

Aligning the Principles of Flexibility and Accountability in the Design of Homeschooling Implementation Policies

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Abstract

Homeschooling is an educational option for children outside the school system that is practiced in various countries. In Indonesia, there is a trend towards an increasing number of homeschoolers. Homeschoolers value the flexibility in structure and content that homeschooling provides, which is not usually available in traditional schools. One of the main challenges in formulating policies for implementing home schools is harmonizing the principles of flexibility and accountability. The current state of homeschooling research highlights the increasing trend of homeschoolers in Indonesia, emphasizing the value of flexibility and accountability in educational policies. This research employs a mixed methods approach to address challenges in harmonizing flexibility and accountability, ensuring the rights of homeschooled children are met. The harmonization of the Draft Regulations on the Implementation of Home Schools revealed that the state's interests in promoting home school accountability can be balanced with the interests of parents who desire flexibility. This allows for the proper fulfillment of the rights of homeschooled children. The results of the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) on the draft regulations for implementing home schools, conducted in Yogyakarta, Medan, and Balikpapan on November 9-11, 2022, showed that respondents were concerned about the principles of flexibility and accountability. Four issues were identified: homeschooling registration, scope of homeschooling material, recognition of past learning, and changing track.

Keywords: homeschooling; flexibility; accountability; mixed method.

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INTRODUCTION

The 1945 Constitution of Indonesia highlights education as a national goal (Annisa et al, 2023). To ensure that every citizen has access to an education that suits them, Article 31 paragraph (3) of the Constitution mandates the state to establish and organize a national education system. This obligation is further detailed in Law No. 20/2003 on the National Education System, which states that education should be organized as a systemic, open, and

multimodal unit. The open system allows for flexibility in choosing educational programs and completion times across different pathways and units. Students have the option to learn while working and can participate in various types of education through face-to-face or distance learning. The "multi-multi" aspect of education emphasizes the development of character, skills, and empowerment (de Jong, 2023). Overall, the Indonesian education system aims to provide an integrated and sustainable learning experience for its citizens (Permanasari, 2023).

Article 13 paragraph (1) of the National Education System Law regulates three education pathways: formal education, non-formal education, and informal education. Formal education is a structured and tiered education pathway consisting of basic education, secondary education, and higher education. Non-formal education is an education pathway outside formal education that can be implemented in a structured and tiered manner. Informal education is a family and neighbourhood education pathway. The regulation of these three channels shows that the state realizes that the right to education cannot always be fulfilled by schools or formal education channels. Through these three channels, it is hoped that all citizens can access education (education for all).

One form of informal education is homeschooling, which is often referred to as family-based education, homeschooling, home-based learning, or home education (Purnamasari, 2017). Homeschooling as an education option has been popular in countries such as the US and the UK since the 1960s (Bleses et al, 2024). In America, for example, the number of homeschoolers is estimated to have increased by 74% between 1999 and 2007 (Bhopal & Myers, 2018). Austria previously did not allow homeschooling, but now recognizes homeschooling (Rosita & Shofwan, 2023). Countries such as Spain, Greece, the Netherlands, and Germany no longer allow home education by national law but continue to allow it on an individual basis. Germany is the only country that rarely authorizes homeschooling (Forrester et al, 2021). In Indonesia, the homeschooling phenomenon has been popular since the beginning of the Reformation era (Permanasari, 2023). From year to year, more and more parents choose homeschooling as a way of educating their own children (Annisa et al, 2023). Unfortunately, there is no data documenting the existence of home schools. Data collected by Perhimpunan Sekolah Rumah Indonesia (PHI), one of the existing home school associations, also shows an increase in membership of 281 home schoolers between 2017 and 2021. The distribution of PHI membership also expanded from 45 cities/districts in 14 provinces to 103 cities/districts in 26 provinces (PHI, 2021). This shows an increasing trend of interest in organizing homeschooling.

