclusive policies and strengthening digital infrastructure to support the success of the education system in the future. This research is expected to contribute to the development of fairer and more equitable education in England.

Keywords: Concept, System, Education.

Introduction

Education is a social institution that is recognised as a very important strategic tool that helps determine the efforts to build a nation. Education as a universal humanitarian institution is owned by every nation in the world. (Irma et al., 2023).

Each nation has an education system that is adapted to its own conditions and does not have the ability like other races. Comparative

education as a part of the field of education began its real role in the 1960s even though, in essence the comparative education activity has been going on since centuries ago and has also given birth to various formal educational institutions. (Nugraha, 2019b).

The United Kingdom is the largest and most populous state of any other state that forms the United Kingdom united. The name "England" is derived from the Old English word

England, meaning "land of the Angles" (Adziman & Fauzan, 2014).

Education in the UK has a long history that has contributed to the intellectual, social, and economic development of the country. The British education system, which is renowned for its quality, has become a model for many countries in the world. From primary to tertiary level, the UK offers a wide range of diverse and well-structured education options. The system includes compulsory education from the ages of 5 to 18, as well as higher education levels that focus on academic development and professional skills.

One of the hallmarks of education in the UK is the existence of public and private schools, which provide opportunities for students from different backgrounds to get an education that suits their needs. In addition, the curriculum implemented in the UK emphasises balancing academic mastery and practical skill development, aiming to prepare students for the challenges of the global workforce.

At the higher education level, the UK is known as home to some of the best universities in the world, such as the University of Oxford and the University of Cambridge. These universities not only serve as hubs for research and innovation but also attract students from all over the world, which in turn enriches the diversity and quality of education in the UK.

However, behind these achievements, the education system in the UK also faces various challenges. Inequality of access between socioeconomic groups, the quality of education in rural and urban areas, and the impact of changes in education policy are some of the issues that continue to be a concern. Therefore, the focus and objectives of this research are: (1) the background of the growth and development of education in the UK, (2) the concept of education in the UK, (3) the implementation of education in the UK, (4) the educational achievements achieved, (5) the problems faced and efforts to overcome the problems, and (6) the comparison with Indonesia.

Method

This research uses the library *research method*, where the data used is obtained from written sources that are relevant to the topic discussed. This method aims to collect, study, and analyse information from various literature such as books, scientific articles, research

reports, government policies, and other sources related to education in the UK. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to gain comprehensive insight into the topic under study, as well as to understand how education in the UK is developing, the underlying concepts, implementation, achievements that have been achieved, the problems faced, the efforts to solve them, and how they compare to the education system in Indonesia. Data analysis uses the Miles and Huberman technique which consists of data reduction, data appearance, and conclusion drawn.

Result and Discussion

Background to the Growth and Development of Education in the UK

The history of the establishment of educational institutions in the *United Kingdom* or the British Empire (hereinafter referred to as the United Kingdom) has been recorded since the end of the 6th century, namely in the period of *Anglo-Saxon British history*. The first school thought to have been established in England was a *grammar school* founded in 598 in Canterbury, England. The UK is home to some of the oldest universities in the world. The University of Oxford is the first university to be established in British history. There is evidence that the oldest university in the English-speaking country has been teaching since 1096 and has flourished since 1167.

In 1209, some scholars from Oxford University decided to leave and move to Cambridge, which later became the forerunner of the University of Cambridge. In the northern part, the University of St. Andrews was founded in 1413, making it the oldest university in Scotland.

One of the important milestones in the history of education in England was the first time that a compulsory education program was enacted, which was in 1880. Compulsory education was enforced at that time only for children aged 5 to 10 years. The deadline for compulsory education then increased gradually and reached the age of 14 in 1918. In 1947 and 1973, the age limit was again increased to 15 and 16 years respectively. With the enactment of the *Education and Skills Act 2008*, from 2013 to 2015, the deadline for compulsory education will gradually increase to 18 years old. (Adziman & Fauzan, 2014).

The Concept of Education in the UK

The United Kingdom is divided into four educations, consisting of a combination of four countries consisting of England (United Kingdom), Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. Each part of the country has a different government and education system. British education at the national level is supervised by the Ministry of Education under the government. The education system is decentralised, and is supervised by the central government. Authority is given to local governments in implementing policies. Each State is different in enforcing its education system because of different governments, with the central government as the supervisor.

