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Critiquing Scientific Articles and Popular Articles from the Perspective of Educational Curriculum Management

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Abstract

The ability to critically analyze scientific and popular articles is an essential part of critical literacy that supports the quality of higher education. This study aims to examine how curriculum management accommodates the development of critical article analysis skills among students. A qualitative descriptive study with a case study approach was employed, involving curriculum document analysis, interviews with lecturers and students, and classroom observations. The results reveal that the development of critical skills is more focused on scientific articles, while popular articles receive less attention in the curriculum. These findings emphasize the need to integrate the critical analysis of both types of articles simultaneously within curriculum management to enhance students' critical literacy. This study contributes a conceptual model for integrating text criticism into higher education curriculum design.

Keywords: *Curriculum Management, Critical Literacy, Higher Education, Popular Articles, Scientific Articles, Text Criticism.*

Introduction

In the world of education, critiquing scientific and popular articles from the perspective of educational curriculum management is a crucial step in understanding the extent to which they contribute to educational development. Scientific articles are typically built on in-depth research and systematic methodology, providing robust data and analysis [1]. Popular articles, on the other hand, tend to be more accessible and presented in simple language, thus reaching a wider audience, including educators and the general public [2]. Therefore, it is crucial for those working in the world of education to understand scientific and popular articles.

However, not all of these articles can be taken at face value without critical analysis, due to differences in objectives, methods, and intended audiences for each type of article. These differences make critical thinking essential in examining educational issues so that the understanding gained is not only valid but also can be implemented effectively. Therefore, it is crucial to carefully critique scientific and popular articles to provide a broad and relevant understanding in the context of educational curriculum management. Many studies have been conducted on scientific and popular articles. Several studies have highlighted the role of scientific and popular articles as academic references supporting

theory development [2]. Over time, several studies have also developed their contribution to supporting deeper and more relevant educational curriculum management.

Scientific articles and popular articles have differences and limitations in contributing to educational curriculum management. Popular articles generally convey academic ideas in simpler language, making them easier for education practitioners to understand, but often lack in-depth analysis and data accuracy [3]. Conversely, scientific articles have the advantage of systematic methodology and accurate information, but their rigid writing style and rich technical jargon make them difficult for general readers to grasp. This creates a gap between the theory presented in academic research and actual practice. Therefore, efforts are needed to connect these two types of articles so that scientific information can be translated into practical contexts without compromising its accuracy and scientific value [4].

Another innovation presented in this study is the design of a conceptual framework to balance the use of scientific articles and popular articles in the curriculum management cycle, which includes the planning, implementation, and assessment stages [5]. Through in-depth analysis, this study will reveal that popular articles should not be considered merely "simple information," but can be a means for educators or curriculum managers to understand current issues in education that can then be verified through more comprehensive scientific articles. In this way, the novelty of this study lies not only in the comparative study, but also in the presentation of a practical framework to combine the strengths of both, so that the resulting curriculum is more relevant, applicable, while still having a solid scientific foundation [2].

This study contributes significantly in terms of theory, practice, and methodology. Theoretically, this study enriches the study of educational curriculum management by bringing a new perspective to the analysis of scientific and popular articles [6]. The analysis is not limited to linguistic elements or writing structure but also highlights the importance and contribution of article content to curriculum management, thereby enriching the literature on the relationship between knowledge discourse and educational practice. In practice, this study is useful for students, teachers, and education practitioners to improve academic and popular literacy focused on curriculum needs [6]. Furthermore, the findings of this study can serve as a reflective guide in using articles as learning resources for curriculum planning, implementation, and evaluation.

Literature Review

A. Differences between Scientific Articles and Popular Articles

Scientific and popular articles have fundamental differences in structure, purpose, and language use. According to research conducted by Nurjamilah and Suharyan [7], popular scientific articles published in mass media, such as opinion columns, tend to use light and communicative language to make them easily understood by the general public. This type of article aims to convey ideas or current information in an engaging and less rigid style. In contrast, scientific articles are written formally, following a standardized structure and emphasizing valid and accountable research findings. Thus, the main difference between the two lies in their communication goals and the depth of analysis presented [7].

