

A critical analysis of Indonesia's 2013 national curriculum: Tensions between global and local concerns

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Abstract

This paper critically examines Indonesia's 2013 national curriculum, implemented in 2019. The most significant change is the mandated use of formative assessment, which we argue is an example of policy borrowing, a trend also seen in many other countries globally. We argue that this policy has been adopted due to global and regional pressure on Indonesia to improve its education system. Alongside this, the 2013 curriculum has a strong emphasis on student attitudes, thereby promoting Indonesian national interests. Taking a holistic approach to our analysis, we follow Priestley et al.'s (2012) conceptual framing of sites of curriculum and draw on a wide range of data including policy texts, existing studies, media texts and teacher voice, to illustrate inconsistencies in the way formative assessment has been interpreted through the policy-making process. Our analysis also highlights tensions between formative assessment and the Indonesian education system and cultural context. As we exemplify, curriculum making is a complex process involving many stakeholders; teachers are not mere enactors of policy and should not be viewed as the source of the 'problem' when issues occur. Our study will be of interest to others in examining the trend of diffused policy borrowing in non-western settings.

KEYWORDS

character education, curriculum, formative assessment, Indonesia, policy borrowing, policy making

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this article is to critically examine Indonesia's 2013 curriculum. Education reform has been a regular feature of Indonesian policy since its independence in 1945, with the eleventh reform of its national curriculum occurring in 2013 (Mukminin et al., 2019). The 2013 curriculum replaces the 2006 curriculum and was piloted in some schools and regions before full implementation in all schools in Indonesia in the academic year 2019/2020 (Ministry of Education and Culture [MOEC], 2015).

In line with Lingard's (2021) views of curriculum, we see the 2013 curriculum as simultaneously an expression and response to globalisation as well as a reflection of national interests. The most significant change introduced is the mandated use of formative assessment, a trend also seen in many other neighbouring countries in the region, and internationally. As this article will discuss, this is an example of policy borrowing and is in response to concerns over Indonesia's poor positioning in international education studies such as PISA. Results in the most recent PISA survey show, for example, that out of 79 countries, Indonesia was ranked 74th in reading, 73rd in mathematics, and 71st in science, lagging behind neighbouring countries such as Malaysia, Thailand, Brunei Darussalam and Singapore (OECD, 2019). Given that Indonesia is predicted to be the fourth largest economy in the world by 2050 (PwC, 2017), there is also international pressure on Indonesia to improve the quality of its education system as a way of enhancing its future economic prospects (Breuer & Kinda, 2018; Pratiwi, 2019). OECD/ADB (2015) has stated that to realise its potential as a possible global power in the future, Indonesia needs to invest in human capital development, rather than relying on its immense natural resources and its large population of young people, with those under 25 years of age accounting for 43% of its 250 million population (OECD/ADB, 2015). The Indonesian Government has attempted to respond to these external pressures with a 'transformation of the education sector' (MOEC, 2013b; p. 2), mandating the inclusion of formative assessment practices in the 2013 curriculum (World Bank, 2020). This decision also responds to regional pressure, e.g., the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation, Innovation and Technology (SEAMEO INNOTECH, 2015), noted 'the conscious effort to rethink and effect a paradigm shift' in the assessment reforms in its 10-member countries including Indonesia (p. 34). As Pham and Pham (2021) state, over the last two decades, Asian countries have been strongly encouraged to adopt more student-centred pedagogies, which are seen as 'best practice' and as a way of improving the quality of an education system and student achievement.

Alongside this, through the 2013 curriculum, Indonesian national interests, deeply rooted in religious and moral values, are strongly promoted. As our analysis demonstrates, the conflicting demands of these two key changes in the new curriculum have resulted in confusing policy making and challenges for teachers in implementing the new curriculum (Baak et al., 2020). As Maguire et al. (2013, p. 332) note, there has been more focus in the literature on evaluating the effectiveness of policy implementation, rather than on understanding the ways in which teachers 'actually deal with the multiple, and sometimes opaque and contradictory demands' of policy (Maguire et al., 2013, p. 322).

