Analysis of Elementary School Teachers' Readiness to Implement the National Assessment

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to assess the readiness of elementary school teachers in Boyolali Regency to implement the National Assessment (AN). Using a quantitative survey method with online questionnaires, data were collected from a sample determined by the Slovin formula and analyzed descriptively. Results show that 89% of teachers understand the AN well, 8% demonstrate deep comprehension, and 3% have limited understanding. Regarding readiness, 87% feel ready, 7% are ready, and 6% are not yet prepared. Overall, teachers in Boyolali show a satisfactory level of understanding and preparedness. However, a small group still needs further support. This study highlights the need for ongoing professional development to strengthen teacher competencies, particularly in response to changes in assessment policies. The findings provide valuable insights for policymakers and training providers in designing targeted interventions and offer a basis for further qualitative research on factors affecting teacher readiness.

Keywords: Indonesia, Learning Evaluation, National Assessment, Primary School Teachers, Teacher Readiness

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INTRODUCTION

In Indonesian education, the national evaluation of learning at the end of each level has changed quite a few times. This nationwide examination aims to identify educational issues and formulate better national education policies. Changes in the names of national exams include: State Examination, Full School Examination, National Final Stage Learning Evaluation, National Final Examination, and National Examination [1]. This exam is intended for all students in the final year of schooling, such as grades 6, 9, and 12.

In 2020, the government, through the Minister of Education and Culture, announced its intention to abolish the National Exam (*Ujian Nasional* or UN) and replace it with the National Assessment (*Asesmen Nasional* or AN) in 2021. The National Assessment program is a

comprehensive evaluation initiative that encompasses primary and secondary school levels, focusing on assessing and ensuring the quality of educational institutions [2]. The Ministry of Education and Culture anticipates this modification will comprehensively depict the educational process through assessment. Changes in national assessments have been implemented to modify education evaluation in Indonesia. This endeavor involves mapping and evaluating the education system regarding inputs, processes, and results. It does not merely entail the assessment of student learning outcomes, as previously employed in the UN [3]. The assessment is designed to evaluate not only students' learning outcomes but also their learning progress. The national assessment is not administered after the academic year but is conducted midway through the school year. Specifically, the assessment is administered in the fifth grade for the elementary level, the eighth grade for the junior high school, and the eleventh grade for the senior high school level [4]. The implementation policy is expected to encourage and provide opportunities for teachers and principals to improve the quality of learning at school in the following year.

The quality of education in the national assessment can be evaluated from three perspectives, including the Minimum Competency Assessment (*Asesmen Kompetensi Minimal* or AKM), which is utilized to assess students' literacy and numeracy competencies [5]. The character survey is an assessment that students will carry out to determine personal, social, and emotional learning outcomes based on the values of the pancas (five principles) that are integral to Islamic teachings, including faith in God Almighty, respect for diversity and tolerance of differences, independence, cooperation, critical thinking, and creativity [6]. The assessment of learning quality and school climate, which fosters learning in educational units, is conducted through a learning environment survey [7].

Implementing this new policy presents challenges, particularly for educators. Therefore, teachers need to be ready to face the National Assessment. Teachers play important roles and are responsible for the learning implementation process as facilitators, learning resources, mentors, and managers. According to Slameto [8], readiness is the state of being prepared to respond to a situation in a certain way. Bandura [9] added that readiness has three aspects: attitude, cognitive, and behavioral. Several factors influence teacher readiness: knowledge and understanding of AN objectives and mechanisms, professional competence to support AN-based learning, socialization and training, motivation and attitude toward policy changes, and resource availability to support AN implementation. These factors influence teachers' readiness to face the AN.

In light of the extant research concerning teacher preparedness in addressing AN in junior high school, a survey revealed that 12.5% of teachers are unaware of the components to be assessed in the AKM [10]. This finding suggests a persistent deficit in comprehension of the substance of the assessment. Teacher readiness in East Java junior high schools indicates that 75% of teachers demonstrate an understanding of the national assessment, while 25% lack this comprehension [3]. The study revealed that teachers' understanding varied according to location, experience, and access to AN training. A study [11] examined the extent to which teachers demonstrated readiness to undertake the AKM in the "ready" category. The analysis revealed that teachers were highly prepared to respond to the Character Survey and the Learning Environment Survey, falling within the "ready" category. [12] study revealed several noteworthy findings. Firstly, 33.3% of prospective teachers already possessed knowledge of AN. Secondly, 41.7% of teachers demonstrated their understanding of AN implementation. Thirdly, 29.2% of prospective teachers correctly identified the necessity of implementing AN. Finally, 62.5% of prospective teachers expressed their readiness to implement AN.

