



## Review of the National Examination Policy in the Learning Evaluation Paradigm and its Implications for Madrasah Students

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### ABSTRACT

The National Examination (UN) policy, which has been implemented in Indonesia for a long time, has a number of weaknesses in terms of educational science. The UN is not "a test fits for all" because it is not multifunctional, not suitable and not a test that fits all. The implementation of the UN at the basic education level such as in Madrasah is not appropriate and is not in line with the concept of the latest learning evaluation. As an educational institution that emphasizes its students on Islamic manners and morals in studying, Madrasah actually does not need to evaluate the learning of its students by using UN questions. Therefore, the researcher tried to examine the implications of the UN policy for Madrasahs by using the literature review method in the perspective of the concept of renewable learning evaluation. The results of the study show that the UN policy is unfair, inappropriate and imposed and does not have an adequate theoretical basis, especially based on the concept of learning evaluation. The UN relies more on paper & pencil tests even though the written test is only a small part of the evaluation aspect of students. Even more so in assessing primary level students in madrasah educational institutions that are characterized by religion.

**Keywords:** *Learning Evaluation, Madrasah, National Exam*

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## INTRODUCTION

### Context of Study

The National Exam (UN), which was originally "the only tool used to measure student success in learning at school", has recently become somewhat different (Asadzandi, 2020). The new formula for student graduation is "combining UN scores with school grades (Blas dkk., 2019). School grades are a combination of school exam scores plus report cards for semesters 1-4. In addition, the combined value of school grades and UN is set at a minimum of 5.5. With this new formula, the repeat UN is eliminated because the current requirements or formula are considered more relaxed, namely a maximum of two subjects with a score of 4, and a minimum of 4 subjects with a minimum

score of 4.25" (Meissner, 2019). In addition to determining whether or not students pass the UN, it is also intended to standardize education in Indonesia. Standardization is determined by the minimum number of passes for each subject tested.

Some time ago (Shan dkk., 2020), when the UN was implemented in schools, the level of anxiety increased, so there was concern that students and even schools might not graduate because they did not get the standard score. This fact is very common, because before the merging of scores as stated above, student graduation was based solely on the results of the UN score (Spitz dkk., 2019). After that, despite the addition of school exam scores, the authority to determine graduation was still the UN score (which amounted to 60%), so the anxiety of not graduating raged not only in the minds of students but also parents and schools.

The change in policy that the UN no longer serves as the only main data for determining student graduation, the implementation of the UN should not haunt students and related parties (Gopalan & Brady, 2020). However, tensions still color the implementation of the UN because there is still a dominance of UN results as a determinant of student graduation. The new policy that "includes school grades as part of determining graduation is not without loopholes to be circumvented by those who only pursue achievement in graduating school students" (Patricia Aguilera-Hermida, 2020). School exam scores or student report cards can be manipulated by schools who hope that many students will pass, so that it is considered a school achievement. The manipulated scores may be different from the UN results. If so, then there will be an imbalance between school results and UN results that should not occur.

The government's intention to implement the UN is actually very good, but it turns out that the concept and implementation have raised various problems. In terms of learning concepts and theories, educational evaluation experts reveal that the UN *paper & pencil test* is not everything, because the results cannot measure the overall learning outcomes of each student. UN results are limited to knowing certain domains, especially cognitive aspects (Iskhakova dkk., 2022). This is because "the UN is not a multifunctional test that *fits all* or not *a test fits for all*". Every time the UN is approaching, there is a feeling of anxiety among students, parents, teachers and school principals, even regional heads who want their regions to be successful with many students passing (De Omena dkk., 2019). UN results are considered as regional progress in the field of education. UN results are considered to be an achievement and pride of a region (Halder dkk., 2020). As a result, the Head of the Region participated in "arranging tactics" so that schools in the region successfully graduated many students, which is a necessity with the learning evaluation system through the implementation of the UN.

We all realize that the UN is "the embodiment of the National Education System Law (UU-SPN) number 20 of 2003, especially article 57 paragraph 1 which reads: Evaluation is carried out in the context of **controlling the quality of** education nationally " (Abdi dkk., 2019). Then in paragraph 2: "Evaluation is carried out on **students**, institutions, and educational programs on formal pathways". Furthermore, article 58 paragraph 1 (Pessarrodona dkk., 2019): "**Evaluation of student learning outcomes** is

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carried out **by educators**". If we look specifically at the bolded words, it will be clear that the education policy makers who triggered the implementation of the UN idea are inconsistent and simplify the understanding of the concept of evaluating student learning outcomes.

