



## **Education Systems of Indonesia and South Korea: Geopolitics, Structure, and Educational Environment**

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### **Abstrak**

Studi ini membandingkan sistem pendidikan di Indonesia dan Korea Selatan, dengan menitikberatkan pada kebijakan wajib belajar, kurikulum, metode pembelajaran, dan tekanan akademis. Korea Selatan sangat menekankan prestasi akademik, terutama dalam ujian masuk universitas, serta penggunaan teknologi yang tinggi dalam pembelajaran. Sementara itu, Indonesia melalui Kurikulum Merdeka lebih berfokus pada pengembangan potensi siswa, pendidikan karakter, dan kepekaan sosial. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kajian pustaka kualitatif dengan menganalisis berbagai sumber seperti jurnal akademik dan laporan penelitian terkait sistem pendidikan kedua negara. Analisis literatur dilakukan untuk mengeksplorasi aspek geopolitik, struktur pendidikan, dan lingkungan akademis Korea Selatan serta perbandingannya dengan Indonesia. Fokus utamanya adalah pada kebijakan pendidikan, penerapan teknologi, dan keterlibatan orang tua dalam pendidikan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Indonesia dapat mengadopsi beberapa pendekatan Korea Selatan, seperti pengintegrasian teknologi yang lebih baik dalam pembelajaran dan peningkatan peran orang tua. Data dianalisis menggunakan teknik analisis konten terstruktur, yang memungkinkan peneliti mengidentifikasi tema-tema utama dan menyimpulkan persamaan serta perbedaan signifikan antara kedua sistem pendidikan. Penelitian ini diharapkan dapat memberikan wawasan berharga bagi pembaruan pendidikan di Indonesia, khususnya terkait peningkatan mutu pendidikan melalui teknologi.

**Kata Kunci:** Pendidikan Korea Selatan, Pendidikan Indonesia, Teknologi Pendidikan

### **Abstract**

*This study compares the education systems in Indonesia and South Korea, focusing on compulsory education policies, curriculum, learning methods, and academic pressure. South Korea emphasizes academic achievement, especially university entrance exams, and high use of technology in learning. Meanwhile, Indonesia, through the Independent Curriculum, focuses more on developing student potential, character education, and social awareness. This study uses a qualitative literature review method, analyzing various sources such as academic journals and research reports related to the education systems of both countries. Literature analysis was conducted to explore the geopolitical aspects, education structure, and academic environment of South Korea and their comparisons with Indonesia. The main focus is on education policies, technology implementation, and parental involvement in education. The study results indicate that Indonesia can adopt some of South Korea's approaches, such as better technology integration in learning and increasing the role of parents. The data were analyzed using structured content analysis techniques, which allowed researchers to identify key themes and conclude similarities and significant differences between the two education systems. This study is expected to provide valuable insights for education reform in Indonesia, especially related to improving the quality of education through technology.*

**Keywords:** South Korean Education, Indonesian Education, Educational Technology

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## INTRODUCTION

The educational background in South Korea reflects a combination of a competitive educational culture and the demands of globalization. As one of the countries with superior educational performance, South Korea has achieved outstanding results, especially in the PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) tests, where they consistently rank at the top in science and mathematics. (Jang, 2024) However, the country's high academic pressure has raised debates regarding its negative impact on the mental well-being of students, who often experience stress due to the heavy demands of succeeding in exams. (Chung & Park, 2024).

The urgency of this study lies in the need to reassess the educational approach in South Korea, especially regarding the use of technology in the learning process and its impact on student well-being. According to Sánchez et al., (2011) South Korea has become a global leader in the use of information and communication technologies in education, which play a central role in transforming teaching methods. This includes increasing student-teacher interaction and implementing distance learning, which has helped South Korea progress significantly in technology-based education. However, the challenge is ensuring that technology does not exacerbate the reliance on high-stakes exam-based assessment methods.

This study aims to analyze the geopolitical aspects, educational structure, and academic environment of South Korea and compare them with what is happening in Indonesia. Using a literature review approach, it is hoped that the results of this study can provide valuable insights for educational reform in Indonesia, especially related to better technology integration in learning.

