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School Excellence and Acceleration Policy: A Review of Theory and Implementation

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Article Information:	ABSTRACT
Received June 10, 2023 Revised June 19, 2023 Accepted July 1, 2023	This research aims to describe the advantages, disadvantages, and ideal picture of superior schools and acceleration programs. The research method used is descriptive qualitative with literature study. The results of the theoretical review present concepts and definitions of excellent schools and acceleration programs. The advantages of excellent schools include a quality learning environment, skilled teachers, and a curriculum focused on critical skills. Disadvantages of excellent schools include high competition and lack of involvement in non-academic aspects. The strengths of accelerated programs are that the academic challenges match the abilities of gifted and bright students. Disadvantages of accelerated programs include social and emotional gaps and a lack of focus on non-academic skills. The ideal picture of excellent schools and accelerated programs includes a balanced approach between academic and non-academic needs, emotional and social support for students, and flexibility in the curriculum. In conjunction with the curriculum reform in Curriculum 2013 (K13), a school policy with an SKS (Satuan Kredit Semester) system was created that emphasizes students' independent and collaborative learning abilities based on Independent Learning Activity Units (UKBM).
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INTRODUCTION

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Education plays a very important role in shaping the future of the younger generation and the development of society as a whole (Azizah dkk., 2022; Nicholas

Yayasan Pendidikan Islam Daarut Thufulah

dkk., 2023). The government and educational institutions strive to improve the quality of education through various policies. The education policies made can affect the prevailing education system, including the curriculum and how it is developed in schools as a place to gain knowledge formally. One policy that has received widespread attention from the community and schools is the superior and accelerated school policy. Excellent schools, as the name implies, are schools with excellent programs that can improve and develop the potential of their students (Putri dkk., 2023; Vicky dkk., 2023). The term was first coined in 1994 by the former Minister of Education and Culture, Wardiman Djojonegoro. He introduced the term "Sekolah Unggul" with the hope that students in Indonesia could achieve national and international level achievements. Initially, the excellent school program was only implemented in public schools funded by the government, but over time, the program managed to influence private schools to improve the quality of their education (Holly dkk., 2023; Levan's dkk., 2022; Saputra dkk., 2022). However, in its implementation, the concept of excellent schools in Indonesia focuses more on academic ability than other aspects. A superior school should be one that continuously improves the quality of learning and optimizes its resources to produce quality students as a whole.

Based on previous research conducted by Fakhrul Rijal with the title "Superior School Curriculum: An Implementation Evaluation" which criticizes that there is no specific standard setting in the superior school criteria in the SISDIKNAS Law which refers to Government Regulation (PP) No. 19 of 2005 which is contained in the regulation of the Minister of National Education (now called Mendikbud Ristek). So that in the application of this superior school only focuses on the cognitive aspects of students (Amrina dkk., 2022; Fathia dkk., 2022; Maryati dkk., 2022). The learning process also only focuses on academic content, characterized by the use of two languages or bilinguals, namely Indonesian and English as an international language. More vulnerably, this superior school program discriminates between smart students and regular students.

In addition to the superior school policy, there is also an acceleration program implemented in some schools. Acceleration is the acceleration of the learning process, characterized by a school program that normally takes 3 years to 2 years, or 6 years to 5 years. This policy, because it shortens the learning time, requires students with above-average intelligence (Liam dkk., 2023; Saskia dkk., 2023). Ideally, the superior and accelerated school policies aim to improve the quality of education by providing a supportive environment for students with high academic potential. However, both of these policies have representative evaluations in their implementation. Thus, this article aims to describe the advantages and disadvantages of superior schools, accelerated programs and how the ideal picture is proclaimed. Furthermore, the difference between this research and previous reference studies is in its summarizing nature, presenting data based on evaluation in the form of theoretical reviews and implementation.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The method used in this research is a literature study, reviewing superior and accelerated school policies that have been implemented in schools in Indonesia in papers and scientific journal articles. In general, the literature study research method, also known as literature review or literature analysis, is a research method conducted by collecting, organizing, evaluating, and synthesizing information from literature sources relevant to the research topic. This method involves an extensive literature search, reading and understanding the content of these sources, and drawing conclusions or synthesizing the information found.