This article also adds to the body of literature on policy borrowing and implementation of western policies and practices in non-western contexts. Our analysis highlights the poor conceptualisation and implementation of formative assessment in the new curriculum and the tensions with the Indonesian education system and cultural context. In this article, we follow Priestley et al.'s (2021, p. 1) holistic approach in our analysis by examining 'sites of curriculum'. We see 'curriculum work' as a social activity and one that involves interactive and dynamic 'processes of interpretation, mediation, negotiation and translation' across multiple sites within the education system (Priestley et al., 2021, p. 1). By taking this approach we identify conflicting interpretations of the goals of the new curriculum during the policy-making

process and see teachers as active participants in curriculum making rather than as mere enforcers of policy.

POLICY BORROWING AND POLICY DIFFUSION

We see the pressure that Indonesia faces from supra-national organisations, e.g., SEAMEO, and supra-international organisations, e.g., OECD, World Bank, to improve its education system through the adoption of so-called globalised standards of 'best practice' such as formative assessment as an example of policy borrowing (Jakobi, 2012; Lingard, 2021; Steiner-Khamsi, 2012). In the Indonesian context, rather than borrowing policy from another country, as is sometimes the case (e.g., Yan and Brown (2021) claim that Hong Kong's policy on formative assessment was borrowed from the UK), it is not possible to trace the trajectory of Indonesia's reform. Steiner-Khamsi (2006) and Jakobi (2012) describe how this kind of policy diffusion can occur when a country is a late adopter of a reform movement. Formative assessment is an example of a 'travelling reform' (Steiner-Khamsi, 2012, p. 3), widely adopted across the world (Berry, 2011; Yan & Brown, 2021), becoming 'everyone's and nobody's reform simultaneously' (Steiner-Khamsi, 2016, p. 386).

Steiner-Khamsi (2012, p. 12) notes how 'the emergence of new regional and international educational spaces' means that agreements to align a country's policies with the larger educational collective(s) to which they belong are both 'prescriptive and coercive.' The literature has called for more research on curriculum reform within local policy contexts to understand and scrutinise how policy makers interpret and implement borrowed policy, and how this works alongside local interests (Jakobi, 2012; Steiner-Khamsi, 2012, 2016).

As Steiner-Khamsi (2016) argues, a key concern about the impact of diffused policy borrowing is that globalised solutions are created before problems at the local level have been analysed and clearly understood, and therefore the solution adopted may not align with local realities and needs. The literature on policy borrowing warns against the temptation of importing pedagogy cross-nationally because of the vast differences across educational and political systems, societies, and cultures (Alexander, 2012; Ashton, 2016, 2018; Kamens, 2013; Raffe, 2011; Riley & Torrance, 2003). Studies on implementing formative assessment have, for example, highlighted the challenges teachers face in adapting their practice in contexts where high-stakes exams and teacher-centred practices are dominant and deeply rooted within the culture (Al-Wassia et al., 2015; Berry, 2011; Yan & Brown, 2021). Change or transformation in pedagogy takes substantial time (Phillips & Ochs, 2003; Yan & Brown, 2021). Yan and Brown (2021, p.1), in reference to Hong Kong's assessment for learning reform, argue that true change requires a paradigm shift which can only happen through 'gradual implementation' that takes the reality of the local context into account.

Attempts to arrive at a 'quick fix' without careful consideration and analysis of the needs of the local context can result in incoherence or confusion (Crossley, 2016; Phillips & Ochs, 2003). Confusion can also arise when key stakeholders tasked with drafting and/or implementing local policy guidelines are far removed from discussions and decisions around policy selection (Carney, 2012; Jakobi, 2012). In such cases, there can be contradictions or tensions between policy making and implementation which undermine its effectiveness (Yan & Brown, 2021). For example, Carney (2012, p. 346) notes how in China attempts at implementing a learner-centred policy have had the reverse effect and have actually 'intensified processes of rote learning, exam preparation and teacher authoritarianism'.

