Education Policy in Turkey During the Reign of Recep Tayyib Erdogan

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ABSTRACT

Background. Islamic education is an effort to develop a person's faith and charity in order to have attitudes and behaviour that are in line with Islamic teachings, and to realise the welfare of life. This approach is based on Islamic laws that aim to form the main Muslim personality in accordance with Islamic teachings. Turkey is one of the Muslim nations that has an urgent role in the development of Islamic culture.

Purpose. This article aims to be an initial assumption to raise awareness of the importance of education policy changes during the reign of Recep Tayyib Erdogan.

Method. This research uses a qualitative method with a descriptive approach based on the writings of education experts. The focus of this article is on education policies that have been implemented by considering dynamic actual conditions. Analysis of the writings of education experts, both through reading books and related journals, is used as a reference to describe education policy.

Results. The results of this study are Some important aspects of education policy in Turkey during Erdogan's reign include: transformation of the education system, Improvement of Islamic religious education, Introduction of Islamic curriculum, Character development, Improvement of teacher quality, Expansion of preschool education, Parental involvement and emphasis on technology education. Recep Tayyib Erdogan's Education Policy in Turkey has implemented several significant education policies since he took over the government in 2003.

Conclusion. Erdogan's education policy in Turkey includes system transformation, improvement of Islamic religious education, Islamic curriculum, character development, improvement of teacher quality, expansion of preschool education, parental involvement, and emphasis on technology education since 2003.

KEYWORDS

Education, Recep Tayyib Erdogan, Turkey

INTRODUCTION

In the world of policy, policy can be defined as a set of concepts and principles that guide work, leadership, and ways of acting (Department of Education and Culture, Dictionary of Indonesian Language, 1995). In the context of educational reform, policies are often considered less contextualised because they are not comprehensive and integrated empirically, evaluatively and normatively (Cirrincione dkk., 2022; Giacomazzi dkk., 2022). However, policies still provide clear guidelines in formulating, implementing and evaluating these policies (Sung dkk., 2019). The importance of clarity in the meaning of policy can be found in the policy literature which considers that policy science is more closely related
to public administration than political science, and policy science has developed since there were early attempts to establish legal regulations (Huovila dkk., 2019). In the Law on the National Education System (SISDIKNAS) Number 20 of 2003, it is explained that education is a deliberate and planned effort to create a learning environment and learning process so that students actively develop their potential in terms of religious spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and skills needed by themselves, society, nation and state (Clark, 1983; Tsao dkk., 2023).

According to Prof. H. M. Arifin, M. Ed. in his book entitled "Islamic Education Science Theoretical and Practical Review Based on Interdisciplinary Approach", Islamic education is an education system that covers all aspects of life needed by a servant of God (Habib dkk., 2021). Islam is a guide for all aspects of human life, both in this world and the hereafter (Yudiawan dkk., 2021). On the other hand, Ahmad D Marimba argues that Islamic education is guidance involving physical and spiritual aspects, based on Islamic religious laws, to achieve the formation of the main personality in accordance with Islamic measures (Chriki & Hocquette, 2020). From these two opinions, it can be concluded that Islamic education is an effort to foster a person's faith and charity in order to have attitudes and behaviour that are in line with Islamic teachings, and to realise the welfare of life. This approach is based on Islamic laws which aim to form the main Muslim personality in accordance with Islamic teachings (Ismail dkk., 2019; Villanueva dkk., 2022).

Turkey was the largest centre of Islamic power during the Ottoman Caliphate from the 12th to the 20th century AD (1299-1922 CE) (Balta, 2023). Turkey is one of the Muslim nations that has an urgent role in the development of Islamic culture. The Ottoman Empire, the influence of this nation reached a very wide area stretching from small Asia, Central Asia to Eastern Europe.” The Turks have a very important role in the development of Islamic culture (Sen, 2023). The most important role was seen in politics when they entered the ranks of the professional army as well as in the government bureaucracy working for the caliphs of the Banu Abbas. Later, they themselves built a power that, although independent, still claimed to be loyal to the Abbas caliphs. This was demonstrated by the emergence of Banu Snow.

Government is the process of everything for the welfare of the people, government can also be said to be a system of exercising authority and power to regulate the social, economic, and political life of a country or parts of it (Soto Carmona, 2022). Recep Tayyib Erdogan is a Turkish politician who served as the 12th and current president of Turkey since 2014. He previously served as prime minister of Turkey from 2003 to 2014 and as mayor of Istanbul from 1994 to 1998. During the reign of Recep Tayyib Erdogan, Turkey experienced significant changes in education policy. The Erdogan administration has implemented extensive reforms in the education system to achieve the goals of developing quality human resources and strengthening national identity. One of the main policies introduced was the transformation of the education system that aimed to incorporate Islamic values in secular education (Asnawi & Setyaningsih, 2020).

