



Document Analysis of Literacy Policy and Curriculum Expectations in Primary and Lower Secondary Education in Indonesia

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ABSTRAK

Abstrak: Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana literasi dikonstruksi dalam kebijakan, kurikulum, asesmen, dan panduan implementasi pendidikan dasar dan menengah pertama di Indonesia. Literasi telah menjadi salah satu indikator utama mutu pendidikan di Indonesia. Namun, bidang kebijakan literasi memuat beberapa dokumen yang menggunakan istilah, prioritas, dan ekspektasi implementasi yang saling berkaitan, tetapi tidak selalu sepenuhnya sama. Penelitian ini menggunakan analisis isi kualitatif terhadap dokumen kebijakan literasi nasional, regulasi kurikulum, panduan pembelajaran dan asesmen, materi Asesmen Kompetensi Minimum, panduan Gerakan Literasi Sekolah, serta dokumen Rapor Pendidikan. Analisis difokuskan pada lima dimensi, yaitu makna literasi, domain kompetensi, progresi dari sekolah dasar ke sekolah menengah pertama, ekspektasi asesmen, serta peran sekolah dan guru. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa literasi tidak hanya dipahami sebagai kebiasaan membaca, tetapi juga sebagai kemampuan memahami, bernalar, menggunakan informasi, memproduksi teks, dan belajar lintas mata pelajaran. Namun, koherensi kebijakan masih memerlukan progresi vertikal yang lebih jelas antarjenjang serta penyelarasan yang lebih kuat antara ekspektasi kurikulum, sinyal asesmen, dan panduan implementasi berbasis sekolah. Artikel ini menegaskan perlunya kerangka literasi yang lebih terpadu agar sekolah dapat menerjemahkan ekspektasi nasional ke dalam praktik pembelajaran dan asesmen yang sistematis.

Abstract: *This study examines how literacy is constructed in Indonesian policy, curriculum, assessment, and implementation guidance for primary and lower secondary education. Literacy has become a central indicator of educational quality in Indonesia, but the policy field contains several documents that use related yet not always identical terms, priorities, and implementation expectations. This study uses qualitative content analysis of national literacy policy documents, curriculum regulations, learning and assessment guidelines, Minimum Competency Assessment materials, School Literacy Movement guidelines, and Rapor Pendidikan documents. The analysis focuses on five dimensions: the meaning of literacy, competency domains, progression from primary to lower secondary schooling, assessment expectations, and the role of schools and teachers. The study shows that literacy is framed not only as reading habit but also as comprehension, reasoning, information use, text production, and cross-curricular learning. However, policy coherence still requires clearer vertical progression between school levels and stronger alignment between curriculum expectations, assessment signals, and school-based implementation guidance. The article argues for a more integrated literacy framework that helps schools translate national expectations into systematic learning and assessment practices.*



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A. BACKGROUND

Literacy has moved from being a narrow school subject into a central marker of educational quality. In contemporary education policy, literacy

refers not only to the ability to decode written text but also to the capacity to understand, evaluate, use, and communicate information across contexts. This broader meaning is visible in global policy discussions and in national education reforms, where reading, reasoning, and text-based learning are treated as foundations for participation in school, work, and civic life (Freebody & Luke, 1990; OECD, 2019; UNESCO, 2017).

Indonesia has placed literacy at the centre of education improvement. The urgency is visible in PISA 2022, where Indonesian students' reading performance remains below the OECD average and continues to signal the need for sustained improvement in learning quality (OECD, 2023). At the national level, Rapor Pendidikan positions literacy as a priority indicator for school and local government planning (Kementerian Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah, 2025). This means that literacy is no longer treated as a supplementary activity. It has become part of a broader system that connects curriculum, assessment, school planning, and instructional improvement.