A large number of stakeholders, each with their own priorities and concerns, contribute to the development and interpretation of curriculum, and as our review illustrates, this is particularly evident in cases of policy borrowing. For this reason, we draw on Priestley et al.'s (2021) conceptual framing of sites of curriculum to guide our study. Priestley et al. (2021) refer to

curriculum work as activities taking place at multiple layers including supra (international), macro (national policy), meso (policy guidelines and support resources), micro (school level practices) and nano (classroom practices and interactions). Reinforcing the complexity and dynamism of curriculum making, these activities are seen as non-linear and interactive. As part of this, activities are understood to be 'messy' with the 'inevitability of interpretation, mediation and translation as curriculum making occurs' (Priestley et al., 2021, p. 12). We consider this a particularly suitable conceptual framework for analysing Indonesia's 2013 curriculum as we are interested in examining the dynamic processes of policy making rather than viewing teachers as mere enactors of a static curriculum policy document. Through an analysis of curriculum activity at the different layers of Priestley et al.'s (2021) sites of curriculum, we are able to present a holistic and critical examination of the 2013 curriculum and to identify areas of conflict and tension across curriculum activities, and the way in which curriculum goals are interpreted and mediated by different stakeholders within and across activities.

INDONESIAN CONTEXT

Historical context

Religious and moral values have been deeply embedded in the Indonesian education system since the 1945 Constitution ("UUD," n.d.). For example, article 31 of the Constitution states:

The Government organises and implements a national education system, to be regulated by laws that aim at enhancing religious and pious feelings as well as moral excellence with a view to upgrading national life (3).

All legislation and policy regarding education in Indonesia must be in accordance with and support the Constitution, as well as the Pancasila, which is Indonesia's official foundational philosophy, introduced in 1945. The first principle of the Pancasila is believing in one God, recognising the importance of strong religious values in Indonesian society. Alongside a focus on religious values, having a *morally excellent* character is an explicitly stated goal in article 31 of the Constitution ("UUD," n.d.).

Whilst Indonesia embraces the concepts of inclusivity and plurality and is not a religious state under the regulation of one faith (Formen & Nuttal, 2014; Nahrowi, 2006), Islam is the majority religion, representing nearly 90% of the population. The stated aim of education, in both the Constitution and the National Education Act (2003), to enhance religious and pious feelings [Iman dan Taqwa] and moral excellence [Akhlaq mulia], is based on Islamic teaching (Formen & Nuttal, 2014).

Due to this unique historical context, education policy in Indonesia places a strong emphasis on having a *morally excellent* character. The 2013 curriculum reinforces and strengthens this focus and represents an important shift from the previous 2006 curriculum. For example, the 2013 curriculum introduces four core competencies: spiritual and social attitudes, knowledge and skills (MOEC, 2013a). In the 2006 curriculum, spiritual and social attitudes were the domain of religious and civics subjects only. Whilst the 2013 curriculum continues to mandate the teaching of attitudes within the religious and civics subjects only, they are now to be assessed in *all* subjects. This is a significant change as now teachers across all subjects are required to assess the attitudes of the students in their classrooms. The dominant role of attitudes is also reinforced in the 2013 curriculum, where it is stipulated

that to progress to the next grade, and to graduate from school, a good score on the attitude competencies is required (MOEC, 2018).

One reason for the increased focus on attitudes in the 2013 curriculum is the public perception that the previous curriculum put too much emphasis on cognitive aspects to the detriment of *character* aspects (MOEC, 2013b). *Moral degradation*, as it is commonly referred to, has dominated recent discussions on educational problems in public and media discourse. For example, Kurniasih et al. (2018) report that when education stakeholders were asked about the challenges facing education in Indonesia, they emphasised societal issues such as corruption, drug use, premarital sex, teen pregnancy, and violence within schools. They also note that these aspects received more prominence in the media than concerns about academic achievement and results, with items such as *the Urgency of Moral Education* (Fudhul, 2019) and *Teachers' being Physically Confronted is a Sign of Moral Degradation* (Puspita, 2018).

Moral issues in contemporary Indonesia are perceived as deriving from the West and the so-called importation of foreign culture which is seen as an unfortunate consequence of globalisation (Parker & Nilan, 2013). According to Harding (2008), the term *the West* is widely used in Indonesia to represent publicly held perceptions of a liberal attitude towards sex outside of marriage. Perceptions of societal change in Indonesia have caused something of a moral panic (Harding, 2008). This is also reflected in articles published on an official Government website. One article, for example, quotes a current Minister as stating, 'this behaviour [free sex] is a western culture that is contrary to the eastern values and norms adhered to by the Indonesian people' (Novrizaldi, 2020), whilst another claims that globalisation has caused *free sex* and sees this as a part of Western culture which does not fit with Indonesian values (Apriliana, 2016). The current president of Indonesia, Joko Widodo, has stated that character education should be at the heart and soul of the Indonesian education system to build the character of Indonesian people so that the influence of foreign culture can be filtered ('*Adada*', 2019; Aji, 2017). A key aim of the 2013 curriculum is therefore to revive and strengthen local culture (Parker & Nilan, 2013).

