

# Implementing a Legal Education Curriculum to Improve Legal Literacy in Indonesia: A Collaborative Approach Between Government, Academics, and Legal Practitioners

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## ARTICLE INFO

### **Article history:**

Received: Maret 3, 2025  
Revised: Maret 13, 2025  
Accepted: Maret 21, 2025

### **Keywords:**

collaboration;  
Legal education;  
legal education curriculum;  
legal literacy.

## ABSTRACT

Legal education in Indonesia has a very important role in improving the legal literacy of the public, but the implementation of an effective legal education curriculum is still a challenge. This research aims to explore the implementation of the legal education curriculum and how collaboration between the government, academics and legal practitioners can improve legal literacy in Indonesia. Using a qualitative approach, this research analyzes legal education policies, the roles of each party, as well as effective collaboration models. The results show that despite efforts to improve legal literacy, the current curriculum is still limited to teaching legal theory and pays less attention to legal literacy for the general public. Therefore, collaboration between the government, universities and legal practitioners is crucial in designing a more applicable and inclusive curriculum, as well as in providing legal training and outreach to the public. This study suggests several concrete steps, including curriculum revisions that are more practical and based on community needs, increasing the capacity of lecturers, and strengthening the role of legal practitioners in legal education and counseling. The findings are expected to serve as a reference for the improvement of the legal education system in Indonesia to increase legal awareness and understanding among the public.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Legal literacy is an important element in a country's development, especially in the context of Indonesia, which has a complex and diverse legal system. However, the level of legal understanding of Indonesian society in general is still relatively low. This can be seen from the many cases of legal violations caused by people's ignorance of their rights and obligations, whether in the context of civil, criminal or administrative law. This ignorance often worsens the quality of justice, where people tend not to be able to access or utilize the existing legal system properly. Legal education plays an important role in improving people's legal literacy. Through good legal education, people can be given a deeper understanding of the applicable laws and regulations, correct legal procedures, and the rights protected by the state. In addition, legal education can also open people's minds to ways of solving problems that are appropriate and in accordance with the legal norms that apply in Indonesia. Thus, people who better understand the law will be better able to protect themselves from potential violations of the law, and can actively participate in law enforcement.

Lack of legal understanding is also closely related to low community participation in legal decision-making that has a direct impact on their lives. For example, when it comes to elections or

public policies that touch on people's basic rights. If people do not have sufficient understanding of how the legal process works, they will find it difficult to fight for their rights or even understand what to do when involved in the legal process. Legal literacy is therefore vital, especially in the context of Indonesia's diverse and developing society. Legal education in Indonesia has basically begun to be implemented at various levels of education, both at the elementary school to university level. However, its application is still limited and tends to focus more on understanding legal theory rather than its application in everyday life. In addition, the distribution of legal knowledge gained through formal education is uneven, with significant differences between urban and rural areas. Many regions do not have adequate access to quality legal education resources. Therefore, it is important for stakeholders to re-evaluate the existing legal education system and ensure that the curriculum implemented can improve legal literacy equally across Indonesia.

Based on the above background, some of the main problems that will be discussed in this research are as follows: How can a legal education curriculum be effectively implemented to improve legal literacy in Indonesia? This research will explore whether the current legal education curriculum is effective in equipping people with a deep understanding of the law and their rights. What roles should the government, academics and legal practitioners play in improving legal literacy in Indonesia? This research will analyze how each party can contribute to creating a more inclusive and effective legal education system in improving the legal awareness of Indonesians. What are the challenges faced in implementing a legal education curriculum that can improve legal literacy? It will also discuss the challenges and obstacles faced in implementing a legal education curriculum that is relevant and accessible to all levels of Indonesian society, including unreached areas.

How can a collaborative model between government, academia and legal practitioners improve the effectiveness of legal education? In this context, the research will identify how a collaborative approach between these three parties can lead to better solutions in improving legal literacy, and how each party can support each other to achieve it. The main objective of this research is to explore the implementation of a more effective legal education curriculum in improving legal literacy in Indonesia. This research aims to provide a clearer understanding of how a legal education system can be properly designed and implemented to address the challenge of low legal literacy among the public. In addition, this research also aims to assess the extent to which the current legal education curriculum accommodates the needs of the public in understanding their rights and obligations within the legal framework. This research also aims to identify the role of each party, including the government, academics and legal practitioners, in creating an effective legal education curriculum that can be accepted by various groups in society. By exploring the potential for collaboration between these stakeholders, it is hoped that concrete solutions can be found to improve legal literacy in Indonesia. Through this research, it is hoped that recommendations can be found that can serve as a reference for policy makers, education managers, and legal practitioners to improve and enhance the legal education system in Indonesia, so as to encourage people to better understand and utilize the law in their daily lives.