The government does need to control the quality of education and also evaluate students. However, article 58 paragraph 1 states that "evaluation of students' learning outcomes is carried out by educators" who better understand the condition of students over the years, let alone to determine whether or not students graduate (Ellili & Nobanee, 2023). Although paragraph 2 of article 58 states that "evaluation of students is carried out by independent institutions on a regular basis", the paragraph in this article does not mention/determine student graduation but rather to assess the achievement of national education standards.

### **Focus and Method of Study**

The above presentation is enough to state that the UN has been carried out so far instead of eroding the concept of school autonomy itself (Hofmeister dkk., 2019), which is always voiced by policy makers (Murphy dkk., 2019). The UN policy does not accommodate the latest theories and concepts about educational assessment in a number of educational science literature and other related disciplines.

The academic anxiety(*hypothesis problem*) that emerges is that the UN assessment system is not in line or has not been equal and congruent with the latest educational science and concepts that continue to develop. Various questions and statements of an academic and non-academic nature emerged over the UN policy (Mensi dkk., 2020). Some of them are as follows:

1. UN is not an appropriate tool to determine graduation and control the quality of education nationally? UN materials are not representative enough in measuring the aspects of learning to be assessed (Al-Rahmi dkk., 2019). UN results are not considered suitable in assessing the success of achieving ideal educational goals.
2. The UN policy/materials do not meet the rules, concepts, and latest educational science.
3. Who actually has the right & obligation to assess student learning outcomes?
4. Does the UN policy fulfill the concept and foundation of education/pedagogy?
5. When and how should student learning assessment be conducted?
6. What are the fundamental implications of the UN policy for madrasah development?
7. What should be the procedure and concept of student learning assessment in madrasahs that have a religious vision and mission (characterized by Islam) that is somewhat different and even more comprehensive (kaafah) than public schools?
8. And a series of other questions / statements related to the impact / implications of the UN policy, especially for the development of Islamic education or madrasah.

The series of statements and critical questions above are factual problems, concerns, crisis situations in the world of education in Indonesia that can indicate academic anxiety over the UN policy (Emre Erkoc, 2019). The focus of this paper is to examine

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scientifically and praxis or descriptively and prescriptively the issues surrounding the UN policy.

The researcher tries to examine the implications of the UN policy for Madrasahs by using the library research method with the perspective of the concept of renewable learning evaluation and document study and ethical data collection from the researcher himself (Maskur dkk., 2019). The discussion relies on the theoretical basis and reveals the findings of the study of UN policy and implementation, both in terms of background, nature and desired spirit as well as the implications of a policy, especially for the development of madrasah (Hanic & Smolo, 2023). The final part of this critical review is completed with conclusions and recommendations.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Literature Review**

#### **Theoretical Foundation**

If we review the educational literature (Billah, 2021), especially the theoretical orientation of educational activities and decisions, then we will know that there has been a very rapid and non-linear change in the concept of education (Mamun dkk., 2021). The fundamental change in question which is still an interesting discourse of education experts is from behaviorism to constructivism.

"Behavioristic theory strongly believes in the power of the environment to condition human behavior, while constructivism on the contrary, believes that individuals have the power and potential to change themselves". The task of education is to explore the power and potential with all the power and provide opportunities to develop (Degeng, 2000).

The theoretical foundation of educational activities and decisions in Indonesia is based more on behaviorism (Al Zaabi dkk., 2019). The UN policy issued by the government is a manifestation of this theoretical basis (Khan & Badjie, 2022). The UN by the government is not only intended to set the boundaries/criteria for student graduation but also in order to control the quality of learning.

The behavioristic paradigm or perspective is the beginning of the development of educational theory (science) with experts such as Edward Thorndike, BF Skinner, Ivan Pavlov. They use a number of animals in their research objects to study the behavior of these animals to be analyzed and finally considered to be "translated" into the repertoire of human behavior (Abasimel, 2023). This view lasted for quite a long time until another perspective emerged, which was cognitiveistic and (finally) became constructivistic.

