

THE ROLE OF CONTINUING EDUCATION IN THE GLOBAL ERA

Putri Anggreni¹⁾

¹⁾Mahendradatta University
e-mail: gekcay@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Education is undergoing significant transformation in response to global dynamics. In the face of the complex challenges faced by the world today, sustainable education has become the main focus. Sustainable education aims to shape a generation that is aware of the environmental and social impacts of their every action. This study emphasises the role of education in promoting inclusive, sustainable and solution-oriented development by analysing the current global context. Through a literature analysis approach, it explores the impact of technology, social change and labour market needs on curriculum design and teaching methods. The research findings highlight the need for learning that is flexible and relevant to contemporary needs. In addition, the study outlines the challenges and opportunities that arise in endeavours to support sustainable education, such as technological innovation, cross-sector collaboration and holistic approaches to learning.

Keywords: *continuing education, technological innovation, collaboration, holistic learning, global era.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Along with the rapid pace of technological development, increasing globalisation, and profound social changes, people in the global era are faced with unexpected demands. The fourth industrial revolution as highlighted by Savitri (2019) has changed the landscape of human life, giving rise to the need for new skills and higher adaptability. Education, as a character-builder and knowledge provider, must play a central role in helping individuals face these challenges. However, education can no longer be seen as a process limited to the beginning of life; instead, continuing education is key to maintaining the relevance and quality of human resources in this era.

In line with the changing dynamics of society, education needs to adopt a paradigm shift. It is no longer sufficient to see education as a process that ends at a certain stage in life; instead, education should be integrated as an integral part of a person's lifelong journey. The concept of continuing education emerged in response to this need, emphasising continuous learning and adaptation to developments in various fields (Ansya, 2015).

It is important to recognise that continuing education is not a new concept. However, in this digital age, with open access to information, online learning opportunities and a paradigm shift in the understanding of effective curriculum, continuing education is gaining new momentum. This transformation requires a change in the way we view the education process, making it more inclusive, relevant and responsive to current developments (Jumali et al., 2017).

One of the main focuses of continuing education is the enhancement of skills relevant to future needs. Along with technology-driven economic change, skills such as problem-solving, creativity, technological expertise and digital literacy are critical. Continuing education tries to align itself with the ever-changing demands of the labour market, providing individuals with the ability to develop and improve their skills throughout life (Simanjuntak et al., 2019).

Sustainable education emphasises the importance of integrating sustainable development concepts into curricula, teaching practices and education policy at large. This includes promoting an understanding of complex environmental, social and economic issues and developing the skills needed to contribute to solving these problems. In accordance with the opinion (Safitri, et al, 2022) that today education is one of the fundamental rights for all human beings. In its role, education can help smooth the life of individuals, because on its basis humans in living their lives cannot be separated from education. The application and progress of education, of course, needs to be adjusted to the situation and social conditions in society. The fourth goal of the 17 SDGs is quality education, which includes issues such as inclusive and equitable access to education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities. Improving education will spur the achievement of other goals and targets in the 17 SDGs, especially to improve Indonesia's human development index (Prinduri, 2023).

In addition to technical skills, continuing education also emphasises character building and social responsibility. Facing the complex challenges of the digital age, individuals need to be equipped with strong emotional, leadership and ethical skills. Continuing education serves as a vehicle to develop these values, creating individuals who are not only technically proficient but also responsible in their contribution to society (Dalmeri, 2014).

In designing continuing education, it is important to recognise that challenges and needs are not always uniform across the globe. Local context, culture and economic conditions play an important role in determining effective education design. Therefore, continuing education needs to be adapted to suit the needs of local communities while still accommodating global trends (Dalmeri 2014).

However, implementing continuing education is not easy. Challenges such as limited resources, differences in education systems in different countries, and resistance to change can be significant obstacles. As stated by Subayil (2020) in the current era of globalisation, an integrated education formulation is needed that can accommodate all the needs of community life. Moreover, the current globalisation era is a time when people can express all their desires and uphold the principle of worldwide freedom in all fields including education. The current era of globalisation leads to intense competition, so schools must be able to provide good education and produce students who have high character and ability to face this competition. Therefore, this article aims to explore the challenges and prospects of sustainable education in today's globalised era, and present ideas on how we can move forward towards a more sustainable future through holistic and solution-oriented educational efforts. Thus, sustainable education will not only be part of the education system, but also an integral part of global efforts to achieve sustainable development as a whole.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research was written using the literature study research method by conducting an in-depth review of literature related to sustainable education, including scientific journals, books, research reports and relevant education policies. This helps to understand the conceptual framework, trends and key issues related to continuing education.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Sustainable education is emerging as a key concept in responding to the complex and rapidly changing dynamics of the global era. Transformations in various sectors of life, especially as a result of the technological revolution and globalisation, require a form of education that not only provides knowledge but also facilitates the development of relevant skills and character. In this context, this research explores the role of continuing education in addressing future challenges and its contribution in shaping individuals who are prepared for the global era (UNESCO, 2012).

