

AKMI: Initial Knowledge, Misconceptions, and Readiness of Madrasa Teachers

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to determine the initial knowledge and readiness of madrasa teachers in facing the implementation of Indonesian Madrasah Competency Assessment (AKMI). This research is an exploratory case study using the survey method. The research sample was 238 MI (Madrasah *Ibtidaiyah*) or Islamic Elementary School teachers in one district in West Java. The results showed that most MI teachers already knew AKMI, but there were still many misconceptions about it. One of the misconceptions about AKMI is that it is the teacher assessment to know students' abilities. In terms of readiness for implementation, the majority of MI teachers are in the stage of preparing themselves. This research has successfully revealed the general description of teachers' prior knowledge and readiness to face AKMI.

Keywords: AKMI, Assessment, Literacy.

1. INTRODUCTION

The literacy level of the people of a nation has a vertical relationship with the quality of the country [1]. The higher the literacy level of the people, the higher the quality of the nation [2]. Primary education aims to foster children's language, literacy, and numeracy learning [3]. Consequently, in preparing students for future challenges, schools must develop basic skills in reading, writing, arithmetic, a basic understanding of science, and other skills such as analysis and advanced problem solving [4].

The evaluation of the education system in the world that consistently and regularly measures student literacy is PISA (Program for International Student Assessment). PISA was initiated by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The focus of the PISA is the mastery of knowledge and skills needed to solve everyday life problems [5]. PISA places Indonesia's literacy score at the bottom level [6], [7], [8]. Studies have indicated the importance of reformation in education in Indonesia. One of the causes of the low PISA score is the incompatibility of the

assessment model used in classroom learning with the ones used in PISA [9].

To respond to the PISA's score, the Ministry of Education and Culture has carried out various movements, such as the school literacy movement and the national literacy movement [10], [11], [12], including the change of the national examination to a national assessment that adapts the PISA assessment model [13]. The Ministry of Religious Affairs has also made a similar program Indonesian Madrasah Competency Assessment (AKMI). AKMI is part of the REP-MEQR (Realizing Education's Promise-Madrasa Education Quality Reform) program which aims to improve the quality of madrasa education management and services. As a pilot project, AKMI was only attended by 50% of Madrasah *Ibtidaiyah* (henceforth MI) or Islamic Elementary School in Indonesia in the early stages. The success of the AKMI program depends on many factors, one of which is the literacy of stakeholders, practitioners, and program supporters in the field. One of them is a madrasa teacher. Therefore, research to reveal the teacher's initial knowledge and readiness to face AKMI is necessary. This paper will

answer three research questions: (1) What is the initial knowledge of madrasa teachers about AKMI? (2) What are the misconceptions of madrasa teachers related to the concept of AKMI? and (3) How is madrasa teacher readiness to face AKMI?

2. METHODS

This research was a pilot study to reveal the teacher’s response to the Ministry of Religious Affairs’ policy regarding AKMI. The method used is an exploratory case study. The selection of this method aims to explore the phenomenon as a point of interest of the researcher [14]. The instrument used is a questionnaire containing general open-ended questions. These general questions are intended to open the door for further examination of the observed phenomena [15]. The choice of the open-ended question method in surveys has advantages, including allowing individuals to respond to questions in their own words and express their opinions freely [16]. Open-ended questions can find responses that individuals give spontaneously and thus avoid bias that may arise from providing answers to individuals. Bias may occur in the case of closed questions [17]. As this study wants to reveal the knowledge possessed by respondents, the choice of open questions is more suitable than closed questions

because it minimizes the possibility that respondents will try to guess the correct answer and often produces more reliable and valid information [18]

AKMI is a new policy related to national assessment initiated by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. As a new policy, five stages must be passed: formulating the plan, making policy formulas, adopting policies, implementing procedures, and evaluating policies [19]. This research is intended to measure the process of policy adoption. Several essential things should be asked in policy research, including respondents’ level of knowledge and readiness in dealing with new policies. The questionnaire contains several items that reveal the level of respondents’ knowledge and readiness regarding AKMI and its implementation. The indicators and questions used in the research can be seen in Table 1. The questionnaires were distributed through the google form application, which was distributed in early September 2021.

Respondents in this study were 238 MI teachers in one district in West Java. The voluntary sampling technique was used. Voluntary sampling was a probability sampling design in which the final sample was selected from willing potential respondents [19]. The answers of each respondent were mapped in codes which were then interpreted and presented in a graph.