Research by Fazillah et al. (2025) explains that scientific articles follow a systematic structure consisting of an introduction, methods, results, and discussion, which are organized logically and scientifically. This structure helps maintain clarity in the author's reasoning and ensures the validity of the findings presented. In contrast, popular articles do not adhere to strict writing rules and focus more on language style to emotionally engage readers with the content. Popular articles often use narratives and rhetorical language that are relatable to everyday life. Therefore, in terms of form and presentation, scientific articles excel in scientific accuracy, while popular articles excel in readability [8].

Both studies emphasize the importance of critical literacy skills in understanding the differences between scientific and popular articles. Students need to be trained to evaluate the content, structure, and sources of each type of writing to avoid being easily influenced by invalid information [7]. This critical literacy becomes a foundational skill for developing scientific thinking while also understanding the social context of each text. Such understanding also helps students adjust their reading strategies between scientific and opinion-based popular writings. Therefore, the ability to critically analyze both types of articles is crucial for strengthening students' reasoning skills and academic integrity [8].

B. The Importance of Critical Literacy in Higher Education

Critical literacy is an essential aspect of higher education because it helps students understand and evaluate information deeply. According to research by Nurjamilah and Suharyan [7], the ability to read critically trains students to distinguish between facts, opinions, and the author's perspectives within a text. Critical literacy enables students not only to comprehend the content of a text but also to recognize the social and ideological contexts behind it. In language learning and academic writing, critical literacy is necessary for students to think reflectively about what they read. Therefore, this skill serves as a crucial foundation for developing active and analytical learners [7].

Critical literacy skills are also closely related to critical thinking in facing the rapid development of technology and digital media. Students with strong digital literacy tend to have higher critical thinking abilities when evaluating online information. Students who are accustomed to reading various sources can more easily identify reliable information and avoid the spread of hoaxes. Digital literacy-based learning in universities helps students adapt to an increasingly open and competitive academic environment. Thus, critical literacy plays a key role in shaping an adaptive and responsible academic character [9].

In addition to enhancing thinking skills, critical literacy also encourages students to develop ethical awareness in using information. Based on findings from both journals, students with strong critical literacy do not merely evaluate text content rationally but also consider the social impact of the information they share. Critical literacy teaches students to be careful in quoting, writing, and disseminating knowledge to remain aligned with academic norms. In doing so, students can cultivate a scientific attitude that values originality and academic truth. Hence, critical literacy is not merely a reading ability but also a form of intellectual responsibility within higher education [7].

C. Educational Curriculum Management

Curriculum management is one of the key aspects in maintaining the quality of education delivery. Curriculum management plays a vital role in organizing the planning, implementation, and evaluation

processes of learning to align with national education goals. Proper curriculum management ensures that teaching and learning activities run effectively and remain relevant to students' needs. Furthermore, curriculum management serves as an instrument to control the direction and achievement of educational outcomes. Therefore, the roles of school principals and lecturers are crucial in implementing well-directed and sustainable curriculum management [10].

In practice, curriculum management is not limited to preparing learning documents but also involves the comprehensive management of educational resources. The research shows that the success of curriculum management is highly influenced by the institution's ability to coordinate educators and learning facilities. Effective curriculum implementation requires continuous monitoring and evaluation to maintain the quality of learning. Additionally, teacher involvement in curriculum development enhances the relevance of the learning content to real-world needs. Thus, curriculum management should be implemented in a participatory and collaborative manner across all levels of education [4].

The effectiveness of curriculum management is also influenced by educational policies and institutional leadership commitment. Continuous evaluation of the curriculum is necessary to align learning content with the advancement of science and technology. A well-managed curriculum can foster students who possess both academic competence and social skills. Moreover, the application of adaptive curriculum management can improve education quality through contextual learning that responds to contemporary demands. With well-structured management, the curriculum becomes an essential instrument for shaping a high-quality education system [10].