There are various practical and philosophical reasons why families feel homeschooling is a more appropriate choice for their children (Hochman, 2022; Fahira et al., 2023). One of the common threads of why these families become homeschoolers is the principle of flexibility (Sumardiono, 2014). With homeschooling, families can personalize the curriculum and learning methods according to the peculiarities of each child, for example for children with special needs, or gifted children, or children who want to pursue certain professions according to their interests and talents from a young age (Bhopal & Myers, 2018). The learning process can also be adapted to the family's circumstances, for example when the family has to move frequently, or lives in a remote area, or has a specific educational vision that is difficult to achieve if the child enters the formal education channel (McCrory et al., 2023). The existence of home schools with this increasing trend raises the question, should the state regulate the implementation of home schools? If so, to what extent does the state need to regulate it, regarding flexibility and accountability in the implementation of homeschooling?

Theoretically, the need to regulate homeschooling centers on the argument of how to balance the interests of parents, children, and the state (Nkosi et al., 2022; Lubienski, 2023). Parents have an interest in their children's education, what they learn, how they learn it, how parents teach them, and what kind of human beings the education produces (de Jong, 2023). Children, on the other hand, have an interest in learning basic knowledge and skills that will enable them to function well in society and fulfil their economic needs (Zimmermann, 2023). Finally, the state also has an interest in the education of its citizens, namely, to ensure that values such as democracy, nationalism, and unity are preserved through education (Lyons et

al, 2013). The convergence of these three interests raises the argument of the extent to which the state can regulate homeschooling.

The existence of homeschooling in Indonesia has been recognized through the Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation Number 129 of 2014 concerning Home Schools (Permendikbud Sekolah rumah). According to Article 1 number 4 of this regulation, home schools are defined as a conscious and planned educational service process carried out by parents/families at home or other places in a singular form. The learning process takes place in a diverse and inclusive community that fosters a conducive environment for each unique potential of the learners to develop to the fullest (Eden et al, 2024). According to Article 3 of the Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation, homeschooling is carried out by families and communities through self-directed learning. Next, this regulation from the Ministry of Education and Culture governs the procedures for registering for homeschooling, the curriculum for homeschooling, the assessment and equalization of learning outcomes for homeschooling, the procedures for transferring children from homeschooling to other educational paths, and the development of homeschooling.

Although published since 2014, the implementation of “Permendikbud Sekolahrumah” has not been fully realized. The mechanism for organizing homeschooling has not been established, so the government currently lacks data on the number of homeschooled children in Indonesia. Some preschool children address this issue by joining Community Learning Centers (PKBM) or Learning Activity Centers (SKB) to obtain equivalent diplomas, thus being registered as non-formal education participants. Others who do not feel the need for an equivalent diploma are not registered at all in the Education Data Center (Dapodik), thus statistically counted as Out of School Children (OSC). The lack of data on preschool children in this area not only has a negative impact on Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) and Human Development Index (HDI), but also prevents the government from providing protection and facilitating the fulfillment of their constitutional right to education.

Currently, the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbudristek) is drafting a regulation to address various challenges in the implementation of homeschooling. One of the main challenges in the policy-making process for homeschooling is how to balance the principles of flexibility and accountability. On one hand, it is found that families who diligently facilitate their children's education have children who grow and develop well and are able to contribute to society (Davis-Kean et al, 2021). These families do not want policies that overly restrict homeschooling, which hinder their freedom to personalize education for their children. On the other hand, it has been found that some parents/guardians claim to be homeschooling their children, but in reality, they neglect their children or indoctrinate them with ideas that contradict the national education goals (Gill & Guterman, 2023).