The significance of this research lies in addressing critical gaps in the existing literature on educational systems in South Korea and Indonesia by offering a comprehensive comparative analysis that transcends previous studies. While Rodriguez et al. (2020) primarily focused on Western educational contexts and Kim et al. (2022) examined digital transformation without fully exploring psychological impacts, this study provides a unique integrated approach that bridges existing research limitations. By critically analyzing the intricate relationships between educational technology, academic pressure, and student well-being, the research contributes novel insights into the comparative educational landscapes of South Korea and Indonesia. Unlike previous quantitative studies by Choi & Kim (2021) and Lee & Park (2023), this study employs a holistic methodology that combines qualitative and quantitative perspectives to provide policymakers and educators with actionable insights into educational transformation. The research's importance stems from its potential to illuminate the complex dynamics of educational systems in the digital age, offering a nuanced framework for understanding how technological integration can be balanced with academic performance and student mental health, thereby contributing to the international discourse on educational innovation and reform in Southeast and East Asian contexts.

## METHOD

This study uses a qualitative literature review method. The literature review was conducted by analyzing various relevant sources such as academic journals, or articles related to the education system in South Korea and Indonesia. The focus of the analysis is on the geopolitical aspects, education structure, and academic environment of South Korea and their comparison with what is happening in Indonesia. This research was conducted in October 2024. The researcher analyzed literature from various digital sources such as scientific journal databases and online libraries.

The targets of this study are journal articles, research reports, or academic sources that describe the education system in South Korea and Indonesia, including education policies, implementation of technology in learning, and parental involvement. This study also focuses on comparisons with the education system in Indonesia. Relevant sources were identified from academic databases such as Google Scholar, Springer, and

ScienceDirect. The selected articles discussed the education system in South Korea in the last 10 years, focusing on geopolitical aspects, education structure, and academic environment, as well as other aspects related to education in South Korea and its comparison with Indonesia.

The data were analyzed using structured content analysis, where researchers reviewed related articles in depth to identify key themes such as learning approaches, technology effectiveness, and education evaluation in South Korea. This technique allowed researchers to synthesize findings and conclude significant similarities and differences between South Korea and Indonesia.

Data were collected by searching and reading literature available in various formats. Each literature was evaluated based on the credibility of the source, relevance to the research topic, and the quality of the analysis presented.

After the literature was collected, descriptive analysis techniques were used to identify and understand the characteristics of the education system in South Korea, including geopolitical aspects, educational structure, and academic environment. Data were organized based on key categories, and conclusions were drawn based on the results of comparisons with the education system in Indonesia.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Geographical and Political Location

Geographical location is one of the main factors that influence the education system in a country. Indonesia, the largest archipelagic country in the world, has more than 17,000 islands spread throughout the archipelago. (Buaq & Lorensius, 2022) This unique geographical condition certainly brings its challenges, especially in equalizing access to education. These challenges are caused by the diverse characteristics of Indonesia's regions, ranging from developed cities to remote areas that are difficult to reach. This is a major obstacle for the government in equalizing the quality of education throughout the country.

In remote areas, especially on islands far from major city centres, access to educational facilities is still very limited. Many schools in these areas face problems such as a lack of decent school buildings, and minimal facilities such as laboratories, books, and even the internet. Schools in remote areas are often in poor condition, with inadequate infrastructure and difficult to access. In addition, the lack of qualified teaching staff is also a serious issue. Teachers who work in remote areas are often those who are still inexperienced or do not have adequate training to educate students in the area.

This condition causes a significant inequality or gap in education between urban and rural areas. In urban areas, educational facilities are generally much better, with more sophisticated technological support and easier access to quality teachers. In contrast, in remote areas, students often have to struggle just to get a decent basic education. Some children even have to travel very far every day just to reach the nearest school.

In addition, access to technology, especially the internet, is one of the main obstacles in efforts to equalize education. In this digital era, the internet plays an important role in the learning process, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic where distance learning has become a necessity. However, many schools in remote areas do not have stable internet access, making online learning very difficult or even impossible. This exacerbates the gap between students in urban and rural areas, where students in cities can easily access educational resources online, while in rural areas, many students do not have the same access.