Compulsory education has become a compulsory program in the UK as a national learning system, affirmed by the government in 1996 in the British Education Act. Every parent in the UK must ensure that each of their children gets and enters education at the age of five to sixteen years to get an education. Parents who violate the rules will be sanctioned with fines and three months in prison. Compulsory learning begins in elementary and junior high school education. Part of the four levels of the UK education system starts from Pre-School, to college.

1. Pre-school

Followed by students aged 5 years and under. The learning pattern is carried out by playing. The field of learning consists of required lessons such as language lessons, lessons on communication, lessons on physical development, lessons on personal, social and emotional development, improving literacy skills, understanding of mathematics lessons, as well as lessons about the world, as well as art lessons. Special exams are not held as a requirement for completing primary education.

The government provides 15 hours of free pre-school education a week for children aged three years and above 38 weeks. Parents can provide additional school time at their own expense. Children whose parents earn the national minimum wage receive 30 hours of pre-primary education from the government per week below the minimum wage. Child development or what is referred to as the foundation stage in the curriculum. Since the National Curriculum was promulgated.

The Education Law 2002 regulates the fields of learning, namely:

- a. Social, emotional and personal development teaches children to have confidence, know their surroundings, see their needs, be able to determine prayer and truth and learn to dress themselves.
- b. Communication using language and literacy teaches speaking for children, telling stories, singing and rhyming, listening and associating them with letters.
- c. Knowing mathematics to recognise numbers using the medium of stories, in songs, and while playing, to see the comparison of smaller and larger objects and distinguish heavier and lighter objects, as well as distinguish between space and the shape of the building.
- d. An understanding of knowledge of the state of the world around them. Recognise the technology used in daily life and past life in each other's homes, as well as other cultures and beliefs. Physical development and exercise in controlling body movements, using tools used daily.
- e. The development of creativity to better understand colors and shapes, try and see the ability to dance, musical ability, and the ability to make a handiwork that has artistic value.

2. Primary education

Starting at the age of 5 until the age of 11, the phase that the course passes under the British education system. At the age of 11, children leave school and continue to secondary school. At the age of 4-11 years children get basic education. Education levels in elementary school, namely key stage 1 and key stage 2. The Key Stage is given education by dividing learning into two stages, starting based on knowledge and skills at the end of each stage to be achieved. At the primary school level, at levels 1 and 2, students are given subject matter subjects in mathematics, English, science, design and technology, history, geography, skills and design, music, sports, and computers. At the next level of key level 2, students are also given lessons on foreign languages. Schools in the UK have religious subjects that are compulsory for each child. Religious education is given for the deepening of one religion, but it

provides various religious lessons in the world. If they object, parents can ask students not to attend religious lessons.

1. Secondary Education

Starting from the ages of 11 to 16, the secondary school enrolls students to enter key stages 3 and 4 and gain and choose their pathway to take the *General Certificate of Secondary Education* (GCSE) expertise. Compulsory education for primary and secondary education, entering the age of 16, education is more optional. Junior secondary education lasts five to seven years at key level 3 and key level 4. After completing key stage 4 (age 16), new students take the GCSE exam to obtain a certificate of expertise. With certificates obtained after completing the GCSE exams, students can continue to upper secondary education by choosing academic or skills education and practical education to pursue higher education or directly enter the workforce. To continue secondary education is the choice of students. The path of choice for students to take various types of A-level and baccalaureate qualifications (Zaenab & Muis, 2011)

2. Private and university education in the UK.

At the age of 18, students begin to enter the level of education at the university and beyond, and educational qualifications can be selected according to their expertise and skills. Honesty is a qualification in academics, it is also offered certificates for higher education and national-level education certificates, higher education diplomas, national education diplomas and foundation degrees, bachelor's degrees and master's degrees integrated in the field of expertise. Students follow education that enters the age of 18 years and above. The university level is S1 (bachelor's) for three years, S2 (Master's) one, and S3 (PhD.) for at least 3 years. For program options, there are several that students can choose from combined with undergraduate and postgraduate levels into the same program. At the end of the study period, students get a master's degree within four years.