Research conducted by the Center for Islamic Studies and Society at the State Islamic University (PPIM UIN) in Jakarta has shed light on the potential risks associated with exclusive religious-based homeschooling (Rosidah et al, 2020). This form of homeschooling could inadvertently serve as a breeding ground for the dissemination of teachings that promote intolerance, extremism, and radicalism (Dmytriv, 2022). Consequently, there is a pressing need for the state to ensure that homeschooling not only upholds the fundamental rights of homeschooled children but also plays a pivotal role in fostering their national identity as responsible citizens (Dahlke et al, 2021). The intricate interplay between flexibility and accountability in regulating homeschooling underscores the significance of finding a middle ground that accommodates the diverse needs and concerns of all stakeholders involved in the homeschooling landscape.

In navigating the complexities of regulating homeschooling, policymakers face the challenge of devising a framework that safeguards the rights of homeschooled children while also addressing societal concerns regarding educational quality and social cohesion. Striking a balance between flexibility and accountability is paramount to ensure that homeschooling remains a viable and beneficial educational option for families while mitigating potential risks associated with inadequate oversight or extremist influences (Appalsami & Gumbo, 2023)

The evolving landscape of homeschooling necessitates a nuanced approach that

acknowledges the diverse motivations and practices within the homeschooling community. By fostering dialogue and collaboration among policymakers, educators, parents, and other stakeholders, it becomes possible to develop regulatory measures that promote educational excellence, safeguard child welfare, and uphold national values and principles (Rahman et al., 2024). Through a harmonious integration of flexibility and accountability in the regulation of homeschooling, it is feasible to create a regulatory environment that not only respects the autonomy of families in shaping their children's education but also ensures that homeschooling aligns with broader societal goals and aspirations (Bodah, 2022).

As the discourse on homeschooling regulation continues to unfold, it is essential to consider the multifaceted dimensions of this educational phenomenon and the implications of regulatory decisions on children's well-being, academic development, and social integration (Davis-Kean et al., 2021). By embracing a balanced approach that values both flexibility and accountability, policymakers can navigate the complexities of homeschooling regulation with sensitivity, foresight, and a commitment to promoting the holistic development of homeschooled children within the broader educational landscape (Zhang et al., 2024).

METHODS

The study utilized a mixed-methods approach combining qualitative and quantitative methods to ensure a comprehensive understanding of homeschooling policies. According to Kurtaliqui et al. (2023), mixed-methods research is an approach that combines qualitative and quantitative research. Mixed methods is a research method that combines quantitative and qualitative methods to obtain more comprehensive, valid, reliable, and objective data. The use of both methods provides a more complete understanding of the research problem than using only one of them (Dawadi, Shrestha & Giri, 2021).

Data collection was conducted using purposive sampling technique, which involves selecting subjects based on specific criteria (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016). This method was chosen to ensure that the sample aligns with the research objectives. Not all samples meet the criteria for the phenomenon being studied. Therefore, the researcher chose purposive sampling techniques that establish specific considerations or criteria that must be met by the samples used in this study.

Data collection for this research was conducted using an online survey consisting of a regulation design instrument related to the implementation of School at Home and a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) in the form of a Public Test in November 2022 in 3 locations, namely Yogyakarta, Medan, and Balikpapan. The survey aims to determine whether the substance of this policy has met the needs of stakeholders from various elements, both practitioners and the government. The respondents in this study numbered 66 individuals from the Department of Education, School-Home Communities, Community Learning Centers (PKBM), and Learning Activity Centers (SKB).

The collected data was analyzed using descriptive analysis to obtain an overview of respondents' assessments of the implementation of the points in the organization of *Sekolahrumah* with a focus on the flexibility and accountability of the regulations. The analysis method used was crosstabs between the points of *Sekolahrumah* regulations, which showed the extent of public test participants' responses and the opinions given. The data provided by the respondents through FGD is analyzed using specific themes related to the concepts of flexibility and accountability. These themes include school registration, homeschooling curriculum, recognition of past learning, and switching pathways. When these themes are cross-checked or linked to the principles of flexibility and accountability, it can be seen how the tendency of the direction of home-school regulation is viewed from the perspective of stakeholders who are respondents in this study.