The global era is characterised by rapid changes in technology, economy and culture. Globalisation and the fourth industrial revolution have shaken the traditional foundations of work and created a need for broader skills and high adaptability (Wijaya, 2016). Society is entering an era where lifelong learning is key to maintaining relevance and competitiveness in an ever-changing labour market. Continuing education encompasses the concept of continuous learning throughout life, passing through different stages of life and adapting to contextual changes. More than just knowledge acquisition, continuing education emphasises the development of critical skills, problem-solving and creative thinking abilities that enable individuals to adapt to their changing environment (Zubaidah, 2019). The importance of continuing education is also reflected in its ability to contribute to the development of both technical and soft skills. Continuing education programmes not only target the improvement of professional skills, but also try to shape individual character, including work ethics, leadership and social responsibility. Thus, continuing education becomes a vehicle to form individuals who are not only technically intelligent but also have a strong moral foundation (Nugraha, 2019).

In responding to the challenges of globalised education, educational institutions need to design learning that is responsive, flexible and relevant to contemporary needs. Learning approaches that are responsive, flexible and relevant to contemporary needs have become the main foundation in dealing with the dynamics of modern times. Rapid changes in technology, economy and culture require a new paradigm in the learning process in order to produce individuals who are ready to face future challenges (Siagian, 2006). One of the positive impacts of responsive, flexible and relevant learning is the ability of individuals to develop skills that match the needs of the contemporary labour market. The world of work today is increasingly competitive and rapidly changing (Hadi, 2015).

Therefore, learning must be able to provide skills that are not only in line with current demands, but can also anticipate future developments. Skills such as problem solving, creativity, critical thinking and teamwork are becoming increasingly important in the face of the changing dynamics of the labour market. Responsive learning also has a positive impact on student motivation and engagement in the learning process. When students see that the material being learnt has relevance to their lives, they tend to be more motivated to learn. Responsive learning allows students to see the connection between what they are learning and the real world, giving deeper meaning to the learning process. In addition, flexibility in learning methods can provide space for students to develop their interests and talents more specifically.

The importance of responsive, flexible and relevant learning is also seen in the context of skills development in the global era. Skills such as digital literacy, critical thinking, collaboration and communication skills are essential in facing complex challenges in the contemporary era. Learning must be able to integrate the development of these skills into the curriculum so that students not only understand the basic concepts but are also able to apply and develop these skills in real situations.

Continuing education is not just about obtaining a degree or a particular qualification, but rather about a lifelong learning process that involves the development of skills, cultural understanding, environmental awareness and leadership. Continuing education has the potential to be a driving force in building a society capable of facing the complex challenges of the global era. By embedding these values in our education system, we can shape individuals who are not only future-ready, but also positive agents of change in an ever-changing global society.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

First of all, it is important to understand that the global era is characterised by dynamics that are very different from previous times. Rapid technological change,

globalisation and the complexity of global issues require individuals to continuously learn and develop throughout their lives. Continuing education is key in ensuring that every individual has access to the knowledge, skills and understanding necessary to remain relevant in an ever-changing era.

Continuing education is not only about acquiring technical or academic skills, but also about developing global-era skills. Skills such as critical thinking, creativity, communication skills and collaboration skills are becoming increasingly important in dealing with the complexity of problems facing society today (Zubaidah, 2019). Continuing education provides a platform for individuals to continuously develop and hone these skills throughout their lives, so that they can become adaptive and innovative thinkers. In addition, continuing education provides opportunities to understand and address social and cultural changes. In an increasingly globally connected society, an understanding of cultural diversity and global perspectives is a must. Continuing education can open doors for individuals to explore different cultures, languages and values, creating a more inclusive and understanding society. The ability to adapt to social change is also an important skill that can be acquired through continuing education.

Continuing education also plays an important role in building a deeper understanding of environmental and sustainability issues. In the midst of climate change and concern for the future of the planet, sustainable education can be a means to build environmental awareness and responsibility. Through a sustainability-focused curriculum, individuals can learn how to understand and manage resources wisely, and contribute to environmental conservation efforts.

The importance of sustainable education can also be seen in the context of developing leadership skills. A globalised society requires leaders who not only possess strong knowledge and expertise but also the ability to lead with integrity, empathy and a sustainable vision. Sustainable education can create an environment where individuals can develop their leadership skills, both on a small and large scale, and become agents of positive change in society.