In addition, the research design used is qualitative-descriptive. Descriptive qualitative research design is defined as a research approach that aims to understand, explain, and describe the phenomenon or event under study in depth. Then the focus of data collection and analysis is descriptive, with the aim of revealing the characteristics, patterns, and relationships that exist in the phenomenon. Descriptive qualitative research design does not attempt to test hypotheses or predict results, but rather to produce a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being studied. The data collection method used in this research is document analysis. Data analysis was conducted inductively by identifying research themes, namely superior and accelerated school policies.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. EXCELLENT SCHOOL

The definition of superior according to KBBI is 1. higher (clever, good, capable, strong, durable, and so on) than others; main (best, especially), 2. winning. A superior school program is a school that meets the National Education Standards or a school that, in terms of accreditation and quality, is able to offer a quality education program to its students (Auliani dkk., 2023; Mustafiyanti dkk., 2023; Wanti dkk., 2023). In this case, the curriculum is effectively designed, bilingual teaching in 2 languages, competent and experienced teachers, and adequate facilities and infrastructure. Excellent schools in the view of the community are generally considered more prestigious because to be able to enter an excellent school, high requirements are needed, especially academically.

2. ACCELERATED PROGRAM

The definition of acceleration according to KBBI is 1. the process of accelerating, 2. an increase in speed; acceleration, 3. the rate of change in speed. So the essence of the definition of acceleration is to accelerate with the aim of shortening. The acceleration program is a program designed to accelerate the learning process for students who have above-average intelligence or talent, so that they are considered capable of completing a regular learning program in a shorter time, namely with a shorter study time, an easier description can be seen in the table below.

Indonesian	Education System	
Education Level	Duration of Level	Intended for Age
Early Childhood Education (ECE)	1 year	4 years
Kindergarten	2 years	5-6 years
Group A		
Group B		
Basic Education (Elementary School)6 years (Grades 1-6)		7-12 years
SD/MI/SDIT equivalent		
Junior Secondary Education	3 years (Grade 7-9)	13-15 years
(Junior High School)		
SMP/MTs equivalent		
Upper Secondary Education	3-4 years (Grade 10-	16-19 years*
(Senior High School)	13)*	
SMA/MAN/SMK equivalent		

Table 1. Indonesia's Early-Middle Education System

*Note: the study period of SMA/MAN/SMK equivalent is normally 3 years. Since SMK is a vocational practice-based school, the learning process in the curriculum of some majors takes up to 4 years. The 4-year program for majors in SMK that need to be completed in 4 years is considered equivalent to D1 (but not all majors).

With the acceleration program, schools can more easily identify students who have the potential, ability, and competent skills to be improved. However, indirectly, the acceleration program causes discrimination where only those who are superior/have an IQ above the average of regular students can join the acceleration program and the school's perception will focus more on their good development because they receive information faster (Mulyasari dkk., 2023; Noer dkk., 2023). The acceleration program is a good program and has good intentions, but it causes the psychological side of students to become individualistic and selfish because it focuses on cognitive only. This is because learning activities are compressed to catch up with the same subject matter, so that more free time is devoted to learning rather than socializing with peers.

Ervan Jaya (2020) in his research entitled "Policy Analysis of the Elimination of the Acceleration Program into a Semester Credit System (SKS) for Children with Special Smart Potential and / or Special Talent (CI-BI)" mentions the obstacles faced in the implementation of the acceleration program, namely the number of facilities and infrastructure, short learning time, limited funds, students feel easily bored, students have difficulty concentrating.

3. STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES AND IDEAL OVERVIEW

The following is a summary of the discussion of superior and accelerated schools, including the advantages and disadvantages and the ideal picture of related policies with the aim of describing the answers to the problems.

Identification	Policy		
Incurrentiation	School Excellence	Accelerated Program	
Pros	 identifiable advantages, although it should be noted that these advantages may vary between different schools and contexts. Here are some of the common advantages often associated with excellent schools: 1. National Education Standards (more comprehensive curriculum, adequate facilities, and quality academic programs). 2. Better Teaching Quality can provide more meaningful learning experiences and help students achieve better results by highly qualified teachers. 3. More adequate and complete facilities and infrastructure. 4. Supportive Environment: by implementing an inclusive approach to education, offering adequate academic and emotional support, and encouraging student participation in extracurricular activities and personal development programs. 5. Better opportunities to further your education or enter a desired career. A school's good reputation and extensive connections can open doors to further education opportunities, scholarships and prestigious jobs. However, it is important to remember that student success is not only determined by the school they attend. Factors such as student commitment, 	 programs designed to accelerate the academic progress of students who are gifted or have above-average abilities. Some of the advantages of accelerated programs are as follows: 1. Appropriate Challenge: Accelerated programs provide students with higher abilities the opportunity to be given more challenging material to progress at a pace and depth appropriate to their abilities. 2. Full Potential Development: Accelerated programs allow gifted students to develop their full potential. 3. Increased Motivation by peers who have the interest and ability to achieve ambitious academic goals. 4. Higher Quality Teaching by providing appropriate guidance to meet students' intellectual needs. 5. Readiness for Future Challenges: problem-solving, critical thinking, and teamwork skills needed to deal with complex environments, as well as shorter time to enter the next 	