#### **1. Renewal of Learning Evaluation**

##### **a). Paradigm/theory shift from behaviorism to constructivism**

If the behavioristic learning concept is nothing but conditioning students to acquire the desired new behavior, then the constructivistic concept links the learning gains that students will achieve with their previous learning experiences. Students in this context will organize or construct new behaviors based on previous experiences (Amin dkk., 2022). From this perspective (Scammell dkk., 2020), humans are placed as unique individuals who have deep characteristics that are certainly different from animals that are used as

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objects of research as occurs in behavioristic studies (Alzahrani, 2019). From here then comes a new orientation in understanding aspects of education including in the context of learning evaluation (Degeng, 1989, 1998, 2000).

b). New Directions in Conducting Learning Evaluation

The social sciences are interrelated with one another. The study of "science, especially in the discipline of learning psychology / educational science and educational technology" is developing tremendously, so that the world of education is required to adjust to these changes (Sali & Marasigan, 2020). The impact is inevitable changes in the human paradigm of humans, the paradigm of education and how to learn and changes in the pattern of relationships between various aspects / components of learning (Engzell dkk., 2021). One of the reforms concerns the direction of learning evaluation.

c). Change from behavioristic to cognitive theory to constructivism

- a. Change of emphasis from learning outcomes to process.
  - b. The main purpose of education is to prepare a person's mental mind that allows him to learn. In this case, the learning process is the goal of education, not just the learning outcomes. Process activities are prioritized.
  - c. Change from passive response to concrete meaning making.
  - d. This means that students' active responses are needed, especially in constructing concrete meanings that are tailored to the characteristics and uniqueness of each student.
  - e. Change from evaluation of separate skills to integrated skills.
  - f. In this understanding, evaluation materials should cover all aspects of education and learning, not only low to high level cognitive (concrete - abstract) but also attitudes (affection) and motor skills (psychomotor) as a whole.
  - g. Focus on "metacognition i.e. self-management and learning skills and conative skills i.e. motivation and other areas that influence learning processes & outcomes".
  - h. *Soft skills* and emotional intelligence become the emphasis of metacognition so that students can develop their mastery of what they learn.
- d). Shift in understanding of "people who know and are skilled" - and "isolated accumulation of facts and skills to the use of knowledge".

Student understanding must be able to be realized and embodied in a synchronous manner or in popular language it is often called "the union of words in action".

e). "Change from paper-and-pencil evaluation to authentic evaluation"

- a. "Evaluation that is relevant and meaningful" to students
  - b. "Evaluation that uses problems with a clear context"
  - c. "Evaluation that emphasizes complex skills"
  - d. "Evaluation that does not demand one right answer" (divergent)
  - e. "Evaluation based on predetermined & agreed upon standards"
  - f. "Evaluation that takes into account the pace and growth of individual students".
- f). Portfolio: "from momentary evaluation to continuous evaluation":
- a. "As a basis for evaluation by the teacher"
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- b. "As a basis for evaluation by students"
  - c. "As a basis for evaluation by parents"
  - d. "Change from single aspect evaluation to multi-dimensional aspect evaluation"
  - e. "Recognition that students have a wide range of abilities and talents"
  - f. "Recognition that students' abilities can be developed"
  - g. "Opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate their diverse abilities"
  - h. "Change of emphasis from individual evaluation to group evaluation"

The above presentation which puts forward a renewable educational paradigm (constructivistic) shows that the evaluation or assessment of students for their learning achievements "is not only based on learning outcomes but also the learning process".

The preparation of uniform tests (standardized tests) such as the UN contains weaknesses and raises various issues including validity (suitability of material), reliability (accuracy and consistency), bias, ethical issues, not authentic, not integrated (Slavin, 1994, pp. 551-554). The uniformity of test materials is very contrary to the conditions of schools and non-educational problems such as socio-economic communities that are not exactly the same in each region (Abdi dkk., 2019). The various variables that surround educational issues are very likely to cause injustice and uneven resources used in efforts to optimize educational outcomes. Therefore, the "imposition" of uniform tests to be applied to a number of schools inevitably leads to disparities.

#### **A. Tests as a Learning Outcome Assessment Tool**

Tests can indeed be used to make measurements (*assessment*) of students. However, tests are not the only tool for measuring student learning achievement. Especially if the meaning of evaluation or assessment is reduced to a measurement tool that is only a written test. Tests seem to be connoted as the main part of evaluation. This is contrary and not in line with the concept of assessment both in terms of learning outcomes and processes that have been developed by educational experts, as revealed by Nana Sudjana (2006) in his book "Assessment of Teaching and Learning Process Results". Written tests can at least be divided into description tests, objective tests. As long as only this type of test is used, we will also find it difficult to know exactly the students' mastery of the subject matter that covers the whole (6 levels) of cognitive aspects revealed by the learning psychologist, Robert M. Gagne. Especially if the results of this test are expected to reach the depth of the three domains of Bloom's taxonomy of education, namely, the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains. Indeed, the UN material is far from that expectation.