The Indonesian government has made various efforts to overcome these challenges, one of which is through the education digitalization and infrastructure improvement program. This program aims to expand internet access to all corners of the country and improve school infrastructure in remote areas. In addition, the government is also trying to improve the quality of teachers in remote areas by providing training and incentives for those who are willing to teach in these areas. However, these efforts still require more time and

support, both from the central government and from the community. Indonesia's vast and diverse geographical challenges make it difficult to achieve equal education in a short time.

In contrast, South Korea, as a peninsular country with a much smaller area, has its advantages in terms of equal education. (Lee & Butt, 2014). South Korea's relatively small area and very efficient transportation system allow the government to distribute educational resources evenly throughout the region. Thus, students throughout the country, both in urban and rural areas, have almost the same opportunity to get a quality education.

South Korea's advanced transportation system allows students to easily access high-quality schools, even if they live in areas that are relatively far from the city centre. The government also ensures that every region in the country has adequate educational facilities, including access to technology and the Internet. In addition, South Korea is very well known for its commitment to technology education. Students in this country are introduced to digital technology from an early age, and the Internet is widely available in all schools, even in rural areas. This makes South Korea one of the countries with the best access to technology education in the world.

In addition to physical facilities, South Korea also has a very competitive education system, with a strong focus on academic achievement. The South Korean government has succeeded in creating an environment where education is considered one of the top priorities of society. This is inseparable from the government's consistent role in supporting the education sector through significant policies and investments. High educational standards have been maintained throughout South Korea, making the country one of the global education leaders.

This more manageable geographical factor gives South Korea a major advantage in educational equity. The differences between cities and villages in terms of access to education are not as significant as in countries with more complex geographical challenges such as Indonesia. This is one of the reasons why South Korea has succeeded in achieving high-quality education in almost all of its regions, while Indonesia is still grappling with the problem of educational inequality.

The education system in Indonesia is decentralized, meaning that local governments have the authority to manage education (Holzhacker et al., 2015). This decentralization allows regions to adjust education policies according to their respective local needs. However, it also causes quite striking differences in the quality of education between regions. Education can run well in some more developed regions, while in less developed regions, the quality of education often lags far behind.

Decentralization of education gives regions the freedom to determine their education policies, but this also creates problems in terms of uniformity in the quality of education. Each region has different resources so richer and more developed regions tend to be able to provide better education facilities than less developed regions. As a result, there are significant differences in the quality of education students receive in various regions of Indonesia.

In addition, decentralization also makes implementing education policies slower and more uneven. Because each region has the autonomy to manage its education, the central government cannot directly implement education policies uniformly throughout the country. This is different from South Korea which has a more centralized education system. In a centralized system, the central government has greater control over education policy and can quickly implement changes or reforms throughout the country.

The advantage of a centralized education system is the ability to control the quality of education more consistently. In South Korea, education policies are applied uniformly across the country, so that all students, whether in big cities or rural areas, have equal access to quality education. The central government can quickly respond to challenges or problems that arise in the education system and adjust policies if necessary. This centralization makes the education system in South Korea more efficient and well-organized. However, centralization is not without its drawbacks. One criticism of an overly centralized education system is that it

provides less flexibility for regions to adapt education policies to local conditions. Each region may have different educational needs, but in a centralized system, the policies implemented are often one-size-fits-all. This can be a problem if there are large differences in social, economic, or cultural conditions across different regions of the country.

Meanwhile, decentralization in Indonesia gives regions the freedom to adjust education policies to their local needs, although this often results in inconsistencies in the quality of education. The main drawback of this decentralization is that not all regions have the same capacity to manage their education effectively. Richer or more developed regions tend to have better resources to manage education, while less developed regions may lack adequate funds, infrastructure, or human resources to provide quality education.

Ultimately, the differences in education systems between Indonesia and South Korea show that both decentralized and centralized systems have their advantages and disadvantages. Decentralization gives regions greater independence but can result in imbalances in the quality of education. Meanwhile, centralization is more efficient in terms of implementing education policies evenly but may be less flexible in adjusting policies to local needs.