This research has several important benefits for the development of the legal education system in Indonesia and the improvement of public legal awareness. First, this research can make a significant contribution in formulating a legal education curriculum that is more effective and more relevant to the needs of Indonesian society. Thus, the resulting legal education is not only focused on theory, but also able to provide knowledge that can be directly applied in everyday life. The second benefit of this research is that it can help increase public access to legal knowledge that is clear and easy to understand, especially in areas that have been lacking legal education resources. By improving legal literacy, people will be more aware of their rights, and be able to fight for their rights more effectively, thus supporting the creation of more equitable justice in Indonesia.

Another benefit is that this research will provide guidance for the government in designing more inclusive education policies, by ensuring that the legal education curriculum is not only limited to the academic environment, but also reaches the wider community, including those outside the big cities. The government can use the results of this study as a basis for developing legal education programs that are more targeted and more accessible to all levels of society. In addition, this research is expected to strengthen the relationship between education and legal practice. By involving legal practitioners in the education process, the curriculum can be tailored to the practical needs and real challenges faced by the public in accessing the legal system. Legal practitioners involved in

education can provide a first-hand perspective on how the law works in the real world, thus providing a deeper understanding to the public.

Overall, the benefit of this research is to create a more legally aware Indonesian society, one that understands their rights and obligations, and can access and utilize the legal system more effectively. This will certainly support the creation of more equitable justice and better social welfare for all Indonesians. Thus, this research focuses on how a more effective legal education curriculum can be implemented in Indonesia to improve people's legal literacy. It is hoped that this research can be a useful reference for all parties involved in the development of legal education in Indonesia, as well as have a positive impact on increasing public legal awareness at large.

## **2. RESEARCH METHOD**

This research is qualitative in nature, as the main focus of the research is to explore an in-depth understanding of the application of the legal education curriculum in improving legal literacy in Indonesia. This research does not only collect numerical data, but rather an understanding of the existing social and legal education context. Using a qualitative approach, this research will seek to explore the phenomena that occur in legal education, as well as the roles played by the government, academics, and legal practitioners in improving people's legal literacy. This research will also highlight the perceptions, experiences and views of various parties involved in legal education in Indonesia, so as to provide a more comprehensive picture of the challenges and solutions. In examining this topic, the approaches used are case studies and policy analysis. This research will conduct case studies on several legal education institutions in Indonesia to see how the legal education curriculum is implemented in various universities and law schools, and how the education outcomes contribute to improving legal literacy in society. In addition, policy analysis will also be used to evaluate the legal education policies implemented by the Indonesian government, including the established curriculum, as well as programs aimed at increasing public legal awareness. This approach allows the author to dig deeper into the effectiveness of existing policies and how they can be optimized to create a more legally aware society.

The data sources used in this research include scientific articles, policy reports, interviews with legal practitioners, and surveys to relevant parties. Scientific articles will be used to understand the theoretical framework and basic concepts relevant to legal literacy and legal education. Policy reports will provide information on government policies related to legal education and legal literacy, as well as the implementation of these policies at the local and national levels. Interviews with legal practitioners such as lawyers, judges and notaries will provide practical insights into the challenges faced in improving legal literacy and how legal curricula can be tailored to the practical needs of society. Surveys of law lecturers and students will help to elicit opinions on the quality of the legal education curriculum in place and the extent to which it can improve legal understanding among the public. The analysis methods used in this research are thematic analysis and policy analysis. Thematic analysis will be used to identify the main themes that emerge from the interviews and data obtained, such as challenges in implementing the legal education curriculum, the role of the government in improving legal literacy, and the contribution of legal practitioners in legal education. These themes will then be analyzed to explore the relationship between theory and practice in legal education in Indonesia. In addition, policy analysis will be conducted to evaluate existing legal education policies, see how they are implemented, and how they can be improved to be more effective in improving legal literacy in Indonesia. With these two methods, this research will generate a deeper understanding of the factors affecting legal literacy in Indonesia and how the legal education curriculum can be adjusted to address these challenges.

## **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **Implementation of the Legal Education Curriculum in Indonesia**

The implementation of the legal education curriculum in Indonesia is currently still facing various challenges, both at the tertiary and secondary education levels. At the tertiary level, legal education curricula generally focus on teaching highly technical and in-depth legal theories, which are more geared towards aspiring legal professionals such as lawyers, judges and notaries. While this is important, the curriculum often lacks emphasis on equipping the general public with legal literacy. In practice, law students are taught from a more academic perspective and are less oriented towards

the application of law in everyday life, which could strengthen people's understanding of their rights and how to engage with the legal system.