Table 2. School Excellence and Accele	rated Program Policy
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	environment also play an important	note that each student is an
	role in achieving a good education.	individual with different needs
		and preferences. Accelerated
		programs should be carefully
		considered and implemented
		with the right support to ensure
		that students feel comfortable,
		socially connected, and still get
		the emotional and academic
D'an dana da ana	XX71-:1	support needed.
Disadvantages	While excellent schools have many	1 0
	advantages, they can also have some	
	disadvantages to consider. Here are	
	some of the drawbacks associated	
	with excellent schools:	associated with accelerated
	1. High Competition among	
	students: The pressure to achieve	
	high results can cause excessive	
	stress and anxiety in students,	or have difficulty
	which can affect their mental and	connecting with older
	emotional well-being.	students emotionally and
	2. Lack of Diversity: Some	socially. This can affect
	excellent schools have a tendency	their school experience and
	to have a socially, culturally, or	overall well-being.
	economically uniform student	2. Limited Development of
	population.	Non-Academic Skills:
	3. High Academic Pressure: In	Accelerated programs often
	excellent schools, academic	focus on developing high
	expectations are high. Students	
	experience excessive pressure to	lead to neglect of non-
	achieve perfect results and the	academic skill
	pursuit of high achievement can	development, such as
	lead to emotional exhaustion.	social, leadership, artistic
	4. Lack of Focus on Non-	· · · ·
	Academic Aspects: excellent	1 8
	schools focus too much on	
	academic achievement and	
	neglect non-academic aspects,	1
	such as the development of social	1 0
	skills, arts, sports or	1
	extracurricular activities. This can	
		1 0
	reduce the diversity of students'	-
	experiences and their potential to	
	develop interests and talents	e
	outside the academic realm.	lead to excessive stress or
	5. Higher Costs: Excellent	
	schools often involve higher costs,	•
	either in the form of high tuition	Accelerated programs often

Ideal Overview	fees or additional costs for extracurricular activities, equipment or teaching materials. This can make excellent schools unaffordable for some families with limited resources. 6. Limited Opportunities: Due to the limited number of places in excellent schools, not all students have the opportunity to attend schools with a good reputation or adequate resources. This can create a gap in the quality of education and opportunities available to students. Excellent schools should be able to accept students from all backgrounds and produce the best students through an effective learning process, not only depending on the quality of teachers. There are two important factors that cause competition in	 Students involved in these programs feel overburdened with heavy assignments and lack of time to relax or participate in activities outside of academics. This heavy workload can disrupt a student's life balance and affect overall well-being. Lack of Flexibility in Curriculum: Accelerated programs have a more rigid and less flexible curriculum. Students have less opportunity to explore other interests and passions outside the academic field they are enrolled in. Indeed, the acceleration program will be right on target if the students who take part in the program are smart students, who are able to understand learning faster. However, it needs to be balanced with non-
	decentralization/regional autonomy. Therefore, an ideal excellent school must pay attention to the minimum requirements for students to be accepted, focusing on improving teacher qualifications and competencies, adequate facilities and infrastructure, and effective school management. As well as on developing the non-academic aspects of students and their social environment.	growth that is appropriate for their age, so that the program can be more meaningful and balance their intelligence. In addition, there needs to be interaction between students and a group system considering that humans are social creatures who cannot be separated from others to help and complement each other.
Policy Consequences	Emergence of reference/model schools	Elimination of the acceleration program into a semester credit system (SKS) for students with special talented potential (CI-

		BI)
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According to Achmad Jazidie, Director General of Secondary Education at the Ministry of Education and Culture, the accelerated education program was abolished in the 2015/2016 school year because the 2013 Curriculum was implemented. This is to eliminate discrimination between bright and mediocre students. There are two reasons behind this decision (Al Maarif dkk., 2023; Utami dkk., 2023). First, bright students are expected to benefit their classmates because they are not separated into exclusive classes. Second, the SKS system can accelerate students' learning time without grouping them in accelerated classes.