Table 1. Research Instruments

Indicators	Question
Explore the respondent’s initial knowledge about AKMI	The Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia will hold a National Assessment named AKMI (Indonesian Madrasah Competency Assessment). Did you know it already?
Exploring deeper understanding of respondents regarding the meaning of AKMI	What do you know about AKMI?
Knowing the preparation of respondents regarding the implementation of AKMI	What preparations have you made as a teacher to face AKMI?
Knowing the obstacles experienced by respondents related to the preparation for the implementation of AKMI	What obstacles did you encounter in preparing for AKMI?
Knowing the type of literacy that is considered difficult by the respondent and the reason	AKMI will measure four literacies in students (reading, numeracy, science, and social-culture). Which literacy do you think is the most difficult? Why is that?

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1 Teacher’s Initial Knowledge Regarding AKMI

The earliest data the researchers want to know is teachers’ knowledge (information obtained) regarding AKMI. The results of data processing related to this initial knowledge are presented in Figure 1.

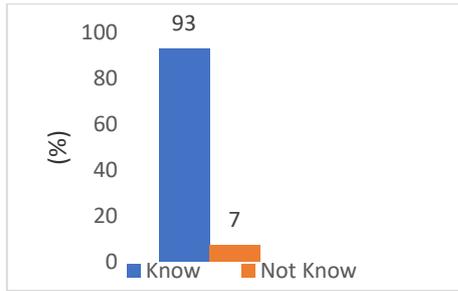


Figure 1. Percentage of madrasa teacher criteria regarding their knowledge of AKMI

Figure 1 shows that most respondents (93%) already know, or at least heard, the term AKMI. Only 7% of the respondents do not know anything about AKMI. This figure shows that teachers have received information on the implementation of AKMI by the Ministry of Religious Affairs at lower levels. Previous research on teachers' understanding of the National Assessment shows that 75% of teachers understand the national assessment, and 25% do not understand the national assessment [20].

As a new program, the dissemination of information carried out by the Ministry of Religious Affairs through socialization has been effective. The importance of program socialization for teachers has been discussed. Submission and receipt of information related to AKMI will be much more effective if carried out through top-down and bottom-up coordination strategies [21]. The ministry can share the up-to-date information to the teachers through the regional office, or the data can start by asking questions from the teacher at the school.

The number of respondents who do not know or have not heard of the term AKMI is 7 percent. Their nescience is understandable, considering that AKMI is a new program and has never been implemented. As an initial

stage, AKMI will only be implemented at the MI level, both public and private madrasas. Madrasas entitled to take part in the AKMI are madrasas that already have an operational permit, have a valid NPSN (national school number), and are registered in the EMIS (Education Management Information System) database.

3.2 The concept of AKMI according to Madrasah Teachers

In addition to knowing the respondents' prior knowledge, this study also wanted to reveal their understanding of AKMI. Figure 2 shows the typology of respondents' answers regarding the AKMI concept.

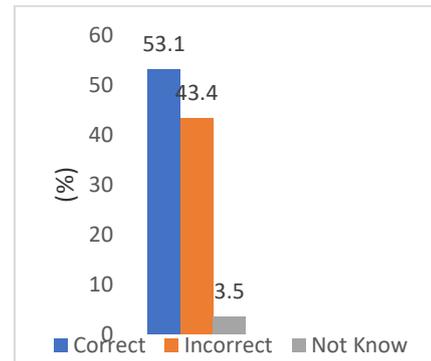


Figure 2. The concept of AKMI according to madrasa teachers

Based on Figure 2, most respondents (53.1%) gave correct answers, 43.4% answered incorrectly (misconceptions), and the remaining 3.5% did not know. The mapping of the respondents' misconceptions is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Misconceptions About AKMI

No	Understanding of AKMI	Amount (%)
1	Test for Computer Proficiency	5.9
2	An assessment conducted by Madrasah	11.7
3	Computer Training	5.9
4	Practice Exam Using Computer	5.9
5	Teacher and Student Competency Assessment	5.9
6	National Minimum Competency Assessment	5.9
7	Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Competency Assessment	11.7
8	Science and Culture Assessment	5.9
9	Student Motivation Forum	5.9
10	Exam	5.9
11	MI Proficiency Test	11.7
12	Teacher Assessment to Know Students' Ability	11.7
13	Madrasa Student Intelligence and Agility Competition	5.9

Misconceptions can occur due to a lack of information or lack of communication. Modern research shows that an organization’s way downward, upward, and lateral communication patterns determine positive and negative outcomes for the organization and its members [22]. One alternative to breaking the deadlock of communication and the lack of information is applying the Model of Collaborative Information Behavior [23]. At the practical level, efforts to increase teachers’ understanding regarding AKMI and National Assessments can be carried out through a debriefing program in the form of workshops involving universities [24].