The results of the validity testing conducted using SPSS software indicated a significant correlation between the assessment of each statement item and the total assessment. The reliability tests were conducted separately on the readability, completeness, and implementation assessments. The results of the tests on the three assessments demonstrated

the validity of the results for readability, completeness, and implementation. This indicates that the instrument is capable of measuring the intended variables.

The next instrument goodness test is reliability using Cronbach's Alpha value. The instrument is deemed reliable if it exhibits a Cronbach's Alpha value of at least 0.6. This result indicates that the instrument is considered consistent and reliable over time. The results of the instrument reliability testing for the assessment of readability, completeness, and implementation are presented in the following SPSS output:

Reliability (Keterbacaan)		Reliability (Kelengkapan)		Reliability (Implementasi)	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.958	18	0.957	18	0.960	18

Figure 1. Homeschooling Implementation Instrument Reliability Test Results

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Draft Regulation on the Implementation of Homeschooling that was tested for publication consists of 18 articles. The principles of flexibility and accountability of homeschooling are integrated into these articles, among others: In Article 1 point 4, on the one hand, it is stated that homeschooling is an independent, flexible, and non-profit form of education, on the other hand, it is stated that homeschooling is part of the national education system. In Article 1 point 5 and Article 2 letter b, it is mentioned at the same time that the organization of homeschooling and the development of children's potential are carried out in accordance with the specific ideals of home schoolers and the objectives of national education.

Article 3 states that the principles of homeschooling include both protection of the flexibility and diversity of homeschooling practices, as well as accountability in the implementation, commitment and responsibility of parents/guardians, alignment with national goals, and integration in the national education system. In Article 4 jo. Article 12 on the registration of home schoolers regulates the obligation of parents/guardians of home schoolers to register home schoolers by completing the requirements that show commitment to fulfilling children's rights, as well as the government's obligation to facilitate the registration of home schoolers in the national education data and information system and issue homeschooling registration marks as a form of recognition and protection, so that home schoolers can move to formal education or informal education channels.

Article 5 jo. Article 6 stipulates that the homeschooling curriculum is prepared and implemented in a personalized manner, but still adheres to the competency standards of home school students which refer to the national graduate competency standards according to their level. In Article 7 jo. Article 8 stipulates that the homeschooling learning content consists of compulsory content elements that build national identity as well as literacy and nuance (religious education, Pancasila, and Citizenship, Indonesian language, and mathematics) and special content elements that can be personalized independently by home schoolers. In Article 9 jis. Article 10 and Article 11 stipulate that home school assessments are carried out by parents/guardians, home school partners, and/ or the Ministry, and an equivalency certificate is provided for home school students who have passed the equivalency test or recognition equivalent to formal education according to the mechanism of recognition of prior learning.

Article 13 jis Article 14, Article 15, and Article 16 regulate the flexibility of families to become home schoolers, there are no requirements for academic qualifications, infrastructure or certain financing. On the other hand, parents/guardians of home schoolers are required to have moral and mental competence to assist the learning process of home schoolers

responsibly, are required to run an accountable home school, starting from planning, implementation, and supervision, and receive supervision from the Ministry in the form of monitoring, supervision, and evaluation.

The Draft Regulation on the Implementation of Homeschooling needs to get responses or inputs from stakeholders. Public Test activities were held in Yogyakarta, Medan, and Balikpapan on 9-11 November 2022, attended by representatives of several institutions. With the public test, the public can find out the structure of the Homeschooling Draft Regulation and can also provide input. The results of this public test will become recommendations that will then be used to improve the structure of home school implementation so that it can be accepted and applied by the community.

Overview of Public Test Respondents

Based on data collected through an online survey involving 66 respondents from representatives of the Home School Community, Community Learning Centres (PKBM), Provincial/City Education Offices, Homeschooling (HS), and Learning Activity Centres (SKB), the number of respondents for each representative can be seen in Figure 2 below.