D. Theoretical framework

This research is based on three main theories.

1. Theory of Differences Between Scientific and Popular Articles [7], [8].

This theory explains that scientific and popular articles have fundamental differences in purpose, structure, and language use.

- Scientific articles are written formally and systematically, following a standardized structure such as introduction, methods, results, and discussion. The writing focuses on presenting accountable research data and findings.
- Popular articles are more flexible and communicative, using lighter and more engaging language to be easily understood by the general public. These articles usually appear in mass media and aim to convey ideas in a current and appealing way.
- In the context of this study, this theory is used to understand students' ability to distinguish the form, style, and communicative purpose of scientific and popular articles.

2. Critical Literacy Theory [7]

Critical literacy theory is based on the view that reading is not only about understanding the content of a text but also about evaluating and interpreting the social meanings embedded within it.

- A critical reader is expected to recognize the structure, communicative purpose, and underlying ideology of a text.
- Critical literacy emphasizes reflective and ethical thinking toward reading materials, as well as awareness of the social impact of consumed information.

- In this research, students' ability to critique scientific and popular articles is seen as an application of critical literacy that needs to be developed through higher education learning.

3. Curriculum Management Theory [4]

This theory explains that scientific and popular articles have fundamental differences inpurpose, structure, and language use.

- Scientific articles are written formally and systematically, following a standardized structure such as introduction, methods, results, and discussion. The writing focuses on presenting accountable research data and findings.
- Popular articles are more flexible and communicative, using lighter and more engaging language to be easily understood by the general public. These articles usually appear in mass media and aim to convey ideas in a current and appealing way.
- In the context of this study, this theory is used to understand students' ability to distinguish the form, style, and communicative purpose of scientific and popular articles.

Material and Methods

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design with a case study approach to examine the critique of scientific and popular articles from the perspective of educational curriculum management. The research focused on how curriculum practices in higher education accommodate the development of students' critical literacy skills. Data were collected through curriculum document analysis, interviews with lecturers and students, and classroom observations. The documents analyzed included learning-related materials relevant to academic reading and writing practices. Interviews were used to explore participants' perceptions and experiences regarding the analysis of scientific and popular articles, while classroom observations were conducted to identify how these activities were implemented in the learning process.

The data were analyzed descriptively by organizing and interpreting the findings based on the main themes of the study, particularly curriculum focus, teaching practices, and students' critical literacy. To strengthen the validity of the findings, the study compared information obtained from documents, interviews, and observations. Through this approach, the research aimed to provide a comprehensive description of the extent to which curriculum management supports students' ability to critically engage with both scientific and popular texts in higher education.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 presents a summary of the main findings related to the implementation of curriculum management in developing students' critical literacy toward scientific and popular articles. The table shows that higher education curricula still emphasize formal academic skills, particularly scientific reading and writing, while the critical analysis of popular articles remains insufficiently structured. The findings also indicate limited development of students' contextual and reflective thinking, weak integration across curriculum planning, implementation, and evaluation, and a policy gap in explicitly embedding critical literacy into learning outcomes and course syllabi. In addition, the table highlights

students' stronger familiarity with scientific articles than with opinion-based popular texts, as well as classroom constraints that limit balanced text analysis. At the same time, several emerging innovations, institutional support needs, and the role of technology are identified as important factors influencing the effectiveness of critical literacy development in higher education.