*Assessment* or measurement of students' learning processes and outcomes requires a comprehensive approach. Not only through written tests but also oral tests such as interviews, dialogs, discussions and the like. In addition, observation, observation based on actual facts including demonstrating skills from the knowledge possessed is also very important and needed if we want a complete assessment. In this context, the UN does not organize its test building based on the above measurement concepts. This means that the UN materials have not been comprehensively and fully organized.

#### **a). Purpose and Usefulness of Learning Assessment**

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Assessment in education aims and is useful at least for "(1) teaching (2) learning outcomes (3) diagnosis and improvement efforts" learning (4) guidance and counseling (5) competency mapping (6) leveling (7) curriculum (8) learning design; and (9) assessment of learning and education providers.

The concept of assessment that will be revealed is more focused on student learning outcomes. In this regard, the organization of *pre-tests* and *formative tests* in the context of benchmark assessment - which will be discussed later - plays a very important role.

**b). Key definitions**

- 1) Measurement is an attempt to find out the state of something according to what it is, which is usually expressed in numbers."
- 2) Assessment is giving meaning to measurement results by making comparisons.

**c). Approach to Assessment**

- 1) Norm-referenced Assessment (PAN), which is "comparing the learning outcomes of students against the learning outcomes of other students in one class" (group).
- 2) Benchmark Assessment (PAP) is an assessment that compares student learning outcomes against a predetermined benchmark. The PAP approach is oriented towards predetermined success criteria or "passing limits". The criteria are definite or absolute, therefore assessments that use this approach are often called absolute assessments. However, the application of this PAP requires:
  1. "thorough" identification of learning (teaching) objectives and appropriate formulation of these objectives;
  2. "implementation of coaching and *enrichment* programs"
  3. "adequate management support and facilities"

**d). Three Stages of Benchmark Assessment Test**

- a. *Pre-test*; used at the beginning of the training "to obtain information about students' initial abilities and the test results can be used as input" for the review of teaching strategies, teaching materials, instructional objectives and so on.
- b. *Embedded test*; is a test conducted during the training/learning process, the use is to determine the level of knowledge and skills possessed from each subject matter or topic per topic, often referred to as coaching tests (*formative tests*).  
*Post-test*; is a comprehensive final test (test) (*summative tests*) of the entire training material presented, then "information about these learning outcomes can be used to determine the achievement index" of learners (students), determine pass and not pass and determine the award of certificates.

The three stages of testing above are related to the type of student learning behavior and test forms such as descriptions (*essays*), multiple choice, matching, short answer, completion and checklists. The relationship between the type of behavior and the type of test can be described as follows:

Table 1: Relationship between types of test items and student behavior

Types of behavior in learning objectives	Essay	Multiple choice	Matchmaking	Short answer	Complement	Check list
Mention	V	V	V			
Identify		V	V	V	V	
Formulate	V	V		V		
Sorting		V	V			
Solve	V	V		V	V	
Construct	V			V	V	V
Operate						V
Select (attitude)	V		V			V

v = is the behavior that can be obtained from the results of applying these tests

Table 1: Relationship of Test Items to Student Behavior

(adopted from test material, Technical Training, PT HM Sampoerna, tbk: Aries Musnandar 1997-1999).

#### **A. Learning Outcomes as the Object of Research.**

Books and references on education related to learning outcomes cannot be separated from the three domains in Bloom's taxonomy below,

1. Cognitive domain

This domain is concerned with intellectual skills and knowledge.

2. Affective domain or attitude

3. This domain pays attention to "the development of feelings, attitudes, values and emotions"

4. Psychomotor Domain

This domain is related to "manipulative activities and motor skills".

The three domains mentioned above are an inseparable part as an object of research on the learning behavior of learners (students).

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Social Excesses of the UN Policy**

This study begins with the implementation of the UN in 2011 which was enacted by education policy makers. The implementation of the UN "at the SMA / MA / SMK level was carried out in a non-stop marathon from April 18 to 21 (4 days), SMP / MTs April 25-28 (4 days), and SD / MI May 10-12 (3 days)". Of course, the duration of the UN implementation for only 3-4 days is felt to be unfair to students, because the efforts of students who have taken 3 and 6 years of learning, are determined by the assessment system for 3-4 days. Because the UN results are used as the standard for student



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graduation. The UN seems to be a "fixed price" for students and those who pass will be declared "smart" children while those who do not pass will be labeled as "stupid" children.