An increased focus on formative assessment

In Indonesia, the 2013 curriculum represents a dramatic shift from the 2006 curriculum where a narrower range of assessment techniques was specified (MOEC, 2007). The Government claimed that the focus of the 2006 curriculum was largely on the assessment of learning, and therefore a stated goal of the new curriculum is to prioritise the use of formative assessment (MOEC, 2017). As such, the 2013 curriculum introduces a range of new formative assessment techniques such as teacher journals and observations, self-assessment, peer-assessment, project-based assessment and portfolios (MOEC, 2017). In this article, we take a broad definition of formative assessment in line with the literature and see assessment as formative when the data or evidence generated from assessment activities is used to improve future teaching and learning (Black & Wiliam, 1998, 2009; Kluger & DeNisi, 1996).

In Indonesia, the area of formative assessment remains largely unexplored (Defianty, 2018). The small number of studies conducted on the 2013 curriculum have predominantly focused on teachers' understanding and implementation of formative assessment. Studies have highlighted concerns around assessment literacy, suggesting that teachers lack both a conceptual and practical understanding of formative assessment (e.g., Arrafii, 2020; Defianty, 2018; Widiastuti & Saukah, 2017). It was also found that where teachers have a partial understanding of formative assessment, this is not reflected in their teaching where more traditional practices are still prevalent (Arrafii, 2021; Azis, 2015; Widiastuti et al., 2020). For example, Arrafii (2020) claims that attempts to implement formative assessment have typically been procedural and contrived,

with teachers continuing to rely on traditional teaching strategies such as drills and rote learning, whilst Widiastuti et al. (2020) found that teachers did not know how to provide feedback to support students in their learning, and simply retaught concepts using the same teaching materials or assigned additional homework when students did not understand a concept.

The continued dominance of summative assessment has also been reported, with teachers focusing on preparing students for tests or exams believing that high grades reflect effective teaching (Arrafii & Sumarni, 2018; Azis, 2015). Defianty (2018) argues that implementing formative assessment requires an adjustment in teaching beliefs and practices that teachers are not ready for. Conventional teacher-centred practices have been used from generation to generation and changing pedagogical culture and practice within schools is not straightforward (Zuhdi, 2015).

In addition, the top-down nature of policy implementation in Indonesia, with little consultation with key stakeholders, can lead to a disconnect between policy intentions and practice (Bjork, 2005; World Bank, 2020). For example, a survey conducted by OECD/ADB (2015) found that whilst Indonesian school principals and teachers were aware of the changes in the 2013 curriculum, they lacked a more in-depth understanding of the intentions behind the changes. Arrafii (2020) notes that it is common for teachers to still use the 2006 curriculum and to only use the 2013 curriculum when they are being observed.

Other studies have found that teachers see the range of new assessment techniques introduced as adding to their workload (Gunawan, 2017; Natsir et al., 2018; Retnawati et al., 2016). Teachers felt overwhelmed and that the onerous assessment requirements detracted from teaching and learning (Retnawati et al., 2016). These findings are consistent with the results of MOEC's (2017) evaluation of the 2013 curriculum in 2014, where teacher complaints about the complexities of assessment within the new curriculum were noted.

Studies have also highlighted concerns around the notion of formative assessment (Gunawan, 2017; Puad & Ashton, 2021; Retnawati et al., 2016). For example, teachers felt that assessment was part of their responsibility and role, and not something that should be handed over to students (Lengkanawati, 2016; Puad & Ashton, 2021). Related to this, teachers expressed concerns about students having the ability to accurately and objectively self- and peer-assess (Puad & Ashton, 2021). Additionally, teachers were concerned about 'the objectivity' of formative assessments showing a lack of trust in less formal assessment techniques (Retnawati et al., 2016, p. 41).