Today, technological developments also enable continuing education to become more affordable and accessible to many. Online learning, distance courses and self-directed learning platforms have become the means to increase the accessibility of continuing education. This opens the door for individuals in different walks of life, regardless of age or background, to continue learning and developing themselves (Wijaya, 2016). However, achieving the full potential of continuing education requires support from various parties, including the government, educational institutions, companies and communities. The government needs to support policies that promote the accessibility and relevance of continuing education. Educational institutions need to continuously adapt to changing needs and offer programmes that are responsive to the demands of the times. Companies can also play a role by providing opportunities for the development of their employees through continuing education programmes.

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Challenges in implementing sustainable education include: 1) Lack of integration of sustainable development concepts in curricula and teaching practices; 2) Limited resources and support for training educators in sustainable education; 3) Resistance to change among educational institutions and stakeholders. As for the prospects and opportunities of implementing sustainable education are: 1) The development of technology as a tool to improve access and effectiveness of continuing education;

2) Increased awareness of the importance of continuing education among students, teachers/lecturers and the community; 3) The potential to integrate sustainable education into various subjects/courses and extracurricular activities.

The development of the world in the current era of globalisation is a challenge or opportunity for education to be able to adjust and answer increasingly complex problems. The challenges in implementing sustainable education highlight the need for collaborative efforts between governments, educational institutions and communities to overcome these obstacles. The integration of sustainable development concepts into curricula and teaching practices requires adequate teacher training and the development of relevant learning resources. In addition, there is a need for advocacy and public awareness to champion the importance of sustainable education in creating a more sustainable future. According to (Safitri, et al. 2022) quality education is of course expected for the progress of a nation, education is not just a means of 'agent of change' for the younger generation who will be the successor of a nation, but also must be an 'agent of producer' in order to create a real transformation. There is a lack of professional development opportunities, and those that are available need to adequately cater to the specific needs of educators. Therefore, a well-defined and comprehensive framework is essential (Hamwy, et al., 2023).

Technological developments that continue to increase rapidly require humans as full power holders to continue to innovate and keep up with technological developments (Fatah, 2020). The implementation of educational activities was previously traditional in the preparation of materials, learning activities and assessment systems, but entering the digitalisation era, all learning activity processes have begun to migrate to the digitalisation system (Annisa, 2024).

The shift towards continuing education through online and blended learning has significant implications for practice, providing a roadmap for educators, policy makers and institutions to implement effective and sustainable digital learning practices. By utilising technology, such as online learning platforms and mobile applications, continuing education can be accessed by more people in different regions.

The integration of continuing education into various subjects can also improve the relevance of education to future needs. These challenges require collaborative and collective action from all policy makers, educators, researchers, parents and students. We need to work together to find innovations and inclusive solutions that can ensure sustainable education for all generations in the global era (Chien, et al., 2023). One of the innovations in facing these challenges can be the use of e-learning, innovation in the use of elearning can increase user motivation and user confidence (Setianingrum, et al, 2021). This must be done evenly to all regions, with the distribution of sustainable education is expected to improve the quality of education, especially in equal distribution of education in Indonesia, reduce the accumulation of education graduates in cities, facilitate access to education services, and improve the welfare of the 3T area community (Rosmana, et al, 2022).

5. CONCLUSION

In responding to the complexity of the global era, responsive, flexible and relevant learning to contemporary needs is a necessity. Responsive learning not only keeps up with technological developments, but also creates space for the development of global skills, such as critical thinking, creativity, and the ability to collaborate. Flexibility in learning approaches allows individuals to find their own learning style, while the relevance of learning materials to global issues ensures that future generations can face real-world challenges.

Continuing education is a key pillar in ensuring the sustainability of lifelong learning, providing accessibility for all, and making individuals lifelong learners. Thus,

education that is responsive, flexible, relevant and sustainable has great potential to shape a society that is adaptive, competitive and able to face the complex changes of the global era.

Key challenges include the lack of integration of sustainable development concepts in curricula and teaching practices, limited resources and support for training educators, and resistance to change among educational institutions and stakeholders. However, there are opportunities that can be capitalized on, such as technological developments that can improve access and effectiveness of sustainable education, as well as increased awareness of the importance of sustainable education among students, teachers/lecturers and communities. To overcome these challenges and take advantage of the opportunities, collaborative efforts are needed between the government, educational institutions, communities and the private sector. Integration of sustainable development concepts into the curriculum, adequate teacher training, community advocacy, and utilization of technology are key steps that need to be taken.

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