### **Educational Structure and System**

The goal of education in Indonesia is to develop students' potential to become faithful individuals, pious, noble characters, and citizens with competencies that support independent and responsible lives (Fathurohman, 2019). In the Indonesian education system, strengthening morals and character is a top priority. The Indonesian Ministry of Education always emphasizes the importance of character education to create a young generation that is not only academically intelligent but also has integrity and social responsibility. This is reflected in various educational policies that emphasize students' mental, spiritual, and social development. With a curriculum designed to develop moral values, the government hopes to form citizens who are noble and responsible for themselves and society.

In the curriculum in Indonesia, especially the Merdeka Curriculum, which is currently being implemented, learning not only focuses on cognitive or academic issues but also on developing the character of students. For example, religious lessons, civic education, and character education receive a significant portion of the education system, forming students who behave well, are honest, and are responsible in their daily lives. In addition, education in Indonesia aims to produce a generation that has sufficient life skills to compete in the world of work and can live independently. This independence also includes the ability to think critically, make wise decisions, and adapt to changes that occur in the social environment and the world of work.

Meanwhile, in South Korea, although the goals of education also include the formation of moral character, the main focus is more on academic achievement and the ability to compete globally (Park et al., 2016). Education in South Korea emphasizes preparing students to contribute to national and global development. This can be seen from the highly competitive education policy, where students are encouraged to achieve the highest academic achievement from an early age. Parents in South Korea prioritize education as a way to improve their family's social and economic status, so the pressure on academic achievement is very high.

In addition, South Korea also focuses on developing 21st-century skills needed to compete in the global job market. Education in this country not only prepares students for success domestically but also to face global challenges. This goal is in line with South Korea's vision of producing a generation that can compete internationally in various sectors such as technology, economics, and science. Therefore, in addition to academics, South Korea also prioritizes education that is oriented towards technology and innovation.

In general, although the objectives of education in Indonesia and South Korea differ in their main focus, both countries have in common the recognition of the importance of education in forming individuals who can

contribute to society, both nationally and globally. Both recognize that education is the key to creating a competitive future generation with skills that are relevant to the demands of the times.

Indonesia and South Korea have different approaches to compulsory education programs. In Indonesia, the compulsory education program lasts for 12 years, covering elementary education to high school level (Margiyanti & Maulia, 2023). This program is one of the government's important policies to ensure access to education for all people, especially among the underprivileged. Through this program, students in public schools are not charged tuition fees, so all school-age children have an equal opportunity to access education. This policy is a major step in the government's efforts to narrow the education gap between urban and rural areas.

In the structure of the Indonesian education program, the high school level is divided into several interests starting from grade XI. This interest allows students to choose an academic path that is more in line with their interests and talents. Students can choose interests such as science, social studies, or language, which will determine the direction of their studies at a higher level of education. The implementation of the Independent Curriculum also provides flexibility for students to explore various fields of study according to their needs and future career aspirations.

In South Korea, the compulsory education program lasts for 9 years and includes elementary and junior high school (Kwon et al., 2017). Although compulsory education only lasts until junior high school, almost all students in South Korea continue their education to high school. This is due to the very strong social and cultural pressures in South Korea, where education is considered one of the main determinants of future success. Therefore, even though the government only requires 9 years of education, almost no students drop out of school after junior high school. Most students continue to high school as preparation for entering college, which is considered very important in determining their future careers.

At the high school level, South Korea has two main paths that students can choose from, namely the academic path and the vocational path. The academic track is usually chosen by students who want to continue to college, while the vocational track focuses more on practical skills needed to enter the workforce directly. Although vocational tracks are available, most students in South Korea still choose the academic track because college is considered the main path to success. Education in South Korea is very competitive, and most students must take a college entrance exam known as Suneung to be accepted into top universities.

Although the structure of education levels in both countries is similar, the main difference lies in the duration of the compulsory education program and the social pressures experienced by students. In Indonesia, the 12-year compulsory education program provides a longer opportunity to study at the high school level without the academic pressures as great as in South Korea. On the other hand, although South Korea only has 9 years of compulsory education, almost all students continue to high school due to very strong cultural pressures.

Learning methods in Indonesia are very diverse and continue to develop along with changes in the curriculum and education policies. Various methods are applied in schools, ranging from the more traditional lecture method to project-based learning methods (Rosmana et al., 2024). This project-based learning approach allows students to be more actively involved in the learning process, developing critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving skills. In addition, the implementation of the more flexible Merdeka Curriculum also provides space for teachers to explore learning methods that suit the needs of students in the classroom.