Nonetheless, most prior studies have centered on the intermediate education level, specifically on secondary school teachers. A comprehensive investigation into the

preparedness of primary school teachers, particularly in regions with distinct geographical and informational characteristics, such as Boyolali, has yet to be conducted. Nevertheless, the degree to which teachers at the elementary school level are prepared has a significant impact on the success of the implementation of the AN. This stage is foundational in determining the students' literacy and numeracy abilities.

In light of the above, the present study will address the existing lacuna in the comprehensive evaluation of the preparedness of elementary school teachers in Boyolali Regency. This study also incorporates a contextual analysis to assess the existing disparity in scientific knowledge and the readiness of primary school teachers about the national system.

METHOD

The present study employs a quantitative approach, characterized by a descriptive design. The quantitative method was selected because the data collected were numerical and were subsequently analyzed statistically. According to Arikunto [13], the research approach employed in quantitative research is characterized by a systematic and methodical progression from data collection, through data interpretation, and culminating in the presentation of data results. The survey method is employed in this study. A descriptive design was used to systematically describe the level of readiness of primary school teachers to implement the National Assessment without making generalizations to a broader population. This research was conducted in elementary schools across Boyolali Regency. This research was conducted in September 2022.

The population of this study comprised all elementary school teachers, including those employed in public and private schools, within Boyolali Regency. The total number of teachers included in this study was 5,038, according to data provided by BPS Kab. Boyolali. The sample size was determined using the Slovin formula $n=N/1+N(e)2$ with an error tolerance of 10%. The calculation revealed a sample of 98 elementary school teachers, who were selected at random.

The data utilized in this study are primary, having been collected by administering questionnaires to respondents. In this study, the researcher will employ a Likert scale. Each item on the instrument utilizes the Likert scale, which provides a gradation or variation of answers ranging from very positive to very negative. These responses can be quantitatively analyzed, with a value range of 4-1.

The questionnaire instrument was designed to measure two main variables. The first variable was the primary school teachers' readiness to face the National Assessment (independent variable). This variable included aspects of teacher knowledge, attitude, and skills. The second variable was the implementation of the National Assessment in primary schools (dependent variable). This variable included teachers' perception and implementation of the National Assessment. The questionnaire provided a range of response options, ranging from "very ready" to "very unready," allowing for a comprehensive assessment of the participants' levels of preparation. The data collection technique entailed the distribution of Google Form links containing questionnaires to respondents who were prepared to complete them. Before distribution, the instrument underwent rigorous validation and reliability testing, yielding results that exceeded the established r table threshold ($p < 0.01$).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study describe the degree to which primary school teachers are prepared to implement the AN. This assessment was collected through a questionnaire distributed using Google Forms to 98 primary school teachers spread throughout Boyolali Regency by random

sampling. Ninety-eight respondents were obtained from the Solvin sample formula derived from various sub-districts in the Boyolali district area. These sub-districts included Wonosegoro, Karanggede, Klego, Simo, Sambi, Andong, Juwangi, Ngemplak, Ampel, and Kemusu. The respondents were selected based on their willingness to complete the questionnaire. The teacher's comprehension can be seen in Figure 1.
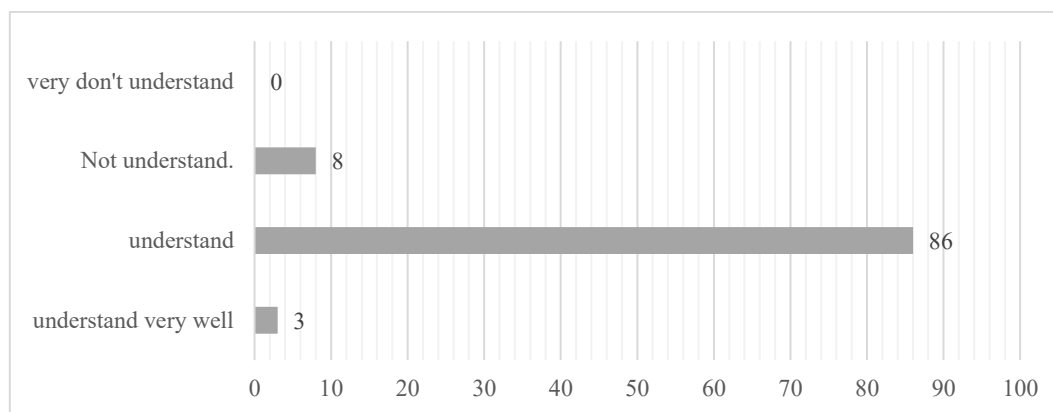
Figure 1. Teachers' Comprehension of AN