The above findings are in line with the strong hierarchical relationship between teachers and students in Indonesian classrooms where showing respect to teachers is an expectation (Lengkanawati, 2016; Mangundjaya, 2013). This is because teachers are seen as role models and enjoy a high status where they are respected within Indonesian society (Mangundjaya, 2013). In a study involving 1900 students in 11 schools in Indonesia, Maulana et al. (2011) found that students perceive their teachers as 'directive or authoritative' (p. 45), noting that in Indonesian classrooms teachers keep both a physical and psychological distance with their students to indicate their position of authority. Teachers believe that students are dependent on teachers and therefore not able to make choices about their learning (Lengkanawati, 2016).

METHODOLOGY

This article critically examines the policy-making process for the 2013 curriculum. We analyse the conceptualisation and implementation of the formative assessment policy, which we see as an example of policy borrowing, and the tensions between global and local interests.

Acknowledging the importance of taking an inclusive approach when undertaking policy analysis, we closely examined a range of official policy documents, as well as other sources to further scrutinise the rationale behind policy decision-making, and the way in which the

policy is interpreted and implemented (Gerrard & Farrell, 2014; Lo Bianco & Aliani, 2013). We undertook a review of documentation as follows:

1. A systematic review and content analysis of key Indonesian policy documents outlining the 2013 curriculum changes and implementation of formative assessment practices and principles. The National Education Act was included due to its importance in providing an overview of Indonesia's education system and key values.
 - National Education Act (2003).
 - 2013 Curriculum framework and structure (MOEC, 2013b).
 - Education Assessment Standards (MOEC, 2016).
 - Assessment Guidance (MOEC, 2017).
2. A wider review of education policy such as required competencies for school graduates and older assessment policies to provide additional context and background.
3. A review of the literature, key media texts and publicly available discourse on Indonesian education policy, particularly concerning the development and implementation of the 2013 curriculum.

A detailed iterative content analysis of the key policy documents in Step 1 above was carried out. The first author led this process which traced through the developments around the two key changes in the 2013 curriculum: the formative assessment policy and increased focus on attitudes. After a careful iterative review process, a draft table was created summarising the key results against Priestley et al.'s (2021) sites of the curriculum. The second author undertook a similar review with the two sets of results compared and discussed before arriving at a consensus over the key points. A review of the documents outlined in Steps 2 and 3 above was then carried out to support a more complete understanding of the complexities and changes across different sites of curriculum activity, and from the perspectives of a range of participants. A table format was used for clarity of presentation with no a priori assumptions about linearity or interactivity across layers.

Whilst our analysis includes teacher perspectives and practices through our review of the literature, given the critical role of teachers, we returned to unpublished data collected in an earlier qualitative study where we examined teacher views of formative assessment (Puad & Ashton, 2021). This data was collected through semi-structured interviews with six teachers at an Islamic boarding school in Lombok, Indonesia. On re-examining this data, we found that it helped to explicate and illustrate the two key findings that had emerged from our analysis and have therefore included excerpts from these teachers in the presentation of our findings. Whilst the number of teachers is low and we do not claim that their views are representative of all Indonesian teachers, we feel they provide important insights into perspectives that ordinary Indonesian teachers hold.

FINDINGS

Table 1 provides a synthesis of our key analysis. Below we present two key findings derived from this analysis.

Issues of consistency in policy making

Our analysis illustrates issues in coherence and consistency in the policy-making process. First, we note that the process was predominantly top-down and linear from Government