This is reflected in the stronger implementation of Islamic religious education and the introduction of a more Islamic curriculum in schools. In addition, the Erdogan government also changed the structure and curriculum of education with an emphasis on skills learning and character development (Nasir, 2020).

During the reign of Recep Tayyib Erdogan, Turkey underwent a major transformation in education policy (Inal, 2019). This education policy was designed to achieve the goals of developing quality human resources and strengthening national identity (Gopalakrishna dkk., 2022; Rachmawati dkk., 2022). Some important aspects of education policy in Turkey during Erdogan's reign include: Transformation of the education system; Erdogan's administration made changes
in the structure and curriculum of education to improve the quality and relevance of education in Turkey. **Improvement of Islamic religious education**; one of the main focuses of Erdogan's education policy was to strengthen Islamic religious education in schools to promote Islamic values and strengthen Turkey's religious identity. **Introduction of Islamic curriculum**; the curriculum in schools was revised with the introduction of more materials related to Islamic teachings, Islamic history and Islamic culture. **Character development**; Erdogan's education policy also emphasises the importance of students' character development, such as ethics, morals, leadership and strong values. **Teacher quality improvement**; the Erdogan administration is making efforts to improve the quality of teachers through training and professional development programmes. **Expansion of preschool education**; Erdogan's education policy also includes the expansion of preschool education to provide a strong foundation for early child development. **Parental involvement**; the Erdogan government encourages parents' participation in their children's education through programmes such as parent schools and regular meetings. **Emphasis on technology education**; the Erdogan government recognises the importance of technology education and supports the introduction of modern technology in the education curriculum (Muthuprasad dkk., 2021).

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This research uses a qualitative method with a descriptive approach based on the writings of education experts (Pollock dkk., 2020; Sundler dkk., 2019). The aim is to map the education policies that have been implemented and attempt to provide new directions and policy changes in accordance with existing developments (McClellan dkk., 2019). This article aims to be an initial assumption to raise awareness of the importance of policy change. The focus of this article is on education policies that have been implemented by considering dynamic actual conditions. Analyses of the writings of education experts, both through reading books and related journals, are used as a reference to describe education policy. Through understanding and analysis, this paper takes the main ideas from these books and journals to explain them.

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

**Policy**

Policies are a series of actions or steps to be taken by governments and organisations to achieve certain goals or address certain problems (Wei dkk., 2021). Policies can cover various fields, such as economic policy, environmental policy, education policy and other policies. Policies are usually based on analyses of problems and goals to be achieved (Watt dkk., 2019). The policy-making process includes data collection, research, consultation with experts and stakeholders and evaluation of the expected impact (Göbel & Munzert, 2022). The purpose of policy is to create positive changes in society and organisations. These policies can regulate individual behaviour, regulate interactions between individuals and groups or regulate interactions between various groups in society (Keenan dkk., 2021). However, it is important to remember that each policy has a different context and impact. Some policies may gain widespread support and achieve desired outcomes, while others may face challenges and controversy. Therefore, it is important to periodically evaluate and adjust policies to keep them relevant and effective (Cederman & Girardin, 2023).

**Education**

Education is the process of learning and developing knowledge skills and attitudes in a systematic or structured manner (Dwivedi dkk., 2021). Through education, individuals acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to function in society and reach their full potential. Education also does not only occur in the classroom or formal educational institutions but can also occur outside...
the classroom environment (Mishra dkk., 2020). As through experience, social interaction and training education can cover a variety of disciplines, education has the main goal of developing the individual as a whole both intellectually, emotionally, socially and physically. Education enables individuals to understand the world around them and prepare themselves for adult life. Education also plays a role in building a better society. By providing equal access to quality education and increasing tolerance and understanding between cultures. Education also plays a role in shaping good values and ethics. Overall, education is an important process in the lives of individuals and societies. It can open doors of opportunity, promote personal growth and contribute to the social and economic development of a country (Blake dkk., 2020).

**Education policy**

Education policy is a series of decisions and measures taken by the government and educational institutions to regulate and direct the education system in a country and region (Koutsouleris dkk., 2022). The aim of education policy is to ensure accessibility, quality and equality in education for all individuals. Education policy also covers various aspects including curriculum, teaching methods, assessment, teacher training and accessibility. Each country has different education policies according to the context and needs of each country (Delcea dkk., 2020). Through education policy, governments and educational institutions can set goals as well as concrete strategies and measures to improve the education system. Education policy can also involve collaboration with various stakeholders such as teachers, parents and communities. The importance of education policy is to create an equitable quality and inclusive education environment for all individuals and to ensure that education can meet the needs and development of learners (Lee dkk., 2020). Education policy also plays a role in preparing individuals for the demands of the world of work and promoting sustainable social and economic development. It is important to keep in mind that education policies may vary from country to country and region to region. Therefore, to understand more about education policy, it is advisable to refer to the policies that apply in specific countries and regions and consult education experts and trusted sources (Aljohani dkk., 2019).