Whereas every child has different potential and learning speed. Uniformity of assessment from one particular point of view denies the diversity and uniqueness of each child (constructivistic theory). Therefore, from this point of view, the UN should and should be able to become a more objective evaluator of learning processes and outcomes for students as a whole and as a whole.

The National Exam has also led to two extreme phenomena in recent years. First, the students who pass will be trapped in a sense of euphoria that is expressed in the act of doodling uniforms, as well as convoys in the streets. Secondly, students who do not pass will be labeled stupid by friends, school and family. Thus, there will be deep resentment and disappointment in the formal education process through school.

The phenomenon that appears is that "every time the UN is approaching, tension and anxiety haunt many parties not only for students, parents, teachers and principals but also regional heads. This is because the UN results are also considered as a result of regional progress in the field of education. So that the UN seems to be a prestige, dignity, regional achievement in the current era of autonomy".

"In the past years, it was shown how the implementation of the UN has made the situation tense and uncomfortable. Tension, anxiety haunts many parties not only for learners (students) parents, teachers and principals but also regional heads. So, it is not only the Principal who is heard instructing the teachers to make maximum efforts to justify all means but the Regional Head also regulates the principal so that his school succeeds in graduating as many students as possible".

Nowadays, there should be less anxiety because the portion of the graduation determination is no longer based on the results of UN scores alone but combines the results of school exams and student report cards. "This fact is very common in previous years which only relied on school graduation from the results of UN scores".

"Logically, by making the UN no longer the main selection tool that determines student graduation, the implementation of the UN should no longer be so haunting". This policy may actually reduce the tension of many parties, but it is not without its weaknesses. "School marking for students may be done by schools who want their students to pass as much as possible so that it is considered a school achievement".

There are at least three weaknesses of the implementation of the UN, namely "violating human rights and legal defects and contrary to the essence of education science which means it is not professional". These weaknesses have emerged without significant efforts to change them.

### **UN Implementation Violates Human Rights & Legal Flaws**

Indeed, back in 2005 a number of "parents, students, teachers, and education observers who realized that the UN caused anxiety and helplessness had complained to the district court. They claimed that the implementation of the UN violated children's human rights. The Central Jakarta District Court granted the lawsuit. The government appealed to the Jakarta High Court and finally filed an appeal to the Supreme Court against the

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decision of the Jakarta High Court which upheld the decision of the Central Jakarta District Court. The cassation was rejected by the Supreme Court in September 2009. So it is very clear that the UN violates human rights, especially the rights of children. Ironically, the ruler who should have paid attention to this legal decision instead set a bad precedent in the world of education by re-enforcing the UN policy."

However, "the National Education authority continued to organise the UN, even as it seemed to heighten the tension of anxiety with various efforts such as involving the police as supervisors and high-ranking officials and heads of regional education offices signing a deed of honesty. This promise to be honest is evidence of the education officials' lack of understanding of the Supreme Court decision". The core or essence of the UN issue according to the law is actually in the violation of children's human rights.

Based on the "Supreme Court decision, it is stated that the UN is a practice that violates children's human rights, namely security". Therefore, "the Ministry of National Education should not prevent cheating by deploying the police and asking for promises from education organisers, but immediately abolish the UN to eliminate the anxiety, fear and helplessness not only felt by students, but also teachers and principals".

### **Distortion of Education Theory**

The impression is that "the UN is considered by the management of education in this country to be everything in seeing the achievements of students and schools". In fact, "student success has been reduced by the dominance of UN results". The UN questions are done at the central level while schools are not involved in preparing the questions. Furthermore, "it turns out that the UN material pays more attention to the cognitive aspect only and that is only limited to measuring the low and medium level cognitive domains". Meanwhile, measurements for the affective and psychomotor domains are still far from expectations. So that the UN does not show indicators of a comprehensive assessment (multifunctional) of student success from the cognitive, affective and psychomotor sides".

Meanwhile, "the affective side of students, for example, which is the embodiment of values and attitudes with / through social interaction (with others) is not properly represented in the UN". Similarly, "the affective function of students cannot only be measured from UN questions that are cognitive in nature.

The UN, which has been followed by school / madrasa students, turns out to be a small part of educational assessment, which is only to measure student learning outcomes, and even then it is limited. cannot be used for other things, for example, for new admissions to universities because the UN is not a multifunctional test or for all or *a test fits for all*".

According to the rules and "educational science references, tests such as the UN are part of educational assessment. The target of assessment should not only refer to learning outcomes but also the education programme (curriculum) and the teaching and learning process (Nana Sudjana 2006). Therefore, judging the achievement of a school only by the number of students passing the UN is very premature, absurd or scientifically (science) education is less accountable ".