TABLE 1 Sites of curriculum activity

Supra	<p>Global and regional factors triggered the push for formative assessment in the 2013 curriculum.</p> <p>Supra-national influence: SEAMEO</p> <p>Supra-international influence: UNESCO, World Bank, OECD, World Education Forum</p> <p>Key factors: Poor results in international surveys; changing demographics; global economic competitiveness; regional and international agreements</p>
Macro	<p>1. National Education Act (2003)</p> <p>Key act outlining national education system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledges commitments at supra sites • Emphasises the importance of religious and moral values (character education), representing strong national interests <p>2. 2013 National curriculum framework and structure (MOEC, 2013b)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • References supra aspects as key challenges the curriculum attempts to address • Four core competencies are introduced, the first two align with the national focus of the education act 2003: spiritual attitudes; social attitudes; knowledge; skills • No specific detail or focus on formative assessment <p>3. Education Assessment Standards (MOEC, 23/2016)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outlines the range of summative and formative assessments and use of assessment results • Definitions and basic principles of formative assessment are in line with the literature • Use of assessment results reflects summative rather than formative purposes: 'remedial teaching' recommended to improve learning; results of teacher assessments used for high-stakes decisions, e.g., student progression and graduation; self- and peer-assessment not mentioned
Meso	<p>Assessment guidance (MOEC, 2017)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formative and summative assessment techniques are required for all four competencies • Limited guidance on formative techniques for knowledge and skills competencies • Detailed, prescriptive guidelines on formatively assessing spiritual and social attitudes including teacher observation, self- and peer-assessment • Spiritual and social attitudes were initially to be taught and assessed in all subjects, but this was revised after an evaluation, which included teacher feedback, with attitudes now to be taught in religious and civics only but still assessed in <i>all</i> subjects <p>Textbooks are now published by the central Government with prescriptive information on teaching and assessment. This is a change from the 2006 curriculum where schools decided which textbooks to use.</p>
Micro	<p>From decentralised to centralised curriculum</p> <p>The 2013 curriculum is developed by the central Government along with guidance on how to conduct assessments and create lesson plans, a change from 2006 when schools were able to develop their own curriculum and had more freedom in developing assessments and lesson plans.</p>
Nano	<p>Studies on piloting the 2013 curriculum have focused on teachers' perceptions and practices around formative assessment. Key findings include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complexity of the assessment regulations and concerns about over-assessment • Lack of resources, support and training for the new curriculum • Teachers lack assessment literacy • Summative views of assessment persist as do teacher-centred approaches to teaching and assessment • Evidence of teachers ignoring the 2013 curriculum <p>Teacher voice data from our study:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new curriculum is overly prescriptive and diminishes teacher autonomy • Fatigue from continual curriculum changes • Formative assessment is 'foreign' and not applicable to Indonesian classrooms • Lack of understanding and trust of formative assessment • Teachers choose to not implement self- and peer-assessment

legislation to the creation of policy guidelines to be used in schools and classrooms. The only evidence we find of non-linearity, where feedback from teachers has contributed to the formal documentation, is in the evaluation of the 2013 curriculum where teachers complained that the assessment requirements were overly complex and negatively impacted their workload. Whilst this challenge was acknowledged by the Ministry (MOEC, 2017), only superficial changes were made as a result. One key change was removing the requirement to teach spiritual and social attitudes within all subjects, with this now a requirement within religion and civics subjects only. However, the requirement for teachers to assess students' attitudes in every subject remained (MOEC, 2017).

Second, the assessment guidelines developed within meso settings are not in line with the key principles of formative assessment outlined in the literature. Whilst the stated intention of the Government policy is to promote formative assessment, the official guidance does not reflect formative assessment practices and principles. Most of the detail on formative assessment is in relation to assessing students' attitudes. For example, whilst self- and peer-assessment are newly introduced in the 2013 curriculum, they are used for assessing students' attitudes, not students' knowledge or skills, and the guidelines remain prescriptive and onerous for teachers. Further to this, one consequence of the new curriculum is that the teaching and assessment of attitudes have become high stakes with students unable to progress to the next year level if their attitude is not deemed acceptable. A clear contradiction can be seen here in the intention of formative assessment and the high-stakes decisions that the results of formative assessments contribute to.

Whilst some formative techniques are newly introduced in the 2013 curriculum for the assessment of knowledge and skills, for example, the use of portfolios and project-based assessments, the assessment of knowledge and skills is still heavily reliant on traditional tests and examinations. The focus on needing to prepare students for tests or exams does not align with the requirement to use formative assessment and there is no guidance for teachers on *how* to use any of the assessment evidence generated for formative purposes to improve teaching and learning. Assessment of knowledge and skills is therefore typically still a summative process despite the use of some formative techniques.

