

SHOULD THE NATIONAL EXAM (UN) BE HELD AGAIN?

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ABSTRACT

The discussion about bringing back the National Examination in Indonesia is getting more important since the country started using ways to assess students. The National Examination used to be a deal in measuring how well students were doing in school and comparing the quality of education in different areas. This article wants to look at whether the National Examination should come by thinking about how it can help make education better help students become better people and improve education policies. The study uses an approach by looking at what other people have written and thinking about how education is assessed in Indonesia. The results show that the National Examination is still useful for checking the quality of education and finding out which schools and areas need help. Also taking the exam can help students learn to be disciplined, responsible and ready for challenges. Like Peter Drucker said, "What gets measured gets improved," which means that checking how things are going is important for making education. However there were some problems with the National Examination system like too much pressure on students and not all schools having the same resources. So the study says that the National Examination can still be useful if it is changed to be fairer to help students think critically and to work with the assessments that schools are already using. This way the exam can be a tool for checking the quality of education and helping to make education better, in Indonesia.

Keywords: *National Examination, educational assessment, standardization, educational quality, education policy, school resources.*

A. Introduction

Educational assessment is very important in checking how well teaching and learning are working. Black and Wiliam (1998) said that assessment is not about measuring what students have learned but also about making education better. Bloom (1956) also said that we need to evaluate students in a way to see if they have achieved their learning goals. So assessment is a part of

education systems all around the world.

In Indonesia one big way to assess students was through the National Examination (UN). For a time the UN was used to measure students' academic achievement and check the quality of education in different areas. The government used it to get data on learning outcomes and find out where there were differences in education between schools and provinces. As

Drucker (1954) said, "What gets measured gets improved." This shows how evaluation is important for making organizations, including schools.

There have been big changes in education policy recently. The Indonesian government stopped the National Examination. Introduced new assessment systems that focus more on what students can do and evaluations at the school level. This change is part of an effort to make education more flexible and centered on students. However some people do not agree with stopping the UN.

Some people think that standardized testing is still needed to keep education standards high and make sure schools are accountable. They believe that national assessments give us information about how well students are doing and let us compare results from different areas. They also think that standardized tests help students develop discipline, responsibility and get ready for challenges.

Others think that the old UN system put much pressure on students and did not consider that some schools have more resources than others. They say that not all schools have access to good facilities, infrastructure

and teachers which can affect how well students do on exams. So many experts think we need a complete evaluation system that looks at many things not just test scores.

Given these views it is important to think again about whether we should bring back the National Examination in Indonesia. This article will discuss the importance of having the UN but also with big changes, in how it is done. Specifically it will look at the role of standardizing education, developing character and improving evaluation systems to support good education and fairness.

B. Research Method

This study employs a qualitative approach with a library research design to find out about the National Examination in Indonesia. We looked at what other people have written about this topic. This kind of research is good for understanding issues in education. Two researchers, Creswell and Poth (2018) said that this type of research helps us understand things from points of view. We chose this approach to see if bringing back the National Examination in Indonesia is an idea and how it can help make education better.

We got our information from things that other people have already written, like articles, books and government documents. We especially looked at what people have said about the National Examination in Indonesia and how we can make education better. We also looked at what other people have found out about tests like the National Examination. We wanted to know what experts think about these kinds of tests. So we looked at what they have written. This helped us understand how the National Examination can help make education better in Indonesia.

We collected our information by looking at what other people have written. We found articles, books and documents that talked about the National Examination and education. We picked the ones that were relevant to our topic. Then we organized what we found into categories. These categories included things like making education helping students become good people and making sure everyone has the same chance to learn.

We looked at what we found and tried to make sense of it. Two researchers, Braun and Clarke (2021)

that this is a way to find patterns in what people have written. We looked for things that people agreed and disagreed on about the National Examination. We did this in four steps. First we read what other people had written and marked points. Then we found patterns in what they said. Next we compared what different people thought. Finally we drew conclusions about what the National Examination can do to help education in Indonesia.

To make sure our findings are believable we looked at different sources. This included what experts have written, government documents and other research. This helped us get a view of the issue.