The data presented herein indicates that a significant proportion of the teaching faculty possesses a comprehensive understanding of the AN, with an estimated 89% of respondents demonstrating a firm grasp of the subject. A modest percentage of 8% of the teaching faculty exhibited a less-than-optimal understanding of the National Assessment, while a mere 3% of respondents revealed a complete absence of comprehension. The implementation of debriefing on the AKM to teachers has been demonstrated to result in enhanced understanding of the AN knowledge among educators [14]. Additionally, this debriefing has been observed to foster creative, cooperative, and independent attitudes among teachers. To assess the degree to which teachers are prepared to implement the AN program to evaluate the quality of each educational institution, teachers must possess a comprehensive understanding of the fundamental student learning outcomes. These qualifications are subdivided into Minimum Competency Assessment, Character Survey, and Learning Environment Survey. In this case, it is necessary to expand the scope of respondents based on school status or teaching experience level to obtain a more in-depth picture of readiness for school assessment.

The survey results assessed teacher knowledge of the aspects evaluated in the national assessment. It has been documented that 62% of teachers receive a score of 4, indicating that they demonstrate proficiency in all domains assessed by the AN, including the AKM, the Learning Environment Survey, and the Character Survey. Thirty percent of the surveyed teachers received a score of 3, indicating their responses did not fully align with the established criteria. The responses of these teachers included the AKM, psychomotor, and character surveys. However, it should be noted that psychomotor practices are not incorporated into the assessment components of the AN. A mere 4% of the surveyed teachers received a score of 3, indicating that their responses were deemed incomplete due to their selection of the AKM and character survey answers. A mere 4% of teachers selected the "Periodic Cognitive Diagnosis Assessment" option, a choice that does not align with the AN's assessment framework. This data suggests that a proportion of the sample that exceeds fifty percent demonstrates a comprehension of the assessment aspects of AN. The remaining individuals are not privy to the intricacies of the National Assessment's evaluation framework. Posit that the national assessment is conducted as a fundamental mapping of the quality of education in the field,

entailing the description of the conditions, processes, and learning outcomes at school [15]. The assessment instrument comprises three components: the AKM, which serves as a metric for evaluating students' cognitive learning outcomes in the domains of literacy (reading) and numeracy; the Character Survey, which functions as a metric for assessing emotional learning outcomes associated with the five principles of the Student Profile; and the Learning Environment Survey. Three components of the AN are analogous to Bandura's triadic reciprocal causation concept, which posits that there exists a relationship between three elements: the person, the behavior, and the environment [16].

In light of the pedagogues' cognisance of the entities implicated in the AN, it was ascertained that a proportion of 50% of pedagogues who attained a score of 4 demonstrated an accurate comprehension of the entities above. Thirty-six percent of the teaching sample provided responses that were not correct. 8% of the teachers received a score of 2, indicating an incorrect answer. A mere 8% of the surveyed teachers obtained a score of 1, the minimum attainable score. This percentage includes teachers who selected the answers of some fifth-grade students and all teachers. As demonstrated in the preceding explanation, it can be inferred that educators employed in elementary schools located across various sub-districts predominantly possess knowledge of the parties involved in the AN. This finding suggests a discrepancy between the understanding and readiness of teachers to implement the National Assessment. All school community members in the AN, including principals, teachers, and students, are involved. As indicated by prior research on the efficacy of implemented policies, it is imperative to engage target groups, including teachers, principals, and students, to ensure the successful implementation of the bridge-to-success initiative [17]. As indicated, the efficacy of the AN is contingent upon the contributions of teachers and students [18].