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In the educational paradigm, it is stated that "assessment does not only mean whether or not the educational objectives are achieved but whether the objectives are important for students and how to achieve them. Assessment can be carried out not only limited to test tools but also non-test assessment tools. The new policy in student graduation as explained at the beginning of this paper, which includes school grades as part of the student graduation requirements, is a small step forward. However, the dominance of UN scores is still evident in the new formula. In fact, as has been stated, the UN cannot currently be used as a multifunctional test tool".

In the "National Education System Law No. 20 of 2003 Article 58 Paragraph (1) there is an article that regulates the evaluation of student learning outcomes, but not the final assessment of the completion of the education level or not a kind of UN". In Law no 20 of 2003 in the National Education System (SPN) it is stated that "evaluation of student learning outcomes is **carried out by educators** to monitor the process, progress, and improvement of student learning outcomes on an ongoing basis".

From this, it is clear that the implementation of the UN has deviated from the SPN Law, which was made by the government itself. One of these deviations is that "the UN is considered by the government as an evaluation of student learning outcomes. While the UN questions are made at the central level not by educators (teachers) of these students. In this context alone, the UN policy makers have violated the law that they themselves have made with the people's representatives" or DPR.

It has been a long time "the issue of exam materials such as the UN which focuses on the cognitive domain has been going on in the country. High school final exams and college entrance exams still dwell on materials that foster the concept of *drilling* among students in facing exams, namely by training and repeating answers to questions. Therefore, it is not surprising if there are findings that reveal that the biggest cost of parents or the community in their children's education is not in schools but in tutoring institutions (LBB) that teach how to quickly solve exam questions through the concept of *drilling*".

Learning activities at tutoring centres or LBBs are nothing more than activities to obtain the highest test scores and are momentary. "In fact, according to educational theory, this *drilling* concept is the lowest level of cognitive insight in the learning process and student learning outcomes". The chaotic "national education policy has made the people who use education services restless and finally the public spending on LBB is so large, while on the other hand LBB has succeeded in utilising the situation of public unrest and making it a business opportunity". Finally, "there is a phenomenon and practices of commercialisation of education by LBB that thrives in this country".

Therefore, education as described above is based on memorisation "answer keys are not on understanding, let alone application, analysis and evaluation". The implementation of the National Examination including university entrance tests is generally also based on memorisation. The "answer key" mentality is ingrained in Indonesian culture, which is indirectly allowed in the Indonesian Education Law. The emphasis on the final results of the State Examination becomes the measure of one's success rather than the process that

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gives students the space to innovate and be creative. As a result, many students chase the answer key just to get a pass. This issue becomes more complicated when many teachers are also involved in finding answer keys and giving them to students just for the sake of prestige and social status of the school.

There were deviations in the following aspects after the implementation of the UN: pedagogical, juridical, social and psychological, and economic. (1) First, the pedagogical aspect. Education basically develops three domains of learners: affective or attitude, cognitive or knowledge, and psychomotor or skill. But the UN only emphasises one aspect of ability, namely the cognitive/knowledge domain, while the other two domains are not tested as determinants of graduation.

"We often find cheating that occurs in the implementation of the national exam itself, both by the test takers and the teachers. From this case, it has been proven that achieving results is prioritised over paying attention to the attitudes and skills of the students. If this continues, the output of education will not be as expected".

(2) From a juridical perspective, it is known that a number of articles contained in the National Education System Law No 20 of 2003 have been violated, for example article 35 paragraph 1 which states that, "National education standards consist of standards of content, process, graduate competencies, education personnel, facilities and infrastructure, management, financing, and educational assessment, which must be improved in a planned and periodic manner." This means that standardisation is required for many components of education, not just the competence of graduates, and they are interrelated. Yet we know that other standards have not been carried out properly and optimally.

The National Examination only measures knowledge ability and the determination of education standards is determined unilaterally by the government. Of course, this cannot be used as a reference for all students in Indonesia. Schools in rural areas should have different standards from schools in the city centre because the infrastructure and access are different, which will affect the output of each school. Therefore, article 35 paragraph 1 above should be seen as an effort or process that has not been completed because it is related to various constraints and factual situations.

The education system is thus required to pay more attention to the implementation of the education process, such as improving and equalising the quality of teachers, improving learning facilities, libraries and laboratories. The learning process must be able to motivate students to learn independently and not only depend on the teacher as a source of knowledge, but students must be motivated to develop their knowledge through various reading sources. One thing that is quite important to consider is changing the mindset of students that learning is not just about passing and getting good grades, but the learning process must be able to shape attitudes for a better life".