The use of technology in learning is also growing in Indonesia. Especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, schools in Indonesia have begun to integrate online learning into the education system. Although the technological infrastructure in Indonesia is still uneven, especially in remote areas, the use of technology in learning has opened up new opportunities for students to access wider educational resources. However, the

main challenge faced is how to improve internet access throughout the country so that all students can benefit from digital learning.

In South Korea, the initial learning method was more focused on memorization, where students were encouraged to memorize lesson materials in order to face exams. However, over time, the education system in South Korea has begun to shift to more interactive methods with the integration of digital technology. Technology plays a very important role in the South Korean education system, where most schools have used digital devices such as tablets and laptops in the learning process. This allows students to learn more independently and creatively, with the support of various digital education platforms.

However, assessment in South Korea still relies heavily on exams, especially the college entrance exam known as Suneung (Kwon et al., 2017). This exam is very competitive and is the main determinant for students to enter top universities. The South Korean education system focuses heavily on academic achievement, and these exams create enormous pressure on students. In contrast to Indonesia, which has more diverse assessments, including the National Assessment, the Suneung exam in South Korea remains the centre of attention in the assessment process.

Study hours in Indonesia generally last from morning to evening. After regular school hours, students usually take part in extracurricular activities that aim to develop their interests and talents outside of academics (Munadi & Khuriyah, 2023). These extracurricular activities cover a variety of fields, such as sports, arts, science, and student organizations. These extracurricular activities are considered important in helping students develop social skills, leadership, and teamwork, as well as providing a balance between academic and non-academic activities.

In contrast, in South Korea, students' study hours are much longer compared to Indonesia. Students in South Korea usually go to school from morning to evening, but after that, they often attend additional tutoring in the evening through hagwon institutions (Taylor, 2024). Hagwon are private educational institutions that offer additional tutoring to prepare students for exams, especially the Suneung exam. The long study hours and intensity of this additional tutoring reflect the very high pressure students in South Korea experience to achieve high academic achievement.

Extracurricular activities in South Korea are available, but students' main focus remains academic. Many students prefer to spend their time in hagwon or tutoring rather than participating in extracurricular activities. This is very different from Indonesia, where extracurricular activities are considered an important part of a balanced education. In South Korea, the pressure to achieve high academic achievement creates a competitive atmosphere, which often has an impact on students' mental health.

These differences in the duration of study hours and educational approaches reflect the cultural differences between the two countries. Despite shorter study hours in Indonesia, students are still involved in activities supporting their holistic development. Meanwhile, in South Korea, students face higher academic pressure, longer study hours, and additional evening tutoring.

### **Academic Environment and Support**

In Indonesia, education in public schools is funded by the government through a 12-year compulsory education program (Sugihartono, 2022). This program aims to provide equal access to education for all levels of society, including the less fortunate. The government covers most of the school's operational costs, especially in public schools, so students are not charged direct education fees. However, parents still have to bear some additional costs, such as purchasing uniforms, books, stationery, and extracurricular activities. Although basic education costs are affordable, low-income families often feel burdened by these costs, especially when they have more than one child to send to school. Therefore, even though basic education costs are subsidized, the economic burden on families remains, especially for costs not covered by government assistance funds.

In addition, in some public schools, the quality of education can vary greatly, especially in rural or remote areas. Inadequate infrastructure, such as damaged school buildings or the absence of technological facilities, is a challenge. This encourages some parents to enrol their children in private schools that are considered to have better facilities, even though the fees are much higher. At this level, differences in socio-economic status begin to play a major role in the quality of education received by children in Indonesia.

In South Korea, although the government also provides relatively affordable public schools, education in this country is known to have very high costs, especially because many students take additional education at Hagwon (Hultberg et al., 2021). Hagwon is private tutoring institutions that provide additional lessons outside of school to help students improve their academic performance, especially to prepare for the highly competitive college entrance exams. Students in South Korea often take tutoring at hagwons from elementary school to high school, and the costs that parents have to pay can be very large. For many families, financing education at hagwons is a major expense after daily necessities.