C. Findings and Discussion

1. Standardization and Quality Monitoring

The literature shows that the National Examination (UN) is a useful tool for checking how well students are doing in school. It helps make sure that all students, no matter where they go to school are held to the same standards. In the context of language assessment, standardized large-scale assessments provide valuable data that help the government monitor the

overall quality and proficiency of English education across diverse regions (Popham, 2017). This information can help governments find out where students are struggling and make decisions about how to improve education.

Research on assessment says that tests like the UN give policymakers important information about how well students are learning. This information can help governments find out where students are struggling and make decisions about how to improve education. Without a test it would be hard to compare how well students are doing in different schools and areas.

Schools, teachers and administrators use test results to see if their teaching methods are working. So having a test like the UN can help make sure that schools are accountable for teaching their students well. However it's essential to make sure that the test doesn't become too focused on getting good scores.

2. Student Character Development and Academic Readiness

Another important finding is that the National Examination can help students develop life skills, not just academic skills. Preparing for a test like the UN requires students to be disciplined, responsible and able to manage their time well.

This aligns with the broader view of educational evaluation, where assessment should not only measure past achievements but also actively stimulate student development, resilience, and learning readiness to meet higher educational goals (Bloom, 1956; Black & Wiliam, 1998). Getting ready for the test can be a valuable experience for students. It helps them learn to handle pressure, stay committed to their goals, and develop resilience. These are skills for success in college and in their future careers.

The test should not just be seen as a way to measure achievement but also as a chance for students to learn and grow. With the support from teachers and schools students can benefit from the experience and develop into capable and confident individuals. However it's crucial to avoid putting much pressure on students.

3. Challenges and the Need for Assessment Reform

Even though the National Examination has its benefits there were also some problems with the way it was implemented in the past. One of the concerns was that it created unequal opportunities for students from different schools. Students from schools with resources often had a harder time preparing for the test.

The test also created a lot of pressure on students, which could be overwhelming. Critics argue that the high-stakes nature of the national examination often led to a “teaching to the test” phenomenon, which narrowed the English curriculum down to grammar memorization and test-taking strategies rather than developing students’ communicative skills (Au, 2007). Consequently, this practice reduces the opportunities for students to experience meaningful language learning.

These concerns don't mean that the National Examination should be abolished entirely. Instead they highlight the need to reform the assessment system. A reformed test should focus on thinking, problem-solving and higher-level thinking skills,

rather than just memorization. It should also be integrated with school-based assessments to give a complete picture of student achievement.

DISCUSSION

The findings show that the debate about the National Examination is really about balancing two goals: making sure that all students are held to the same standards and making sure that the test is fair and doesn't create too much pressure on students.

The evidence suggests that the best approach is not to get rid of the test but to redesign it. A reformed National Examination could provide information about student achievement while also being fair and inclusive. Such a system would balance accountability, fairness and educational quality.

Therefore the discussion supports the argument that the National Examination's still relevant, in Indonesia but it needs to be updated to meet the changing needs of education. It should be designed to be more inclusive, flexible and student-centred.

D. Conclusion

The discussion on bringing back the National Examination (UN) is still very important in education today. From what we have read the National Examination has some benefits, especially in helping to standardize education check how well students are learning and give useful information for making policies. As a test that is taken by students over the country the UN can give us comparable data that can help the government find out where education is not fair and improve it.

The National Examination can also help students develop skills like being disciplined, responsible and ready for future challenges. These skills are really important for students to succeed in education and their future careers. So the value of the UN is not about measuring how well students are doing in school.

However we also found some problems with how the National Examination was done. Some of these problems include education, too much pressure on students and too much focus on test scores. This means that if we bring back the UN we need to make some changes. We should not go back to how it was done but make

a new system that is fair balanced and kind to students.

In the end this study says that the National Examination is still important and should be part of Indonesias education assessment.. We need to make some big improvements, like testing critical thinking and problem-solving skills not making the test too stressful and including assessments that are done at school. With these changes the National Examination can help make sure education is quality and fair, for all students and help them have meaningful learning experiences.

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