(3) Social and psychological aspects. "Some psychologists say that people's motivation to learn comes from their desire to find out, to understand, and to develop themselves. So the motivation that arises in students to learn does not come from the grades they get at the end of the learning process, but arises from their enjoyment and activeness during the learning process(*internal motivation*).

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In addition, *external motivation* also comes into play, students can be motivated through *rewards*, but will not necessarily be motivated through sanctions (*punishment*). With the national exam, the motivation to learn is "forced" to appear only to pursue the graduation standards that have been made. Motivation that is not genuine".

(4) "Economic aspect. Economically, the implementation of the UN is clearly a waste of money. The implementation of the UN has been costly and ineffective. The high cost of the UN has been tainted with bad behaviour such as cheating that occurs in the field, so that the funds that have been spent are not comparable to the targets that have been set".

It turns out that cheating in the field has occurred repeatedly even though prevention efforts continue to be made. "It is not only the examinees who cheat, but also the teachers who take part. Teachers who want all their students to pass the national exam make any effort to help pass, including cheating".

Cheating during the UN has surfaced due to the fact that unscrupulous individuals in schools who are supposed to be in charge of overseeing the UN are involved in such disgraceful practices as leaking UN questions, circulating SMS-SMS containing UN answers and so on. If this is "not addressed immediately, then the *output* of the education system in Indonesia will not develop and it is impossible to give birth to future generations who are intellectually and attitudinally intelligent".

When the improvement of the education system and process has been carried out, including by "developing the quality of teachers and distributing educational facilities evenly throughout the country, then the government can demand the quality of education through the benchmark of UN results.

In the UN standard operational guidelines (POS) it is stated that "the purpose of the National Examination (UN) is to assess the learning outcomes of students in an effort to improve the quality of education". Furthermore, it can be argued that the "Education Law No 23 Year 2003" implies the need to improve the quality of education evenly.

However, because the current condition is still quite wide educational inequality between regions, the implementation of standardisation through the implementation of the UN is unfair and seems to want to take shortcuts in equalising the quality of education. In fact, a shortcut policy without going through an *evidence-based information* model can make a policy fail and is not impossible to mislead (Education Policy by H.A.R Tilaar and Nugroho, 2009: pages 173-180)". Moreover, the implementation of formal education in schools and madrasahs is fostered by two different ministries. In the context of the UN, which is applied to all schools and madrasahs, only the Ministry of National Education is entrusted with the preparation of UN materials and policies.

### **Implications of the UN Policy for Madrasah Development**

#### **a). Political, social and cultural issues**

In the context of political policy, it can be stated that the implementation of education in Indonesia is regulated through the National Education System Law (SPN Law) which also recognises the existence of Islamic education such as madrasah and pesantren. However, the disclosure of madrasahs in the law is *ala kadar* or does not have

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meaningful recognition as a major component of national education. The government is more concerned with educational institutions or public schools under the control of the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud) in improving the quality of schools and the amount of budget funds. "In fact, according to SPN Law no 20 of 2003, madrasahs have the same position and role as other educational institutions (schools). With this fact, often when discussing school development, the Islamic education system (madrasah) is not discussed by policy makers and even tends to be neglected or neglected *community*".

Public schools are supervised by the Ministry of Education and Culture, while madrasahs are supervised by the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA). Meanwhile, in terms of the implementation of the UN prepared by the Ministry of Education and Culture, madrasahs are required to follow the UN policy and the Ministry of Religious Affairs is not given the authority to do so, especially regarding subjects that have been determined by the Ministry of Education and Culture. It is recognised that madrasahs are unique educational institutions with religious characteristics, unlike public schools. The nature and spirit that underlies the learning process in madrasahs should not conflict with *Islamic* values. Islamic teachings recommend to prosper the world by realising good works that have high wisdom and lesson values and always strive to improve the quality of spiritual, intellectual and social life: QS. An Nahl: 125. Thus, education is an important part of improving these three aspects.

أَدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجِدِّ لَهُمْ بِالَّتِي  
هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ  
بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ

"Call people to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a good way. Verily, your Lord is the One who knows better who has strayed from His path and He is the One who knows better those who are guided." (An Nahl- 125)

The meaning contained in the verse above is an affirmation to maintain cultural values, words and subtle ways, so as not to offend the feelings, culture or customs of others. Even if you have to argue, it must still be done in the best way, so that harmony is maintained.