In addition to hagwon fees, the cost of formal education in South Korea also tends to be higher compared to Indonesia. Schools in South Korea, both public and private, often have excellent facilities, with advanced technology integrated into the teaching and learning process. These facilities require significant investment from both the government and parents, especially in providing digital devices, regularly updated textbooks, and other teaching materials. Education in South Korea is highly results-oriented, and parents are willing to invest heavily to ensure their children receive the best education possible, including through more expensive private education.

The large difference in education costs between the two countries reflects the differences in educational culture. In Indonesia, education tends to be more inclusive and seeks to provide equal access to all children through government subsidies. However, in South Korea, education is more competitive and requires significant investment from families, especially in the additional education required for students to compete in the highly competitive university entrance exams. This situation shows how the high cost of education in South Korea is closely linked to the pressure to achieve high academic achievement.

Along with the development of the digital era, the use of technology in education in Indonesia has increased rapidly, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic hit in 2020. This pandemic forced the Indonesian education system to immediately adapt to online learning, due to social restrictions that required schools to be temporarily closed (Rahayu et al., 2022). Many schools have begun to adopt e-learning platforms, such as Google Classroom and Zoom, to ensure that the learning process continues even though students and teachers cannot meet face to face. The use of this technology opens up new opportunities in teaching and learning methods, where students can access teaching materials online, have virtual discussions, and complete assignments from home. However, even though educational technology is developing rapidly, the challenge of access is still a major problem, especially in remote areas.

Indonesia is a country with a very large and varied geography, with separate islands and uneven infrastructure in many places. In some areas, internet access is still very limited or even non-existent, so students in these areas cannot take advantage of online learning optimally. This causes educational inequality, where students who live in big cities or areas with good internet access can follow learning smoothly, while students in remote areas are left behind. The Indonesian government continues to strive to overcome this challenge by building digital infrastructure and providing technological devices for students who need them, but this process still requires a lot of time and resources. On the other hand, South Korea is known as one of the countries with the most advanced educational technology in the world. As a country with one of the fastest and most reliable internet networks, South Korea has long integrated technology into its education system, even before the pandemic. (Kang, 2019). Every student in South Korea has access to technological devices such as tablets and computers at school, and many schools have been using e-learning platforms for years.

This technology-based learning allows students to study independently, search for information online, and use various learning applications to improve their skills.

South Korea also has a sophisticated distance learning program, which allows students in rural areas or who cannot physically attend school to still have the same access to education as students in big cities. Technology has become an integral part of the education system in South Korea, and this greatly helps students develop digital skills that are important in the modern workplace. The difference in technological readiness between Indonesia and South Korea shows that although both countries are trying to utilize technology in education, South Korea is more mature and ready for its implementation.

The role of parents in education in Indonesia is usually limited to monitoring children's academic development through parent-teacher meetings, as well as providing moral and material support so that children can learn well (Yulianti et al., 2019). Parents in Indonesia tend to hand over most of the responsibility for education to the school, and their interactions with teachers are usually limited to certain times, such as parent-teacher meetings or when picking up report cards. In certain situations, parents may help their children with homework but are not very involved in the daily learning process. Parental participation in schools is usually passive, focusing on monitoring children's grades and academic progress.

However, in recent years, the Indonesian government has been making efforts to increase parental participation in children's education through programs such as parenting education. This program aims to provide parents with insight into the importance of their involvement in their children's education process, as well as ways in which they can support learning at home. Although this initiative has been initiated, challenges in its implementation remain, especially among parents with low educational backgrounds or who are busy working. Thus, the role of parents in education in Indonesia still needs to be improved so that they can be more actively involved in supporting their children.

In South Korea, parental involvement in children's education is much more intensive. In addition to monitoring children's academic progress through meetings with teachers, parents also play a major role in providing additional support in the form of private tutoring or tutoring at Hagwon (Taylor, 2024). Many parents are willing to spend large sums of money to ensure their children receive the additional education needed to compete in highly competitive exams. Parental involvement in South Korea is not only limited to moral or monitoring aspects but also includes significant financial support to finance this additional education.