To achieve this objective, it is essential that elementary school teachers, as facilitators and assistants, understand the necessity of implementing the AN as a metric for evaluating the quality of education within their respective schools. As posited, the role of the teacher is multifaceted, encompassing functions such as instruction, facilitation, management, and guidance [19];[20]. Educators must possess the necessary skills and knowledge to implement the AN without encountering significant impediments. This study will also assess the extent of teachers' knowledge regarding the necessity of the AN as a benchmark for assessment and the quality of learning on a national scale. This indicates that 46% of respondents with a score of 4 selected the option with the most suitable rationale. A total of 29% of respondents who received a score of 3 indicated that the rationale for their choice was that AN is implemented as a national scale assessment to obtain mapping information in education, measuring student interest, and assessing the performance of school leaders. The response that received the second-highest score was the one that indicated a percentage of 20%. Among the respondents who selected this option, the provided reasons were incomplete. 5% of the respondents selected an incomplete reason as their response. A review of the results reveals that many elementary school teachers in Boyolali District remain unaware of the necessity. These obstacles impede the effective teaching process. The main obstacles are present in the implementation of the AN. The first set of barriers is technical and includes information technology infrastructure constraints, limited internet connections, and inadequate hardware [21]. The answer is unclear about whether students and teachers lack technical preparedness. By the findings of Rahim & Rusman [22], it is imperative for teachers, schools, learners, and the government to collaborate to surmount the technical and non-technical impediments that hinder the success of AN. These impediments include, but are not limited to, infrastructure updates, advanced training, and enhanced communication.

Elementary school teachers must be adequately prepared to confront the impending AN. The efficacy of the AN of Elementary Schools in Boyolali Regency is contingent upon the

adeptness of educators in their preparation. This preparation encompasses the alignment of the curriculum, the regular administration of practice questions to students, the execution of AN simulations, the provision of supplementary tutoring, and the facilitation of students' development. As posited by Kusumaningrum and Abduh [23], teacher readiness is not solely contingent on pedagogical expertise and knowledge; physical, mental, and emotional factors also influence it. This study examined the physical preparedness of teachers in Boyolali Regency before the implementation of the AN, as they were poised to confront this significant undertaking. The results obtained from the survey researchers are presented in Figure 2.
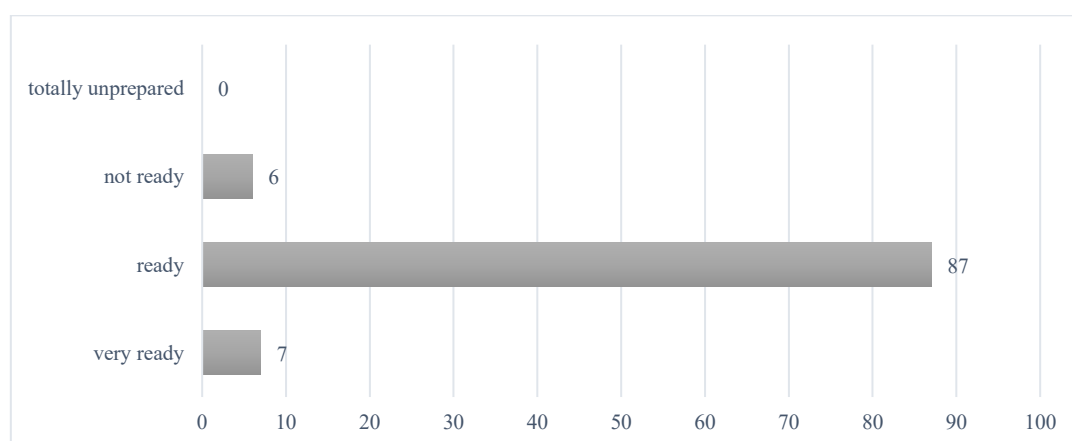

Figure 2. Teachers' Readiness of AN

The survey results indicate that most teachers are adequately prepared to implement the AN. Specifically, 86% of respondents stated they were ready, 7% indicated they were very prepared, 6% indicated they were not prepared, and no teacher said they were not prepared. Consequently, it can be posited that the degree of teachers' readiness in implementing the AN falls within the "ready" category. While many teachers indicated their preparedness to implement the National Assessment, others disagreed. This finding suggests a need for continued guidance and socialization for teachers in the Boyolali district regarding the National Assessment. As posited, teachers' readiness to implement AN is a response to the surrounding environment, seeking a positive transformation [24].

Furthermore, allocating sufficient time to prepare for the National Assessment is imperative. In this case, the researcher also inquired about the duration of teacher preparation time. The survey results obtained provide insight into this question. The data indicate that 43% of teachers reported that the preparation period for the AN is one to two months. A survey of 41% of teachers indicated that preparing for the AN requires more than two months. Eleven percent of teachers needed two to three weeks, while five percent required one month. The results of this study indicate that the time necessary to prepare for the implementation of the AN is contingent upon several factors, including student readiness, mental and emotional readiness, and parental involvement. As posited by Fitriya and Mastur [25], effective time management is imperative for national assessment readiness. This entails implementing eight hours of school learning, coordinating activities, additional lesson hours, and providing teachers with data on student development.