3.3 Teacher Readiness

The data of MI teachers’ readiness in dealing with AKMI is shown in Figure 3.

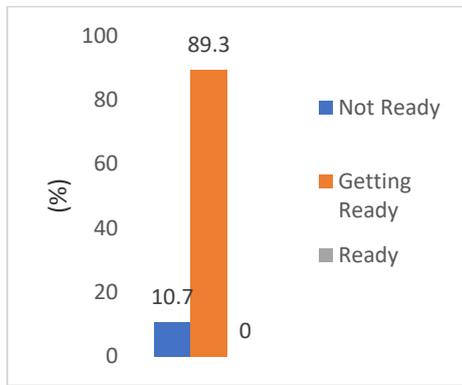


Figure 3. Teacher Readiness to Face AKMI

In general, teachers’ readiness in dealing with AKMI can be categorized as low. This is shown by only 10,7% of the respondents stated that they were ready to implement AKMI. In contrast, 89,3% of the respondents are making preparations, such as conducting simulations for students, conducting socialization to parents, providing guidance on the use of IT, planning programs, forming committees, completing data on the system, and preparing tools that they want to use.

The respondents who stated that they were not ready to face AKMI generally encountered several obstacles, such as 1) the unavailability of facilities and costs for procurement; 2) the inadequate internet signal in the madrasa environment; 3) incomplete information about AKMI received; 4) students’ low level of willingness to read; 5) students’ incompetence on IT usage; 5) short time for preparation; 6) the lack of coordination between the principal and teachers.

Readiness and understanding of AKMI must be possessed by all teachers, not only teachers whose students are AKMI participants (fifth-grade teachers). In theory, the results obtained by each student on the AKMI test represent the literacy process possessed by students during their learning activities from grades 1 to

5. However, the results show that not all teachers who can answer literacy questions can arrange literacy-based questions well, despite their more than a decade of teaching experience and being certified teachers [25].

3.4 Literacy Difficulty Level according to Teacher

Figure 4 shows the responses of madrasa teachers regarding their views regarding the level of difficulty of the type of literacy being tested.

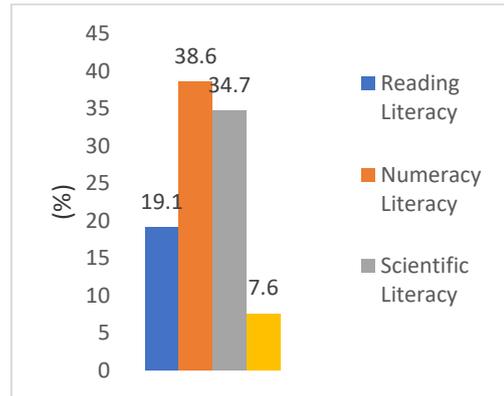


Figure 4. The level of difficulty of the type of literacy according to the madrasah teacher

According to Figure 4, numerical literacy is considered the most difficult one. In this study, numeracy literacy is defined as applying number concepts and arithmetic operation skills in daily life and interpreting quantitative information in the student’s environment [26], [27]. Numerical literacy significantly contributes to problem-solving abilities [28]. This revelation of the perceived difficulty of numerical literacy is similar and strengthens the previous research [29].

In addition to numerical literacy, another literacy that is considered difficult is scientific literacy. Scientific literacy is the ability to use knowledge in science, identify questions, and draw conclusions based on evidence to understand and make decisions regarding nature and its changes. Scientific literacy enables people to use scientific principles and processes to make personal decisions and participate in discussions about scientific issues that affect society [30], [27]. Previous research shows that students who have scientific literacy problems and teachers who act as central components in the learning process also perform less satisfactorily.

4. CONCLUSION

This research has succeeded in describing the initial knowledge, misconceptions, and readiness of madrasa teachers in facing the implementation of AKMI. The majority of madrasa teachers have received information about the implementation of AKMI in madrasas,

although there are still misconceptions about it. Massive socialization in various forums, as well as planned and sustainable programs, are needed.

In the aspect of readiness, most madrasa teachers are improving themselves in preparing all the needs related to AKMI, both in fulfilling facilities and infrastructure such as procuring computers, simulating students, and including teacher readiness in it. In the teacher's view, the types of literacy that are still considered difficult are numeracy and scientific literacy. Various learning approaches to improve students' numerical and scientific literacy are needed.

The findings of this study need to be responded to by the Ministry of Religious Affairs to create a follow-up program for teachers at the elementary school level to obtain comprehensive information about AKMI, both in the format of continuous training specifically and integrated into existing training programs.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors conceived and designed this study. All authors contributed to the process of revising the manuscript, and in the end, all authors have approved the final version of this manuscript.

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