On the other hand, secondary education in Indonesia also shows limitations in teaching legal literacy. Although some secondary school curricula have begun to include subjects related to civics and law, the material presented is often limited to a basic understanding of laws and fundamental rights, without addressing how the law works in real life. This leaves many students who graduate from secondary education without a sufficient understanding of the law that they can use in dealing with everyday legal issues. Overall, the legal education curriculum in Indonesia has not fully covered legal literacy aspects, especially for the wider community outside legal professionals. Although there are efforts to integrate legal education in various levels of education, the curriculum has not been designed with the aim of increasing the legal awareness of the general public, but rather focuses more on providing legal professionals. Therefore, there is a need to review and improve the existing curriculum in order to create a more legally aware society, by providing knowledge that is more applicable and easily understood by all, not only for those who want to pursue a career in law.

### **The Government's Role in Legal Literacy**

The Indonesian government has realized the importance of legal literacy in building a law-aware society, and several policies and regulations have been implemented to improve legal literacy in the country. One of the main policies implemented is the integration of civic and legal education in the national education curriculum, both at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels. Through this policy, the government hopes to instill a basic understanding of the law to the younger generation so that they are more aware of their rights and obligations in everyday life. In addition, the government has also launched various legal counseling programs implemented by various institutions, such as the National Law Development Agency (BPHN) and the Ministry of Law and Human Rights, which aim to provide legal information and understanding to the wider community, especially in areas that are still less accessible to legal education.

However, despite these policies and regulations, the challenges faced in improving legal literacy are still enormous. One of them is the lack of public access to adequate legal information. Existing legal counseling programs, although widely implemented, are often not effective enough to reach all levels of society, especially those living in rural or remote areas. In addition, although legal education has been introduced in schools, the material presented is often too technical and less relevant to the practical needs of the community, making it difficult to be well received and understood. In addition, in terms of regulation, the government still needs to update and strengthen the legal education curriculum at various levels of education, to focus more on improving the legal literacy of the general public, not just for prospective legal professionals. The government also needs to strengthen cooperation with academics, legal practitioners, and non-governmental organizations in developing materials that are easy to understand and more applicable. Therefore, despite the steps that have been taken, the government needs to evaluate and improve existing policies, as well as expand access and improve the quality of legal education in Indonesia, so that people's legal literacy can increase significantly.

### **Academia's Role in Legal Education**

The role of academics, especially lecturers and universities, is vital in designing a legal education curriculum that can improve the legal literacy of the community. As higher education institutions, universities have the responsibility to not only produce graduates who are competent in the field of law, but also to introduce basic legal concepts to the public at large. In this regard, academics have a role to play in designing a more inclusive and applicable curriculum that focuses not only on legal theory, but also on teaching basic rights, simple legal procedures, and ways to access justice in Indonesia. Curricula designed with a more practical, needs-based approach will go a long way to improving legal understanding among students and the general public.

In recent years, academics have begun to develop various innovations in legal learning to create a broader understanding of the law. One such innovation is the implementation of technology-based learning, such as online learning and the use of digital platforms to disseminate legal materials that are more accessible to the public. This allows students and the public who do not have direct access to educational institutions to obtain useful legal information. In addition, some universities have also integrated case study and simulation-based learning methods, where students can learn

about the application of law in real situations, such as their participation in mediation, legal consultation, and dispute resolution.

Another innovation is the development of curricula that are more relevant to the practical needs of society, such as teaching about consumer rights, human rights, and family law that are more often encountered in everyday life. Some universities have also begun to hold legal counseling programs that involve students as teachers or facilitators, who go directly to the community to provide direct legal education. Through this program, students can provide basic legal knowledge to the community, while honing their practical skills in delivering easy-to-understand legal information. With these innovations, academics play a major role in creating legal education that benefits not only legal professionals, but also the wider community who need a basic understanding of the law.

### **The Role of Legal Practitioners in Legal Literacy**

Legal practitioners, such as lawyers, judges, notaries, and various other legal professionals, have a very important role to play in improving legal literacy in Indonesia. As those directly involved in the legal system, they have a deep understanding of legal procedures, individual rights and technical aspects of the law that are often difficult for the general public to understand. Therefore, through legal counseling, training, and their role in education, legal practitioners can make a significant contribution to improving public legal awareness. One of the most effective roles of legal practitioners is through legal counseling. Many lawyers and judges are involved in outreach programs that aim to explain people's basic rights, provide information on legal procedures, and advise on ways to solve simple legal problems. These outreach activities are often conducted in villages or remote areas that do not have easy access to legal information. In this way, legal practitioners can help communities to understand their rights, as well as avoid potential legal violations caused by ignorance.