Widi Astuti, et al (2022) in their research titled "Learning Acceleration Program for Special Talented Children" asserted that special attention to Special Talented Children (CI-BI) is not intended to discriminate, but merely to provide educational services in accordance with their needs and conditions.

As in college, bright students can take more credits than their classmates and complete what should be three years of study in two. However, their classes are still mixed with other students and each school must use the Self-Learning Activity Unit (UKBM) as a guidebook and teaching material (Fiqih dkk., 2023; Pamuji & Limei, 2023). The SKS system provides fair services for students with below-average, average and above-average abilities, while the acceleration program does not.

CONCLUSION

School of excellence and acceleration policies are two educational concepts that are often associated with each other. While excellent schools aim to create a highquality learning environment for students, acceleration focuses on developing students' abilities by accelerating the learning process. Basically, both excellent and accelerated school policies aim to improve the quality of education and provide opportunities for students to develop and reach their full potential.

In theory, the implementation of superior and accelerated school policies can be done in several ways, including: (1) Development of a comprehensive curriculum that is relevant to the demands of the times and the needs of students. A quality curriculum will provide a strong foundation for students to learn and develop. (2) Improving the quality of educators and school staff. High-quality teachers and school staff will be able to provide optimal teaching and support for students. (3) Improving school facilities and infrastructure, such as modern equipment and technology as well as adequate sports and laboratory facilities. (4) Rewarding and incentivizing outstanding students and teachers, thus encouraging them to continuously improve their performance and academic achievement. (5) Establishing a conducive and inclusive learning environment for students from different backgrounds and abilities.

However, the implementation of superior and accelerated school policies is prone to discrimination of student abilities. Therefore, in connection with the curriculum reform in Curriculum 2013 (K13), the SKS / Credit Semester system was created, which

emphasizes students' independent and collaborative learning abilities. Ideally, the knowledge and skills that students have gained from the learning process at school can be realized in life.

Here is the tabel of summary for the pros, disadvantages, ideal overview, and policy consequences of school excellent and accelerated program to be insight.

Identification	Policy	
Incumication	School Excellence	Accelerated Program
Pros	 Excellent schools have several identifiable advantages, although it should be noted that these advantages may vary between different schools and contexts. Here are some of the common advantages often associated with excellent schools: 6. National Education Standards (more comprehensive curriculum, adequate facilities, and quality academic programs). 7. Better Teaching Quality can provide more meaningful learning experiences and help students achieve better results by highly qualified teachers. 8. More adequate and complete facilities and infrastructure. 9. Supportive Environment: by implementing an inclusive approach to education, offering adequate academic and emotional support, and encouraging student participation in extracurricular activities and personal development programs. 10. Better opportunities to further your education or enter a desired career. A school's good reputation and extensive connections can open doors to further education opportunities, scholarships and prestigious jobs. However, it is important to remember that student success is not only determined by the school they attend. Factors such as student commitment, 	 programs designed to accelerate the academic progress of students who are gifted or have above-average abilities. Some of the advantages of accelerated programs are as follows: 6. Appropriate Challenge: Accelerated programs provide students with higher abilities the opportunity to be given more challenging material to progress at a pace and depth appropriate to their abilities. 7. Full Potential Development: Accelerated programs allow gifted students to develop their full potential. 8. Increased Motivation by peers who have the interest and ability to achieve ambitious academic goals. 9. Higher Quality Teaching by providing appropriate guidance to meet students' intellectual needs. 10. Readiness for Future Challenges: problemsolving, critical thinking, and teamwork skills needed to deal with complex environments, as well as shorter time to enter the next

Table 3. School Excellence and Accelerated Program Policy

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stress and anxiety in students, or have	
	difficulty
which can affect their mental and connecting with	
emotional well-being. students emotional	-
8. Lack of Diversity: Some socially. This ca	
excellent schools have a tendency their school experi	ence and
to have a socially, culturally, or overall well-being.	
economically uniform student 7. Limited Develo	pment of
population. Non-Academic	Skills:
9. High Academic Pressure: In Accelerated progra	ms often
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expectations are high. Students academic skills.	This can
experience excessive pressure to lead to neglect	of non-
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skills, arts, sports or but they are not em	
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-	allenges.
experiences and their potential to This can affect	
develop interests and talents emotional well-be	ing and
outside the academic realm. lead to excessive	stress or
11. Higher Costs: Excellent burnout.	
schools often involve higher costs, 9. Heavy	I