Third, we argue that changing curriculum making from being a school site activity to a centralised Government activity, and having prescriptive Government provided textbooks and guidelines on creating lesson plans, is not likely to support or empower teachers to adapt their pedagogy and to use formative assessment strategies in their classes. Rather, teachers see the level of prescription in the new curriculum as diminishing their autonomy and freedom. For example, one teacher in our study stated: 'I want the teacher to be given freedom. Now the learning model has been regulated, especially in the 2013 curriculum, students are asked to be more active than teachers'. Similar views about the level of prescription are expressed by another teacher who illustrates the level of confusion caused by what they see as continual change:

The government should not have too many rules. Almost the curriculum is changed every year, then which curriculum should we follow? Now that we have a lesson plan model...in addition, the existing model was revised again by the government. That's why we get confused. I want it not to be too regulated, I don't want to feel too pressured by the curriculum...with various kinds of assessments it makes it complicated, moreover we are required by the system to teach like this, must use these kinds of materials and so on.

Teachers feel that it is hard to keep up with the changes, and this is likely to be exacerbated when the policy documents in relation to the 2013 curriculum lack consistency.

Tensions between global and national interests

Our second finding highlights the tensions between global and national interests. We see this in the confused implementation of formative assessment through the two attitudinal competencies, illustrating that for the policy makers creating the assessment guidelines, a focus on attitudes was a more prominent concern than adherence to the principles of formative assessment. We also note that in all the policy documentation we analysed, references to attitudes and moral values were consistent in message and were more prominent, appearing before the mention of knowledge and skills.

The tension between 'foreign' ideas and local interests is clearly reflected in the views of the teachers we interviewed. For example, one teacher discusses how they do not believe their students to be capable of using formative assessment techniques such as peer-assessment:

they can't give each other an assessment of their friends, what happens is that they blame each other. Overseas may be different, they have more knowledge, so they can criticize each other. Here the knowledge is plain, their thinking is simple so if to assess what the advantages and disadvantages of his friend it is not yet possible.

Here, the teacher makes a direct comparison claiming that Indonesian students do not have the knowledge and capability that overseas students have and therefore they do not see the relevance of peer-assessment in this context. We found similar views expressed by the other teachers we interviewed, many of whom used their agency to disregard the curriculum requirements to implement peer-assessment in their classes. For example: 'I have never applied peer-assessment so far in the classroom', 'I have never implemented it [peer-assessment]' and 'I've never used it, keep in mind that at my place it's not really suitable for assessing classmates'.

Delving more deeply into teachers' perceptions as to why this 'foreign' concept was not appropriate in their classrooms, our findings highlight the value that teachers place on attitudes within education, often prioritising attitudes over knowledge or skills, e.g., 'no matter how smart a person is, if his morals are not good, it's meaningless'. Teachers were pleased with the renewed focus on attitudes in the curriculum, something they felt had been lacking in the previous curriculum: 'the teachers really emphasize the value of attitude to students, moral and character education, [previously] students who behaved badly could pass the exam while diligent children might not pass'.

Our data also illustrate that teachers do not consider that self- and peer-assessment can positively contribute to teaching and learning. On the contrary, they perceive that it will have a negative effect if students receive 'poor scores'.

there will be students who are smart, and there are students whose abilities are mediocre so peer-assessment is not good so if you look at students' scores, their friends will see that his scores are not good. This will be material for ridicule, instead of motivating, and it usually embarrasses a student.

We also found that teachers do not trust students to take on the role of self- and peer-assessment, e.g., 'the student may lie later, meaning that a very close friend of him would assess his work, later he says we have to give him good grade. That's what we have to avoid'. This lack of trust was common in our data with teachers viewing assessment as their role and something they were better equipped to do. The data in this section illustrate

not only a lack of understanding about formative assessment but a fundamental difference in beliefs about assessment.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this article, we have used Priestley et al.'s (2021) sites of curriculum to help elucidate the policy-making process for Indonesia's 2013 curriculum. In doing so, we analysed a range of policy documents, existing studies, and have also drawn on teacher voice. This holistic approach has allowed us to explore the policy-making process at different sites of curriculum making and from a range of perspectives. Our analysis has helped us to understand in more detail the intentions of the formative assessment policy change and the way these intentions are interpreted and mediated at different sites of curriculum making and by stakeholders with differing goals and beliefs.