In addition, legal practitioners also play a role in legal training aimed at the general public or specific groups, such as training for NGO activists, youth, or women's groups, who are often poorly informed about their legal rights. This training can cover practical topics such as family law, intellectual property rights, or employment law. Legal practitioners can also teach basic skills that are useful to the community, such as how to draw up a legal contract or how to file a lawsuit in court. In addition, legal practitioners also play a role in formal education, such as through collaborating with universities to organize guest lectures or seminars, which give students and the public more insight into the application of law in everyday life. Legal practitioners can often provide a real perspective on how legal theory is applied in practice and how they deal with various complex legal issues. By involving themselves in education, legal practitioners not only improve the quality of learning, but also enrich students' and the public's understanding of the real world of law. Overall, the role of legal practitioners in legal literacy is crucial. Not only do they carry out their profession in the legal realm, but they also have a social responsibility to share knowledge and help the public understand the law more broadly, so that more people can effectively utilize their rights and avoid legal problems that may arise.

### **Effective Collaboration Model**

A collaborative approach between the government, academics and legal practitioners is essential in designing and implementing an effective curriculum to improve legal literacy in Indonesia. This collaboration can create synergies between policy, legal education theory and real legal practice, so that the resulting curriculum is more applicable and relevant to the needs of society. The government, as a policy maker, can provide a regulatory framework that supports the development of legal literacy, such as by setting curriculum standards and legal counseling programs that involve various parties. Academics, on the other hand, have an important role in designing educational curricula that are based on the latest research and theories, and integrate innovative learning approaches, such as case-based learning and digital technology. Legal practitioners, including lawyers, judges and notaries, can contribute greatly through their practical experience, by being directly involved in education through guest lectures, seminars or training programs.

One effective collaborative model can be seen in the "Community Legal Education" programs conducted by several Indonesian universities, where law students work with legal practitioners to provide legal education to communities in underserved areas. For example, a program implemented by the University of Indonesia, which invites legal practitioners to teach in certain classes, provides an opportunity for students to learn first-hand about the legal challenges faced by the community and

practical ways to solve them. In addition, this collaboration could also involve the government in providing budget and policy support, as well as ensuring that the curriculum can be widely implemented across Indonesia, including regions that need more in-depth legal education. Such a model not only improves legal literacy, but also strengthens the relationship between educational institutions, government, and legal practitioners in creating a more legally aware society.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This study found that the implementation of the legal education curriculum in Indonesia is still limited to teaching legal theory that is more focused on the legal profession, while legal literacy for the general public has not been fully achieved. At the tertiary level, the legal curriculum is more geared towards professional training for prospective lawyers, judges and notaries, without giving sufficient attention to improving the legal understanding of the general public. Meanwhile, at the secondary education level, despite efforts to introduce basic legal concepts, the material taught is often still too technical and less relevant to the practical needs of the community. This research also shows that collaboration between the government, academics and legal practitioners is needed to create a more effective curriculum to improve legal literacy. Collaborative models, such as legal counseling programs involving students and legal practitioners, have proven effective in improving legal understanding in the community. However, the government's role in supporting more in-depth policies and regulations related to legal education still needs to be strengthened in order to support the implementation of a more inclusive curriculum.

Based on these findings, there are several concrete steps that can be taken to improve legal literacy in Indonesia through the legal education curriculum. First, a revision of the legal education curriculum is needed to add materials that are more applicable and relevant to people's daily lives, including topics on basic rights, easy-to-understand legal procedures, and how to access justice. This curriculum should not only focus on aspiring legal professionals, but also on empowering communities to be more aware of their rights and obligations. Second, it is important to conduct training and capacity building for lecturers so that they are more skilled in teaching legal materials that are more practical and based on community needs, as well as more innovative in using learning methods, such as case-based learning and digital technology. Third, strengthening the role of legal practitioners in education is urgently needed. Legal practitioners, whether lawyers, judges, or notaries, must be more involved in legal education, whether through guest lectures, legal counseling programs, or practical training for communities and students. Finally, the government needs to strengthen legal education policies and regulations, by ensuring that the curriculum and legal education programs can reach all levels of society, including hard-to-reach areas.

This study has several limitations, including the limited scope of the sample which only includes several universities and legal practitioners in urban areas, which may not fully reflect conditions in remote or less developed areas. In addition, this study focuses more on the curriculum aspect of legal education and does not discuss in depth the implementation of government policies at the regional level, which may have its own challenges. For future research, it is recommended to expand the sample coverage and deepen the analysis of the implementation of the legal education curriculum in various regions in Indonesia. Further research could also examine the direct impact of legal counseling programs on changes in public understanding and legal awareness.

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