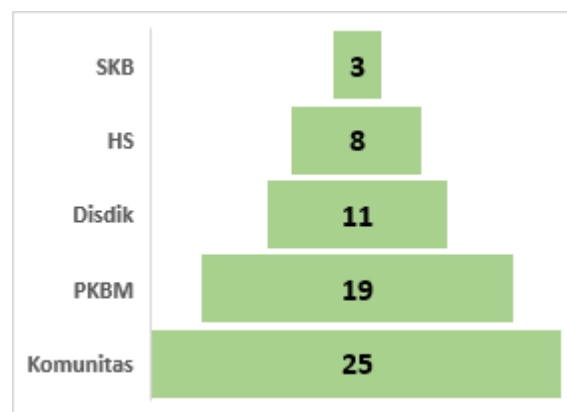


Figure 2. Number of Public Test Respondents by Institutional Representative

Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analysis was conducted on the results of the public test related to the responses of policy makers regarding the alignment of the principles of flexibility and accountability in the Homeschooling setting. The points in the home school arrangements related to the principles of flexibility and accountability, namely the principles of organizing homeschooling (one of which contains the principle of accountability), are denoted as X_1 , home school registration (X_2), the scope of home school materials (X_3), recognition of prior learning (X_4), and changing paths (X_5).

Based on the analysis using crosstabs, symmetrical measures and bar graphs are obtained that explain the relationship between 2 (two) variables. The results of the combination of the analyzed relationships along with their interpretations are as follows: X_1 and X_2 : identifying the relationship between the principal of accountability and home School registration. The bar graph in figure 2 shows that most (39 participants or 78%) agreed with the accountability principle and the homeschooling registration procedure, although there were still 11 participants (22%) who agreed with the homeschooling principle but disagreed with the home school registration so that the two articles showed a fairly strong and real relationship as indicated by a significant value <0.05 (Table 1). Thus, this result shows that most of the respondents agreed to be registered as a form of accountability for homeschooling.

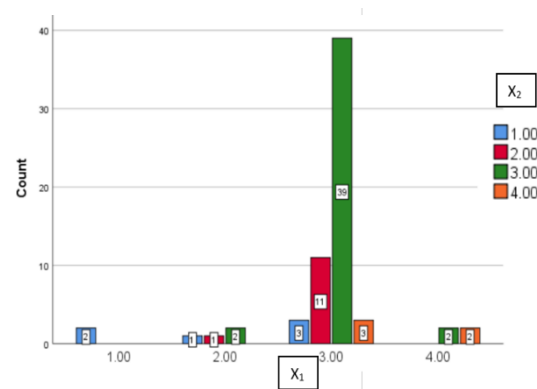


Figure 3. Comparison of Respondents' Responses related to the principle (X₁) and registration (X₂) of Homeschooling.

Table 1. Symmetrical Measures X₁ and X₂

		Value	Asymptotic Standard Error ^a	Approximate T ^b	Approximate Significance
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	.501	.118	4.628	.000 ^c
Ordinal by Ordinal	Spearman Correlation	.422	.115	3.729	.000 ^c
N of Valid Cases		66			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.
b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.
c. Based on normal approximation.

X₁ and X₃: identifying the relationship between the principle of accountability and the scope of the material. The bar graph in Figure 3 shows that most (49 participants) agreed with the principle of accountability as well as the scope of materials used as learning content. Both articles showed a strong (0.566) and significant relationship as indicated by a significant value <0.05 (Table 2). This result proves that within the scope of the material, most respondents agreed to be regulated as a form of homeschooling accountability.

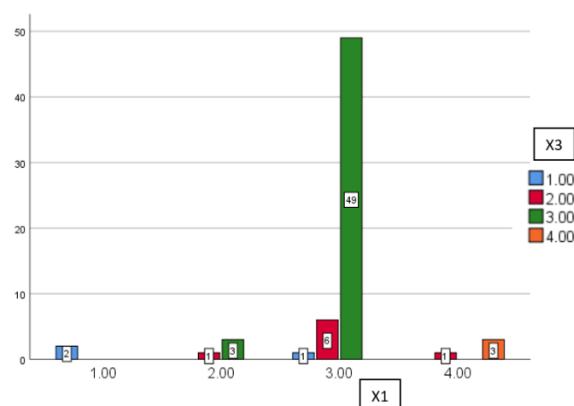


Figure 4. Comparison of Respondents' Responses related to the principles (X₁) and scope of materials (X₃) of Homeschooling.