**The scope of education**

Education as a science, has a very broad scope because in it many aspects and parties are involved either directly or indirectly (Shuai, 2020). Education also has a very broad scope and covers various aspects of life. Here are some important scopes in education.

**Formal education**

Formal education is education that is structured and conducted in formal educational institutions such as schools and universities (Elahi dkk., 2020). Formal education also includes primary, secondary and higher education levels and has a curriculum regulated by the government.

**Non-formal education**

Non-formal education is unstructured education that takes place outside educational institutions. Examples include vocational training, language courses and extracurricular activities at school (Chakraborty dkk., 2020).

**Informal education**

Informal education is education that occurs unconsciously through daily experiences, social interactions or the media. Examples include learning from experience in the workplace and watching learning videos (Owusu dkk., 2019).
Field of study

Education also has various fields of study that cover specific disciplines such as maths, language science and arts. Each field of study has a specific curriculum and learning methods (Radianti dkk., 2020).

Lifelong education

Lifelong education is education that is lifelong. It occurs throughout an individual's life, from childhood to adulthood. This approach encourages lifelong learning for personal and professional development (Tchamyou, 2020).

Education Objectives

A goal is a result that will be achieved through an action or effort. A goal is a description of what is to be achieved and guides the steps to achieve it (Pitout & Finn, 2020). Educational objectives cover various aspects such as knowledge, skills and preparation for adult life. Educational goals may vary depending on the level of education, social and cultural context (Fisher dkk., 2020). In education, it is very important to have clear and specific objectives so that the learning process can be directed and effective. Clear objectives can also help in planning the curriculum, teaching methods and evaluation of learning outcomes. Educational objectives also play an important role in motivating individuals to learn and develop. They are not just about academic achievement but also about character building, values and good attitudes. Educational objectives should also include aspects of inclusion, equality and individual empowerment (Kolasinski dkk., 2020).

According to Robert Mager, objectives are statements that describe the behaviour expected of individuals after completing a programme or learning. Objectives should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and limited in time. Meanwhile, according to Benjamin Bloom, objectives are statements that describe the expected learning outcomes of the educational process (Browning dkk., 2021). He developed a taxonomy of educational objectives consisting of 6 levels ranging from knowledge to evaluation. Although there are many opinions that formulate the definition of the goal itself, it still has elements in common and has the intention to be achieved through the process or effort of holistic individual growth. Here are some important goals of education:

Enhancing knowledge

One of the main objectives in education is to provide individuals with useful knowledge. Through education one can learn various disciplines such as maths, history and languages.

Learning skills

Education also aims to develop practical skills that can be applied in everyday life.

Shaping character

Education plays an important role in shaping an individual's character. The aim of education is to develop ethical values, morality and positive attitudes towards oneself and others.

Preparing for adult life

Education aims to prepare individuals for adult life and the world of work. It can help individuals to develop their abilities and solve problems.

Promoting inclusion and equality

Every individual regardless of background or special needs should have the same opportunity to receive a quality education (Powers dkk., 2019).

Education Curriculum
The education curriculum is a plan and guideline that regulates the learning process in educational institutions (Elsalem dkk., 2021). The curriculum includes various aspects such as learning objectives, learning content, teaching methods, assessment of learning outcomes, and organisation of educational activities. The curriculum is very important for the world of education because the curriculum is the main key to achieving success in the world of education (Almusharraf & Khahro, 2020). The curriculum is widely identified with teaching materials that are always changing from time to time. Linguistically, the curriculum comes from Latin "currere" which means "walking". The term curriculum comes from the world of sports in ancient Roman Greece, which contains a sense that refers to the plans and guidelines that govern the learning process in educational institutions (Reynolds & Park, 2021). In Arabic the Education curriculum is called "منهاج التعليم" (minhaj al-ta'lim). This term is used to refer to the plans and guidelines that govern the learning process in educational institutions. The curriculum is known as the word manhaj which means the bright path travelled by humans in various phases of their lives. This definition is associated with education, so manhaj or curriculum means a bright path travelled by teachers and students to develop knowledge, attitudes and skills.