Education in the UK is a system ranging from basic education to education at the UK university level. The evaluation system for the elementary and first secondary school levels is not carried out, the evaluation is carried out at the upper secondary level to obtain educational qualifications and skills to be ready to enter the world of work and to continue higher education. (Arsilawita et al., 2021).

Education Implementation

In general, the implementation of schools in the UK begins with the new school year. The new school year starts every September 1st unless the date is a holiday; it is moved to the 2nd or 3rd. There are two levels of education regulated in the national curriculum for England: pre-primary, primary and secondary. *The Education Act 2002, chapter 32*, is the Law underlying this arrangement. There is no standard curriculum for further education and higher education. Due to the variety of qualifications that exist at the level of education after 16 years, each qualification has its own curriculum. Students at this stage are considered mature enough to choose. Some of the qualifications offer practical skills training so that you can work immediately afterwards. Some offer preparation before entering university, and so on.

The basic structure of the education system in the UK is as follows: (1) Pre-primary education aged 3-4 years; (2) Primary education aged 4-11 years; (3) Secondary education aged 11-16 years; (4) Further education aged 16-18 years; and (5) Higher education over 18 years old. Before elementary school, there is a preparatory class called reception class (TK) for children who are 4 years old. Then, when he was 5 years old, he began to enter elementary school until the end of the 6th year for children aged 7-10 years. Sending children to public schools in the UK means free tuition. Not only tuition, even parents who are really incapable, like those who live in the most slum pockets like the city of Leeds, are entitled to various free training provided by schools.

1. Pre-Primary Education)

Pre-primary education in the UK covers children aged 3 to 4 years and aims to prepare them before entering formal education. Pre-primary education providers and facilities may be organised by *nursery schools*, *playgroups*, and *childcare centres* managed by the government, the private sector, or voluntary organisations. This program is often subsidised by the government, especially for children aged 3 and 4 years. The objectives and methods of activities at this level are focused on the development of social, motor, and cognitive skills through play, artistic activities, and social interaction.

2. Primary Education

Pendidikan primer dimulai pada usia 4–5 taand lasted until the age of 11. This education

includes *Key Stage 1* and *Key Stage 2*, which are divided as follows:

Key Stage 1 (Ages 5–7): Subjects taught include English, Maths, and Science, as well as additional lessons such as Arts and Physical Education. Assessment at the end of *Key Stage 1* is carried out through teacher assessments and standardised exams.

Key Stage 2 (Ages 7–11): The curriculum covers a wider range of subjects such as Geography, History, and Modern Languages. At the end of *Key Stage 2*, students take *Standard Assessment Tests (SATs)* to assess their abilities.

3. Secondary Education

Secondary education starts from the age of 11 to 16 years and is divided into *Key Stage 3* and *Key Stage 4*. *Key Stage 3* (Ages 11–14) during this stage, students study a variety of subjects which include English, Mathematics, Science, Information Technology, Arts, and Modern Languages. *Key Stage 4* (Age 14–16 years) At this stage, students begin to choose subjects according to their interests and the field of study they want to focus on. The *General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE)* exam at the end of *Key Stage 4* is an important evaluation to determine their academic ability.

4. Further Education

Further education is intended for students aged 16 to 18 and includes several educational pathway options:

A-levels (Advanced Levels): Academic programs that prepare students to go on to university. Students typically choose three to four subjects and take an exam at the end of the program.

Vocational Diploma: Programs that are more oriented towards job skills and practical training in areas such as business, technology, and health. *Apprenticeships*: It is a combination of on-the-job training and classroom study, which allows students to acquire practical skills (Jones, 2021).

5. Higher Education

Higher education in the UK is regulated by universities and colleges, with programs ranging from undergraduate to doctoral levels. Undergraduate programs usually last for three to four years, depending on the major and program taken. Well-known universities such as Oxford and Cambridge offer tutorial-based teaching systems. Postgraduate programs include master's degrees that typically last one to two years and doctoral (PhD) programs that take three to four

years. *Access and Funding*: Students who wish to pursue higher education typically apply through UCAS (*Universities and Colleges Admissions Service*). Higher education financing can involve education loans from the government that must be repaid after the student is employed and his income exceeds a certain threshold. (Hovel, 2021).

In terms of curriculum, schools in the UK use the national curriculum. The national curriculum is determined by the school curriculum development council, especially for schools in primary and secondary education. Originally, the curriculum development council was still one with the national examination board, namely in one forum called *The School Council For Curriculum and Examinations*. (Ridley, 2012).