As Defianty (2018) notes, there is a paucity of studies on the new Indonesian curriculum, and our study provides important new insights into inconsistencies in the policy-making process. Indonesia's implementation of formative assessment can be seen as an example of diffused policy borrowing (Steiner-Khamsi, 2012, 2016) where Indonesia has faced regional and global pressures to improve their education system by implementing globalised views of 'best practice'. We highlight how the key ethos of formative assessment was lost within meso settings in the development of policy guidelines to support teachers in implementing the 2013 curriculum. This process resulted in more detailed guidelines on the formative assessment of attitudes than for knowledge or skills. Our findings support other studies on the 2013 curriculum which have noted that traditional assessment approaches remain dominant and that Indonesian teachers have a limited conceptual understanding of formative assessment (e.g., Arrafii, 2020; Arrafii & Sumarni, 2018; Azis, 2015; Defianty, 2018; Widiastuti & Saukah, 2017). Our findings also support the conclusions of these studies that further professional development is needed to support teachers in developing assessment literacy and understanding how to implement the formative assessment. However, we expand on this to caution that if the formative assessment is interpreted in policy documents and guidelines in a way that does not align with the principles and practices outlined in the literature, it is unrealistic to then expect teachers to implement formative assessment in line with this. Further professional development for teachers does not change the inconsistencies we highlight or improve the understanding of formative assessment of those responsible for developing the guidelines.

Additionally, we found that teachers were wary of what they perceived as continual changes imposed by the Government, saw the 2013 curriculum changes as diminishing their power and autonomy as teachers, and chose to ignore aspects they did not agree with or understand. As our study illustrates the predominantly top-down and linear process of policy making means that teachers feel disengaged and disconnected from policy directives. However, alongside this, by ignoring the guidelines, we exemplify how teachers are important curriculum makers within their classrooms. We see clear examples of the policies being filtered through their 'existing professional knowledge, dispositions and beliefs' and being dismissed with teachers continuing to follow their own beliefs about best practices (Priestley et al., 2021, p. 6).

We see this case of policy borrowing as an attempt at a quick fix to improve Indonesia's education system. We illustrate, as others in different contexts have noted, the confusion and incoherence that can occur when those tasked with drafting and implementing local policy guidelines are far removed from discussions and decisions around the initial policy selection (Carney, 2012; Crossley, 2016; Jakobi, 2012; Phillips & Ochs, 2003; Yan & Brown, 2021), and draw a parallel with the example Carney (2012) discusses in China, where attempts at implementing a learner-centred policy have had the reverse effect.

Our study has also revealed cultural concerns, with some teachers seeing formative assessment as 'foreign' and not relevant for their learners and classrooms. We also note, in alignment with other studies in Indonesia, that teachers see assessment as part of their responsibility and role, and not something that students should participate in (Puad & Ashton, 2021). Teachers expressed concerns about students having the ability to accurately and objectively self- and peer-assess their attitudes (Puad & Ashton, 2021) and show a lack of trust in less formal assessment techniques (Retnawati et al., 2016). These findings are in line with the strong hierarchical relationship between teachers and students in Indonesian classrooms where respect is shown to teachers who are seen as role models (Lengkanawati, 2016; Mangundjaya, 2013; Maulana et al., 2011). These aspects are ingrained in Indonesian culture, and as the literature notes, true change in assessment for learning pedagogy requires a paradigm shift which can only happen through careful and 'gradual implementation' that takes local needs and cultural considerations into account (Phillips & Ochs, 2003; Yan & Brown, 2021, p. 1). We argue that without the support of this kind, supra-national and supra-international organisations are potentially setting countries up for failed implementation and further tensions and issues within their education systems. If Indonesian teachers are to fully embrace formative assessment, this will take concerted time and effort to ascertain how this could work within Indonesian classrooms, and to ensure consistency in policy messages across all sites of curriculum making. It is our view that success is unlikely without teachers playing a more active role in contributing to policy making at macro and meso sites of activity.

We acknowledge the limitation of drawing on a small sample of six teachers from an Islamic boarding school, and that these teachers may hold stronger views on character education than teachers in other settings. However, we believe that our holistic approach, where we have triangulated a wide range of data sources, helps to mitigate this, and has enabled us to see curriculum making as a complex process rather than as a product where teachers are seen as mere enactors of policy and as the source of the 'problem' when the implementation does not achieve the goals it sets out to. Whilst our findings are contextualised within the Indonesian culture, we hope they provide useful reflections for others in examining the trend of diffused policy borrowing in non-western settings, and tensions between global and local policy goals.

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We confirm that ethical considerations from the authors' intuitions and countries have been fully adhered to.

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