The definition of curriculum continues to evolve in line with the development of educational theory and practice. Various opinions regarding the definition of the curriculum. The curriculum is a set of plans and arrangements for education and educational and teaching outcomes that must be achieved by students or teaching and learning activities as well as empowering educational resources in the development of the curriculum itself. The educational curriculum according to Hilda Tabah is a set of plans and arrangements that are prepared to achieve specific learning objectives. According to Jerome Bruner, he argues that the curriculum is a set of materials and activities arranged to facilitate student learning (Collins dkk., 2019).

From some of the above definitions, it can be concluded that the education curriculum is an activity that includes various teaching and learning strategy plans, programme arrangements so that they can be implemented, and matters that include educational activities aimed at achieving the desired goals. The curriculum is part of what cannot be separated in any discussion or description of the teaching materials and materials that teachers must provide to their students. In this case, including those related to the anthological limits of human ability to learn according to growth and development. Which means that each phase of a person's life results in different levels of quality and quantity of curriculum targets that must and can be given.

**Education Policy under Recep Tayyib Erdogan**

**Education in Turkey**

Turkey is a country in the form of a kingdom. Currently, the Turkish government is a Republic with the capital in Istanbul. The Republic of Turkey is a self-proclaimed secular state, but it cannot be denied that its Islamic spirit remains inherent and inseparable from the Turkish nation. This also has an impact on the progress of education in the country. The Republic of Turkey provides religious education that is handled by three different levels of institutions. Some of the colleges that are under the control of the ministry of national education are the university of Ankara and the university which both have faculties of theology. Private educational institutions are freely established in the Turkish state, in which many Muslim communities carry out specialised education in the field of Islam. In general, this private education includes Quran lessons for children, computers and translations of the Quran and the hadith of the prophet Muhammad. Private religious education institutions create opportunities for those who cannot attend official training programmes.
Education in Turkey is governed by a national system established in accordance with Attaturk's reforms after Turkey's war of independence. Education in Turkey is a state-supervised system designed to produce a class of skilled professionals for the nation's social and economic institutions. After the foundation of the Republic of Turkey the organisation of the education department was gradually developed and organised with Law No. 2287 issued in 1933. Before the foundation of the Republic in Turkey, educational institutions were far from having a national character. Schools were organised in three separate channels, which were independent of each other. Education in Turkey has been one of the most important, it has been described as the hallmark of the elite and has been found to be an important criterion underlying the social differences between the Turkish people.

Recep Tayyib Erdogan's Education Policy in Turkey

Recep Tayyib Erdogan, the president of Turkey has implemented several significant education policies since he took over the government in 2003. These policies aim to change the education system in Turkey by emphasising Islamic values, strengthening national identity and improving education standards in the country. Here are some of Erdogan's education policies:

**Improving educational access**

Turkish President Recipient Toyib Erdogan has committed to improving educational access across Turkey. His administration implemented a 12-year compulsory education programme and undertook initiatives to expand the reach of preschool education.

**Emphasis on religious learning and Islamic values**

Erdogan has implemented policies that strengthen the teaching of Islamic religious subjects and Islamic values in Turkey's school curriculum. This policy aims to ensure that students gain knowledge of Islam and promote Muslim identity in the country.

**Changing the curriculum**

Erdogan will update the curriculum in Turkish schools by emphasising national identity and Turkish history. The updated curriculum contains a greater emphasis on Turkish history and culture and the strengthening of nationalistic values.

**Reducing the role of secularism in the education system**

Erdogan has tried to reduce the influence of secularism aspects in the Turkish education system and replace it with a more religious and culturally orientated approach.

CONCLUSION

Islamic education is an effort to develop a person's faith and charity in order to have attitudes and behaviour that are in line with Islamic teachings, and to realise the welfare of life. This approach is based on Islamic laws that aim to form the main Muslim personality in accordance with Islamic teachings. Turkey is one of the Muslim nations that has an urgent role in the development of Islamic culture. Some important aspects of education policy in Turkey during Erdogan's reign include: transformation of the education system, improvement of Islamic religious education, introduction of Islamic curriculum, character development, improvement of teacher quality, expansion of preschool education, parental involvement and emphasis on technological education. Recep Tayyib Erdogan's Education Policy in Turkey has implemented several significant education policies since he took over the government in 2003. These policies aim to change the education system in Turkey by emphasising Islamic values, strengthening national identity and improving education standards in the country including: increasing access to education, emphasising religious learning and Islamic values, changing the curriculum, reducing the role of secularism in the education system.
AUTHORS’ CONTRIBUTION
Author 1: Conceptualization; Project administration; Validation; Writing - review and editing.
Author 2: Conceptualization; Data curation; Investigation.

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