Table 2. Symmetrical measures of X₁ and X₃

		Value	Asymptotic Standard Error ^a	Approximate T ^b	Approximate Significance
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	.566	.167	5.490	.000 ^c
Ordinal by Ordinal	Spearman Correlation	.427	.184	3.782	.000 ^c
N of Valid Cases		66			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.
b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.
c. Based on normal approximation.

X₄ and X₅: identifying the relationship between prior learning recognition and switching pathways. The bar graph in Figure 5 shows that the majority (45 participants) agreed with the recognition of prior learning as well as moving on. Both articles showed a strong (0.685) and significant relationship as indicated by a significant value <0.05 (Table 3). The results of this test prove that the recognition of prior learning, which indicates accountability, and changing pathways, which indicates flexibility, both received a positive response from respondents to be regulated in the RPM (*Rancangan Peraturan Menteri*) for homeschooling.

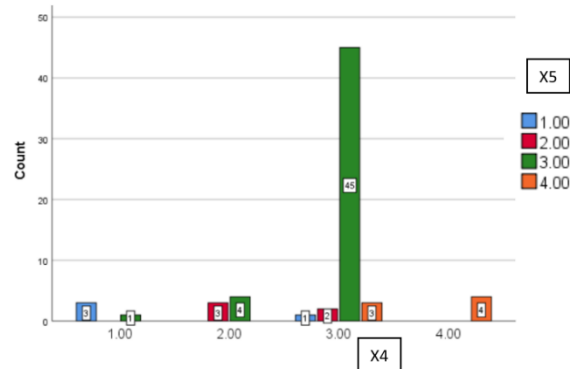


Figure 5. Comparison of Respondents' Responses related to recognition of prior learning (X_4) and switching paths (X_5).

Table 3. Symmetrical Size of X_4 and X_5

		Value	Asymptotic Standard Error ^a	Approximate τ^b	Approximate Significance
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	.685	.118	7.517	.000 ^c
Ordinal by Ordinal	Spearman Correlation	.653	.102	6.903	.000 ^c
N of Valid Cases		66			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

c. Based on normal approximation.

After conducting the crosstabs analysis, all feedback/suggestions submitted through the open-ended questions were analyzed using a word cloud, so as to identify the points that were responded to while showing the words that appeared frequently. Based on Figure 6, the words "complicated registration" and "RPL technical guidelines" were expressed more frequently than other words. This shows that the rules regarding registration are still considered complicated and in general, respondents suggested making technical guidelines (*petunjuk teknis*) for the regulation of organizing homeschooling. In other words, this result translates as respondents' desire for a more flexible process in terms of home school registration and recognition of prior learning (RPL).



Figure 6. Word processing results of the suggestions in the homeschooling regulation

instrument.

CONCLUSION

The study evaluates the balance between flexibility and accountability in the draft regulation of homeschooling by the Ministry of Education and Culture, Research and Technology. While flexibility distinguishes homeschooling as informal education, accountability is crucial to ensure children's right to quality education. Survey and focus group discussions highlight stakeholders' concerns regarding homeschooling registration, curriculum scope, recognition of prior learning, and educational pathways. Stakeholders prioritize accountability in registration procedures and material regulation, aiming to prevent radicalism (Kaur & Kaur, 2021). However, they advocate for flexibility in recognizing learning outcomes and changing pathways to facilitate children's transition to formal or non-formal education. By aligning flexibility and accountability, the regulation aims to address the interests of children, parents, and the state in organizing homeschooling effectively.

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