Ideal Overview	education and opportunities available to students. Excellent schools should be able to accept students from all backgrounds and produce the best students through an effective learning process, not only depending on the quality of teachers. There are two important	program will be right on target if the students who take part in the program are smart students, who are able to understand learning faster. However, it
	decentralization/regional autonomy. Therefore, an ideal excellent school must pay attention to the minimum requirements for students to be accepted, focusing on improving	academic activities for mental growth that is appropriate for their age, so that the program can be more meaningful and balance their intelligence. In addition, there needs to be interaction between students and a group system considering that humans are social creatures who cannot be separated from others to help and complement each other.
	developing the non-academic aspects of students and their social environment.	

	special talented potential (CI- BI)
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ADVICE

This superior and accelerated school policy review research is a deepening of the specific theme of a broad education policy. Especially in Indonesia, where the education system is dynamic, it is hoped that there will be further research on the latest policies from the government in terms of education policy, such as the Merdeka Belajar policy currently in effect. It is possible that there will be research that summarizes the history of education policy in addition to the frequently changing curriculum but also school programs that experience regional autonomy, with their respective characteristics. So with this, researchers who are involved in the world of education must always update their knowledge through critical studies of education, one of which is policies influenced by the government and office holders.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to the individuals, institutions, and organizations that have played a pivotal role in shaping and supporting the implementation of the school excellence and acceleration policy. This policy, aimed at promoting academic rigor, fostering innovation, and empowering students, has been made possible through the collaborative efforts of numerous stakeholders. Although it is challenging to acknowledge the contributions of all involved, we endeavor to recognize their significant support and dedication.

First and foremost, we express our deep appreciation to the educational policymakers and administrators who have championed the school excellence and acceleration policy. Their vision, foresight, and commitment to enhancing educational opportunities have paved the way for transformative changes in our educational system. Their unwavering support and leadership have been instrumental in shaping the policy and driving its implementation. We would like to acknowledge the tireless efforts of school principals and administrators who have embraced and implemented the school excellence and acceleration policy within their institutions. Their dedication to fostering an environment of academic excellence, innovation, and inclusivity has created a nurturing space for students to thrive. We are grateful for their commitment to creating a supportive learning environment that encourages intellectual growth and development.

Our sincere appreciation also extends to the educators and teachers who have wholeheartedly embraced the principles and practices of the school excellence and acceleration policy. Their passion, expertise, and innovative teaching methodologies have played a crucial role in empowering students and nurturing their talents. Their commitment to providing personalized instruction, fostering critical thinking, and encouraging intellectual curiosity have contributed to the policy's success. Furthermore, we would like to express our gratitude to the students who have embraced the challenges and opportunities offered by the school excellence and acceleration policy. Their enthusiasm, dedication, and thirst for knowledge have been an inspiration. Their willingness to engage in advanced coursework, extracurricular activities, and research endeavors has exemplified the spirit of academic excellence and intellectual growth that the policy aims to cultivate.

We would also like to acknowledge the support and partnership of parents and guardians who have actively participated in their children's educational journey. Their unwavering support, encouragement, and collaboration with educators and schools have been vital in realizing the goals of the school excellence and acceleration policy. Their commitment to their children's education and their willingness to engage in meaningful dialogue have been instrumental in creating a holistic learning experience. Additionally, we express our gratitude to the researchers, scholars, and experts who have provided valuable insights, research findings, and best practices in the field of education. Their contributions have informed the development and implementation of the school excellence and acceleration policy, ensuring its alignment with current educational theories and evidence-based practices.

Lastly, we would like to extend our heartfelt appreciation to all other stakeholders, including community organizations, non-governmental organizations, and educational associations, who have provided resources, guidance, and support in implementing the school excellence and acceleration policy. Their collaboration and partnership have strengthened the policy's impact and contributed to its success. While we have attempted to acknowledge all individuals and entities who have contributed significantly to the school excellence and acceleration policy, we acknowledge that there may be others whose contributions may not have been explicitly mentioned. We extend our sincere apologies for any omissions and express our gratitude for their valuable contributions.

In conclusion, we are immensely grateful to the individuals, institutions, and organizations who have contributed to the development and implementation of the school excellence and acceleration policy. Their collective efforts have paved the way for transformative changes in our educational system, empowering students and fostering a culture of academic excellence.

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