The higher education year in the UK is divided into two or three terms. Students take majors that are in accordance with the interests they want to study and develop. A bachelor's degree will be awarded if they have completed it. There are two major groups of majors, namely "*art*" and "*science*" majors. Postgraduate programs can be followed by those who have graduated with a bachelor's degree. Generally, they are over 21 years old. The postgraduate program is taken within 2 years. Students must complete coursework, write a thesis, and take a final exam. Traditional post-graduate glasses are usually in the field of "*arts*" with the designation (MA), while in the field of "*Science*" with the designation (MSc). The increasingly popular post-graduate glass is the *Master of Business Administration (MBA)*.

Children of extraordinary physical and mental abilities are held in special schools according to the "tripartite" system. Children are required to study until the age of 16. Some of these schools have dormitories to accommodate children from other regions. Children with IQs that are slightly less than normal children are usually mixed with children who are the same age as in ordinary schools. Some educational institutions for exceptional children provide places for further training and find employment for them. (Irma et al., 2023).

Educational Achievements Achieved

The UK has a global reputation in education, particularly at the higher education level and innovations in primary and secondary education. This achievement is reflected in various international indicators, such as

university rankings, international exam results, and contributions to science and research. Here are some examples of educational achievements achieved by the UK:

3. Ranking of the World's Best Universities

The UK is known to have universities that rank at the top of the list of the best universities in the world. Two of the most well-known universities are the University of Oxford and the University of Cambridge, which consistently occupy the top positions in various global rankings, such as *the QS World University Rankings* and *the Times Higher Education World University Rankings*. These universities are known not only for their superior teaching quality but also for being global centres of research and innovation in a variety of fields, from science and technology to the humanities.

Examples of Achievements: In 2024, the University of Oxford is ranked first in the world according to Times Higher Education for several consecutive times, while the University of Cambridge is also ranked second on the list. These two universities continue to make great contributions in the fields of medical, social, and technological research.

1. PISA Scores

England also showed strong results in *the Programme for International Student Assessment* (PISA), which measures the ability of 15-year-olds worldwide in literacy in reading, mathematics and science. In PISA, the UK is consistently above the OECD (*Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development*) average for all three areas.

Examples of Achievements: At PISA 2018, the UK ranked 13th for reading, 18th for maths, and 14th for science out of more than 70 participating countries. This shows that the secondary education system in the UK produces students who are competent and ready to compete globally.

Research and Innovation Contribution

The UK is one of the major global centres of research and innovation, supported by its universities. The UK often leads in science, technology, health, and social research. Many of the globally influential innovations come from the UK, such as in vaccine development, new technologies, and climate change research.

Example of Achievement: In 2020, scientists at the University of Oxford led the development of a COVID-19 vaccine that became one of the first vaccines to be widely distributed worldwide. This is a clear example

of the global impact of the UK higher education system in facing world challenges. (Fauzi, 2014).

Problems Faced and Solutions

The UK is one of the developed countries, still facing various challenges that affect various sectors of life, ranging from the economy to public services. Some of the main problems facing the UK include social inequality, the impact of Brexit, the housing crisis, challenges in the health sector, and climate change. Here is a more detailed explanation of the problems facing the UK:

2. Social and Economic Disparities

The economic gap between rich and poor areas of the UK continues to be a significant problem. London and the southeast of England enjoyed rapid economic development, while the northern region and some other areas were left behind. This has an impact on unequal access to public services such as education, healthcare, and quality jobs. In the UK, the gender wage gap is calculated as the difference between men's and women's average hourly earnings (excluding overtime) as a proportion of men's average hourly earnings (excluding overtime) to men's earnings (Hartika, 2020).

Other examples are areas such as Liverpool and Manchester often lag behind in terms of economic development compared to London, with higher levels of unemployment and poverty.

Solution: Investment in Infrastructure and Regional Development: The government has launched the "*Northern Powerhouse*" initiative, a programme that aims to reduce the gap between the northern and southern regions of the UK through investment in infrastructure, technological innovation and job creation.