By referring to the understanding of the verse above, it is clear that Islamic education through schools, especially madrasahs, is expected to produce people who are empowered and "useful not only for themselves but also for the surrounding environment". This meaning seems to be more or less "captured" by the authors of the SPN Law No. 20 of 2003 that education seeks to realise "the potential of students to have religious spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and skills needed for themselves, society, nation and state".



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Even in the next article (article 2), it is stated that national education functions to "develop the ability and shape the character of students and the dignified civilisation of the nation". If the emphasis of our education is on the process, then the issue of character education or ethics may not be as prominent as it is today.

On the other hand, madrasah as an educational institution characterised by religion offers an alternative solution for the formation of students' character through the acculturation of Islamic values. Unfortunately, politically and socioculturally, the existence of madrassas cannot be separated from the hand of government policies that are not (less) committed to exploring universal religious values in the world of education.

b). Issues of Competency Development of Madrasah Graduates

In realising the purpose and function of education above, it is necessary to understand the right educational paradigm so that the nation's expectations can be achieved. In the context of educational evaluation, the theoretical basis that is more in line with the ideals contained in the SPN Law is actually through a constructivistic approach rather than behaviourism, which is currently strongly embedded in the views of education administrators and policies in this country. The behaviouristic approach only makes the existence of students as objects rather than subjects. As a result, the development of graduate competencies that can be carried out is still limited to stimulus - response, uniformity and result-oriented approaches.

If we refer to the constructivistic paradigm that presents a new direction in the renewal of learning evaluation, then the implementation of the UN policy as it is today is not on target.

This is because the UN only measures a small part of student learning behaviour from a number of educational objectives that have been standardised through the laws and constitutions of the State. Moreover, for Islamic educational institutions such as madrasahs that prioritise *Islamic* values as a whole and comprehensive (kaafah) covering all three domains of Bloom's taxonomy and higher-level cognitive areas and based on *akhlakul karimah*.

Considering that madrasah is an educational institution with religious characteristics, it is fitting that the competence of madrasah graduates has more advantages than public schools. The reality still shows otherwise, the competence of graduates is still below public schools. Not only *hard skills* (academic) but also *soft skills* such as achievement motivation, initiative, creativity, self-confidence and communication skills need to be improved. Many madrasah graduates drop out of school.

UN-style competency measurement is not appropriate for shaping the personal character of madrasah graduates who are kaffah. An evaluation model that takes into account all the potential of students is needed. Developing the competence of graduates can only be achieved if the new direction in evaluating learning is carried out by following the correct and appropriate theoretical principles.

c). Madrasah Teacher Competency Development Issues

The expertise of a "teacher inside and outside the classroom in realising the potential of students is needed". Through managerial and pedagogic skills, teachers will be able to

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provide constructive inspiration for students in interpreting the learning process. Meanwhile, "professional competence refers to the teacher's ability to master learning materials. Teachers must have a good knowledge of the subject being taught, follow a professional code of ethics, maintain and develop their professional skills".

Furthermore, "Government Regulation No. 16/2007 on Teacher Competency Standards explains that the competencies required by teachers are divided into four categories, namely pedagogic competence, personality competence, professional competence, and social competence. These four types of competence are used as the basis for developing the education system for education personnel. Various teacher professional development programmes have so far paid more attention to pedagogic and professional competencies (mastery of teaching methods and materials). Whereas personality competence and social competence are domains of emotional competence which based on the results of research (Goleman 1998) have been proven to contribute 80% of the success of performance / work" or *achieved* performance.

The mastery of teachers and madrasah heads of the educational process as an important part towards achieving optimal student competency development needs to be continuously improved. Believing that each student has diverse potential, different interests, varied experiences and distinctive characteristics makes the learning process very dynamic. Evaluation of students is done comprehensively, not partially as in the UN results. As an Islamic educational institution with religious characteristics, madrasah needs to prioritise the concept of *kaafah* in achieving educational goals in accordance with Islamic values and the SPN Law.

## CONCLUSION

Educational evaluation is an assessment of education that is directed not only at predetermined educational objectives, but also at the learning process that is comprehensive and intact (*kaffah*) covering aspects of cognition, affection and motor skills. "Given the breadth of objectives and objects of assessment, the tools used in assessment also vary, not only in the form of tests as in the national exam (UN) but also non-test assessment tools".

The UN policy can measure some aspects of student learning and can be used to determine the level of mastery of student material within certain limits. The concept of the UN focuses on drilling, recalling and memorisation, the material of which is embodied in the form of *paper and pencil tests*.

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