Table 1. Summary of Key Findings on Curriculum Management and Critical Literacy Development

Focus of Findings	Description of Findings	Supporting Sources
Curriculum focus imbalance	The curriculum in higher education emphasizes formal academic skills (scientific reading and writing), while critical literacy related to popular articles is not structured in learning design.	[11]
Limited development of critical literacy	Students' critical thinking is limited to textual understanding and not yet to contextual and reflective analysis of text content.	[12]
Lack of integration in curriculum management	The planning, implementation, and evaluation stages of curriculum management have not been coherently connected in developing critical literacy.	[13]
Students' reading patterns	Students are more skilled in analyzing scientific articles but struggle to critique opinion-based popular articles due to unfamiliarity with ideological and contextual reading	[14]
Teaching practice constraints	Lecturers tend to prioritize analysis of scientific articles, while popular texts are discussed briefly due to limited time and heavy material load.	[5]
Curriculum policy gap	The study program's curriculum has not yet integrated critical literacy development explicitly into learning outcomes or course syllabi.	[7]
Emerging innovations	Some lecturers began integrating popular article analysis and discussions on current issues to strengthen reflective and critical thinking.	[15]
Institutional support needs	The success of curriculum management in developing critical literacy depends on institutional policy support, not just lecturer initiatives.	[16]
Technological facilitation and barriers	Digital tools like Google Scholar and Mendeley assist students, but technical and access limitations still hinder the quality of academic writing.	[8]

The research findings indicate that curriculum management in higher education has not yet fully accommodated the balanced development of students' skills in critiquing both scientific and popular articles. The curriculum still focuses on formal academic abilities such as scientific reading and writing, while activities that promote critical literacy toward popular texts are not yet structured within the learning design. This condition shows that the stages of planning, implementation, and evaluation in curriculum management have not been carried out continually. As a result, students' critical thinking skills remain limited to textual comprehension and have not reached a deeper level of analysis concerning the content and context of texts, as also revealed by Sitompul et al. [12]. To strengthen students' critical literacy skills, an adaptive and collaborative curriculum management approach is needed [16].

Results and Discussion

A. Implementation of Curriculum Management in Developing Article Critiquing Skills

Based on the research findings, the development of students' skills in critiquing scientific and popular articles has not been explicitly stated in curriculum documents or course syllabi. The curriculum still focuses more on formal academic reading and writing skills, while the analysis of popular articles is

treated merely as an additional activity that is not always assessed. This condition indicates that curriculum management has not yet been fully directed toward the development of students' critical literacy abilities. Effective curriculum management must involve three main components: continuous planning, implementation, and evaluation of learning. However, in practice, many universities still emphasize the administrative aspects of planning and implementation without paying sufficient attention to developing students' critical thinking skills. Such curricula tend to focus only on technical achievements rather than reflective outcomes

B. Students' Perceptions of Article Critiquing Skills

Interviews and observations revealed that most students were more capable of understanding the structure and content of scientific articles than popular ones. They were accustomed to texts with methodological writing patterns but found it difficult to assess the objectivity of opinion-based popular articles. This indicates that students still focus on textual reading rather than contextual interpretation. Students' critical thinking abilities largely depend on their digital literacy and habits of evaluating source credibility. Students who are not used to reading popular texts analytically tend to accept information at face value without reflection[17]. Weak information and source evaluation skills are major factors inhibiting the development of students' critical thinking abilities. Therefore, higher education needs to provide more opportunities for critical reading of popular texts so that students become accustomed to assessing the validity of information and identifying potential ideological biases embedded within the texts.

C. Teaching Practices and Classroom Constraints

Observations showed that learning activities focused more on analyzing scientific articles than popular ones. Lecturers typically assigned students to examine the structure and content of scientific articles, while discussions on popular articles were only briefly conducted. Although students showed high enthusiasm for popular topics, they were not provided with sufficient opportunities for deeper engagement due to limited time and dense course material. Most universities still rely on conventional lecture-based teaching methods, resulting in suboptimal development of students' critical thinking. This situation suggests that teaching strategies and time management within the curriculum need to be improved to allow for more effective analysis of popular texts.