Improving Access to Vocational Education and Training: Through vocational education programmes such as T-Levels, the UK seeks to upskill young workers to better suit the needs of the local labour market, particularly in areas where there is a shortage of skilled labour

3. Climate Change and Energy Crisis

Problematic: Like many countries in the world, the UK faces major challenges in terms of climate change and energy crisis. Despite having committed to achieving a zero-carbon emissions target by 2050, the UK remains dependent on fossil energy, while renewable

energy sources require more investment and development.

Example: The energy crisis in 2022-2023, exacerbated by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, caused gas and electricity prices to soar in the UK, with many households facing difficulties paying energy bills.

Solution: Renewable Energy Development, the UK continues to invest in the development of renewable energy, including wind and solar power. The UK has one of the offshore wind power projects (Shah, 2001).

Comparison with Indonesia

Education System in the UK

The education system in the UK is generally divided into several levels based on age:

1. Pre-primary education, age 3-4 years
2. Primary education, ages 4-11
3. Secondary education, ages 11-16
4. Further education, age 16-18 years
5. Higher education, over 18 years old

Education System in Indonesia

Indonesia now adheres to the national education system. There are several systems in Indonesia that have been implemented, including:

1. The Indonesian Education System is value-oriented.

This education system has been implemented since elementary school. Here students are taught honesty, tolerance, discipline, etc. This value is conveyed through PKN lessons, even this value is also conveyed at the secondary and higher education levels.

2. Indonesia adheres to an open education system.

According to this education system, students are required to be able to compete with friends, think creatively and innovatively.

3. The education system is diverse.

In Indonesia, it consists of various ethnicities, languages, regions, cultures, etc. As well as Indonesian education which consists of formal, non-formal and informal education.

4. An efficient education system in time management.

In KBM, the time is arranged in such a way that students do not

feel burdened with the subject matter delivered because the time is too short or vice versa.

5. An education system that is adapted to the changing times. In this system, the Indonesian nation must adjust the curriculum to the current situation. Therefore, the curriculum in Indonesia often changes from time to time, until now Indonesia uses the 2013 curriculum and the Independent curriculum.

Broadly speaking, the education system in Indonesia is as follows:

- a. Kindergarten
- b. Compulsory 9 years of study (SD/MI to SMP/MTS)
- c. Senior High School (SMA/MA/SMK)
- d. College.

And soon the government will plan a 12-year compulsory education, which means that the minimum education for Indonesian citizens is up to the high school level. In addition, there are also private schools, which are based on religion such as SD-IT, SMP-IT and so on (Arif, 2010).

Differences in the Education System in the UK and Indonesia

Education System in the UK

1. The implementation of the basic education system in the United Kingdom emphasizes more on practice than theory.
2. Primary school in the UK is intended for children aged 5 to 11 years and lasts for approximately 6 years.
3. In the education system in the United Kingdom, there is no exam system to move on to the next grade.
4. The basic ability test is conducted only once when the student is 7 years old. The first and second years are called infants and the third and sixth years are called juniors.
5. The curriculum of subjects taught in elementary schools there is Spanish, mathematics, science, social studies, music training, art, aesthetics, and handicrafts as well as sports or physical education lessons.

Education System in Indonesia

The organizers of the basic education system in Indonesia emphasize more theory than practice.

Elementary schools in Indonesia are intended for children aged 6-11 years and last for a period of 6 years.

The elementary school level in Indonesia is grade I-VI

In the education system in Indonesia, we know what is called the class promotion exam, which is held at the end of the second semester.

The evaluation carried out is by way of a national exam. If the student does not pass the national exam phase 1, the student must take the UN phase 2. If students do not pass by stage 2, they must follow the work package program.

The curriculum of the subjects taught includes: religious education, civic education, Indonesian language, mathematics, science, social studies, cultural arts and skills, physical education, sports and health, and local content (Nugraha, 2019).

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Conclusion

The study concludes that the education system in the UK has undergone significant changes to adapt to the challenges of the 21st century. The curriculum based on the development of critical skills and creativity is considered effective in preparing students for the modern world of work. However, the main challenge is still related to inequality in access to education, especially for students from low-economic groups. In addition, despite the increasing adoption of technology in education, the digital divide remains an obstacle for some schools. Therefore, more inclusive policy reforms and investments in education infrastructure, especially in support of technology, are urgently needed to ensure that all students can reap the benefits of quality education.