The results related to teacher preparation in meeting the needs of AN include the following: 49% of teachers can identify questions, follow the technical guidance program held, and intensify the literacy and numeracy movement program at school. A survey of 39% of teachers revealed that they possessed knowledge of AN, participated in the technical guidance

program, and demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of the purpose and benefits of implementing AN. Eleven percent of teachers know AN, the ability to identify questions, and the capacity to improve school infrastructure. Furthermore, a select group of teachers, constituting approximately 1% of the teaching population, has opted to augment the existing literacy and numeracy program within educational institutions to enhance the quality of instruction for students. A salient point imparted to students is the efficacy of reading and literacy activities in improving their academic performance and enjoyment of the activity [26].
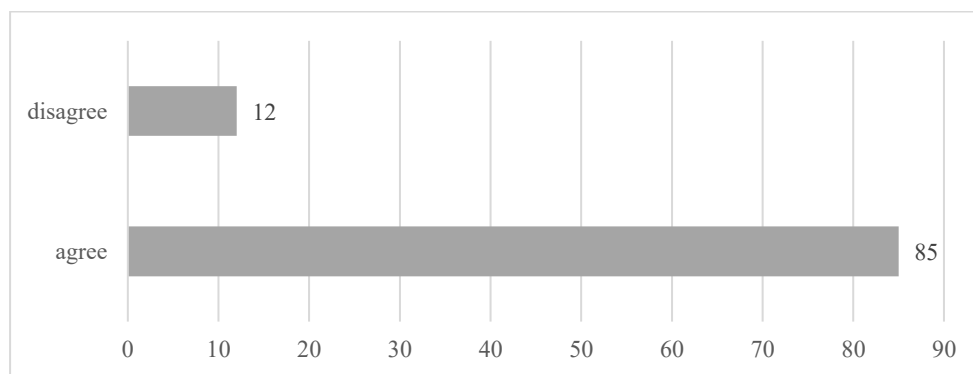
Figure 3. The AN policy is used as a national evaluation tool

The data presented herein indicate that most educators concur with the National Assessment policy, which serves as a national evaluation instrument instead of the national exam. Specifically, 85% of respondents agreed, while 12% expressed disagreement. The AN is not a new iteration of the UN, which is concerned with the final result, but rather the results of the evaluation [27]. This ensures that the implementation of the AN does not need to wait twenty years for improvements or changes.

The data presented herein suggest that primary school teachers in Boyolali District may lack a comprehensive understanding of the AN and may not be adequately prepared to participate. The findings of researchers in the field support this assertion. The government must implement a socialization program regarding the AN and regular technical guidance for teachers in the Boyolali district. This initiative is crucial to ensure educators' comprehension and preparedness for implementing the AN. By doing so, the government can facilitate the realization of its objectives to enhance the quality of education in the Boyolali district.

Consequently, a subset of teachers either lack understanding or demonstrate suboptimal readiness in terms of knowledge and implementation. Additionally, some respondents have yet to identify the components of AN in their entirety accurately, and they demonstrate reluctance in elucidating the significance of AN as a metric of educational quality.

CONCLUSION

As indicated by the literature review findings and existing conceptual framework, this study aims to determine the readiness level of elementary school teachers in Boyolali Regency to implement the AN. About their familiarity with the AN, 89% of the surveyed teachers exhibited a comprehension of the material, 8% demonstrated a high level of understanding, and 3% indicated a lack of familiarity with the subject matter. Concerning the question of preparedness, 87% of the surveyed teachers stated they were ready, 7% indicated they were very prepared, and 6% said they were not yet ready. The results of this study are expected to benefit stakeholders, namely the education office and schools, in designing programs such as socialization and training (workshops) for the AN. It is recommended that socialization and

training on the AN, character surveys, and learning environment surveys be strengthened for elementary school teachers. Subsequent research endeavors may explore additional factors that influence teacher preparedness, including the accessibility of educational resources and policy support at the local level. These results are expected to serve as a basis for the education office and schools in developing strategies to improve teacher capacity through more comprehensive socialization, training, and implementation assistance. The geographical scope of this study is limited to several districts within Boyolali Regency, and the data collection was conducted online, which may have resulted in an underrepresentation of certain groups due to access issues. Consequently, employing a mixed-methods approach for subsequent research endeavors is advised.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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