D. The Relationship Between Curriculum Management and Students' Critical Literacy

The findings also show that curriculum management at the study program level has not yet fully integrated the development of critical literacy into learning outcomes. The planning stage remains oriented toward mastery of theory and academic writing techniques, while the implementation stage rarely includes reading and analyzing popular texts. Adaptive curriculum management requires coherence among three main components: planning, implementation, and evaluation. Evaluation should not only assess the final written product but also measure the critical thinking processes that occur during learning. If the curriculum only focuses on written output without considering analytical processes, the learning outcomes will not fully reflect students' reflective thinking abilities [18]. This view is consistent with the study of Nurjamilah and Suharyan [7], which emphasized the importance of critical literacy–based learning in enhancing students' awareness of ideological structures and social

meanings within texts. Students should be guided not only to comprehend content but also to analyze the purpose, context, and values embedded in the text.

E. Strategies for Strengthening Critical Literacy through Adaptive Curriculum Management

Several lecturers have begun to implement innovations by incorporating critical literacy activities, such as discussions of current articles and analyses of popular media texts. These initiatives demonstrate growing academic awareness of the importance of reflective thinking skills. However, the success of curriculum management in higher education largely depends on institutional commitment to policies that support instructional innovation. Curriculum management in the digital era must be adaptive, collaborative, and technology-based to meet the needs of modern learners. Therefore, integrating critical literacy into the curriculum should not remain an individual lecturer's initiative but must be systematically designed through revisions of learning outcomes, preparation of course outlines, and assessments that measure students' critical thinking processes. The success of curriculum implementation is strongly influenced by collaboration between educators and program management. Without institutional support, efforts to develop critical literacy will remain temporary. Therefore, strategies to strengthen critical literacy in higher education should be established as part of formal curriculum policy. The 21st-century education must cultivate reflective, creative, and responsible thinking toward information. A balanced integration of scientific and popular article analysis is thus a crucial step in shaping students who are critical, adaptive, and socially aware [16]. Technological advances make it easier for students to search for references through Google Scholar, manage citations using Mendeley, and write draft documents online [19]. Technology serves as a facilitator that increases time efficiency, citation neatness, and the availability of learning resources [20]. However, the quality of scientific papers is still determined by the analytical and academic abilities of the author. Interview results show that students face obstacles such as slow internet, Mendeley errors, and limited access to journals. Therefore, education management needs to prepare digital strategies, academic literacy training, and lecturer assistance to ensure the quality of scientific papers.

Conclusion

Research results indicate that curriculum management in higher education has not fully accommodated the development of skills in critiquing scientific and popular articles in a balanced manner. The curriculum still focuses on formal academic skills such as scientific reading and writing, while activities that encourage critical literacy regarding popular texts are not structured in the learning design. This situation indicates that the planning, implementation, and evaluation stages in curriculum management have not been carried out continuously. As a result, students' critical thinking skills remain limited to textual understanding, not reaching the level of in-depth analysis of the content and context of the text. To strengthen students' critical literacy skills, adaptive and collaborative curriculum management is needed. The curriculum needs to place the analysis of popular articles as part of the learning process, on par with the analysis of scientific articles. The 21st-century curriculum must be able to bridge academic literacy and social reality, which emphasizes the importance of education that fosters reflective skills and responsibility for information. With targeted curriculum management, universities

can develop students who are critical, adaptive, and have ethical awareness in dealing with the flow of information in the digital era.

Limitation and Suggestions

This study has several limitations. First, it was limited to the analysis of curriculum documents, interviews, and observations within a single study program, so the findings cannot be generalized to all higher education contexts. Second, the study did not quantitatively measure the extent to which students' critical literacy skills improved through specific learning strategies. As a result, the findings remain descriptive and qualitative, focusing on the actual conditions of curriculum implementation and teaching practices. Despite these limitations, the study provides important insights into the gap between curriculum design and the development of critical literacy. Future studies are recommended to involve multiple study programs and universities in order to obtain more representative findings. Experimental or mixed-method research is also needed to test the effectiveness of learning models that integrate scientific and popular article analysis. In addition, lecturers should apply adaptive curriculum management, while universities should provide institutional support so that critical literacy development becomes part of sustainable academic policy.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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