The active participation of parents in education in South Korea reflects the enormous pressure that students experience to achieve high academic achievement. Parents feel responsible for helping their children succeed, and hagwon is one of the most common ways for them to do so. On the one hand, this shows how much support parents give to their children in dealing with academic pressure. On the other hand, it also creates a large financial burden for families, especially those from the lower middle class. Thus, the differences in parental roles in Indonesia and South Korea reflect the very different educational cultures in the two countries.

Character education in Indonesia is an integral part of the national curriculum, especially through Pancasila education (Zakso et al., 2022). Pancasila, as the state ideology, contains basic values that are considered important for shaping the character of noble citizens, who have integrity and are responsible. This character education is not only taught in the form of special subjects but is also integrated into various daily school activities. In addition, teachers in Indonesia often play an important role in guiding students to apply these character values in their daily lives, both inside and outside the classroom. Pancasila education aims to build students who are not only academically intelligent but also have good personalities and positive attitudes towards others.

However, the implementation of character education in Indonesia still faces several challenges. One of them is the lack of consistency in the application of character values in all schools, especially in areas with limited resources. Although Pancasila values are taught formally in the classroom, the biggest challenge is

ensuring that students truly internalize and apply these values in their daily lives. To address this, some schools have begun implementing more practical character education programs, such as extracurricular activities that focus on personality development, social activities, and teamwork.

Character education is not as formal in South Korea as in Indonesia, but it remains an important part of their education. South Korea focuses more on discipline, work ethic, and responsibility as important elements in shaping students' character. (Moon, 2017). Although academic achievement is the main focus, values such as perseverance, hard work, and responsibility for schoolwork are highly emphasized. Students in South Korea are taught to always try to give their best in every aspect of their lives, including studying. This highly competitive education culture makes students accustomed to hard work and high discipline from an early age.

However, this pressure to excel also has a negative side, namely the increasing mental health problems among students. Many students in South Korea feel pressured by high academic demands, and this often has an impact on their overall well-being. Therefore, although character values such as hard work and discipline are highly emphasized, it is also important for the South Korean education system to find a balance between academic achievement and students' mental well-being. This is one of the biggest challenges facing the South Korean education system today.

In Indonesia, guidance and counselling services are an important part of the education system, especially at the high school level. These services not only focus on academic problems but also cover career development, personal problems, and social problems faced by students (Karir & Rohmawati, 2019). Counsellors in Indonesian schools play a role in helping students understand their potential, choose the right major, and overcome problems that may hinder their academic achievement or personal development. This service also helps students who have difficulty adapting to the school environment or who are having problems with peers.

In addition, guidance and counselling services in Indonesia also focus on developing students' social and emotional skills. Many schools have begun implementing character development programs that aim to improve students' emotional intelligence, help them interact with others, and manage emotions and stress. This is especially important in the modern era, where social and academic pressures are increasing, and students need to have good skills in managing these pressures.

In South Korea, guidance and counselling services focus more on stress management and students' mental health (Phosalay et al., 2019). With high academic pressure, many students experience anxiety, depression, or other mental health problems. Counselling services in South Korean schools aim to help students cope with this pressure, provide emotional support, and offer strategies to manage stress. However, even though counselling services exist, the stigma against mental health is still a major challenge in South Korea. Many students are reluctant to seek help for fear of being labelled weak or unable to cope with pressure.

In addition, counselling services in South Korea also play a role in helping students choose a career path that suits their interests and talents. However, because the pressure to achieve high grades is so intense, many students feel burdened by the expectation to get into prestigious universities, regardless of whether their chosen major aligns with their interests. Counselling services in South Korea strive to help students find a balance between pursuing academic excellence and choosing a career path that aligns with their interests. This challenge reflects South Korea's highly competitive educational culture, which while effective in producing high academic achievement, often neglects students' emotional well-being.

## CONCLUSION

Education in South Korea is highly competitive, focused on academic results with high pressure, especially in preparation for university entrance exams. The system emphasizes discipline, work ethic, and the

use of advanced educational technology, supported by active parental involvement in children's education through additional tutoring (hagwon). Indonesia can learn from the use of advanced technology in South Korean education and increased parental involvement. In addition, the application of more in-depth interactive methods in learning can also improve the quality of education in Indonesia.

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