The policy landscape, however, is complex. Several documents speak about literacy from different angles. The national curriculum regulations define the structure and expectations of learning (Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi, 2024; Kementerian Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah, 2025a). *Capaian Pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia* describes the expected development of language and literacy competencies across phases (Badan Standar, Kurikulum, dan Asesmen Pendidikan, 2024a, 2024b, 2024c). The learning and assessment guide explains how learning goals, assessment, and feedback should form a cycle (Badan Standar, Kurikulum, dan Asesmen Pendidikan, 2024d). The Minimum Competency Assessment framework emphasises reading literacy as the ability to understand, use, evaluate, and reflect on texts in personal, socio-cultural, and scientific contexts (Pusat Asesmen Pendidikan, 2022). The School Literacy Movement guidelines, meanwhile, place literacy within school culture and reading habits (Faizah et al., 2016; Retnaningdyah et al., 2016).

These documents are all important, but they do not always speak in the same register. Some frame literacy as a culture of reading. Some frame it as cognitive competence. Some frame it as assessment

performance. Others frame it as classroom practice. This variation is not automatically a weakness because literacy is indeed multidimensional. The risk emerges when schools read the documents separately and fail to see how they connect. In that situation, teachers may understand literacy as a reading campaign, a Bahasa Indonesia target, an AKM score, or a school programme, rather than as a coherent learning expectation across subjects and levels.

The transition from primary to lower secondary education makes this issue more urgent. In primary school, students are expected to build foundational language and literacy skills, including listening, reading, viewing, speaking, presenting, and writing. By lower secondary school, literacy expectations become more demanding. Students must work with longer texts, more abstract concepts, discipline-specific information, argumentation, and multimodal sources. If policy documents do not make this progression explicit, schools may struggle to support students as they move from basic literacy toward academic literacy.

This article examines how literacy is constructed in Indonesian policy and curriculum documents for primary and lower secondary education. It focuses on three questions. First, how is literacy defined or represented across policy, curriculum, assessment, and implementation documents? Second, how are literacy expectations structured across primary and lower secondary levels? Third, what forms of coherence and possible gaps can be identified across the documents?

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with document analysis as its main method. Document analysis is appropriate when the research seeks to understand the language, assumptions, categories, and relationships embedded in official texts (Bowen, 2009). In this study, the documents are not treated as neutral administrative artefacts. They are read as policy texts that shape how schools, teachers, and education authorities understand literacy expectations.

The corpus was selected purposively. The inclusion criteria were direct relevance to literacy, curriculum, assessment, or school-level implementation at primary and lower secondary

levels; publication by an official institution or a recognised scholarly source; and relevance to the current Indonesian education policy context. The main documents include curriculum regulations, Capaian Pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia for relevant phases, learning and assessment guidelines, the Minimum Competency Assessment framework, School Literacy Movement guidelines, literacy and numeracy strengthening guidance, and Rapor Pendidikan documents.

The analysis followed three procedures. First, each document was read to identify key terms, definitions, goals, and implementation expectations related to literacy. Second, relevant textual units were coded using categories adapted from literacy theory, curriculum alignment literature, and policy enactment studies. The coding categories included definition of literacy, competency domains, progression across levels, learning expectations, assessment expectations, school support, and teacher role. Third, the coded data were compared across documents to identify patterns of alignment, repetition, tension, and absence.

Content analysis was used to examine the explicit structure and categories in the documents (Krippendorff, 2018), while thematic analysis supported interpretation of recurring meanings across policy texts (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The study also drew on the idea that policy does not move directly from document to practice. Schools interpret policy through local routines, available resources, and professional judgement (Ball et al., 2012; Fullan, 2016). For that reason, the analysis gives attention not only to what the documents state, but also to how easy their expectations may be for schools to interpret and use.

To strengthen trustworthiness, the analysis used a transparent coding matrix, repeated reading of documents, cross-checking of categories, and comparison between official policy sources and established literacy scholarship. The aim was not to evaluate schools or teachers, but to clarify how national documents organise literacy expectations and what this implies for curriculum implementation.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Literacy as a competence, not only a habit

The first pattern across the documents is the movement from literacy as reading habit toward

literacy as competence. The School Literacy Movement guidelines place strong emphasis on reading culture, school environment, and habituation. This orientation is important because students need access to texts, time to read, and supportive routines before they can develop deeper literacy engagement (Faizah et al., 2016; Retnaningdyah et al., 2016). However, literacy policy has expanded beyond reading frequency. In curriculum and assessment documents, literacy increasingly refers to students' ability to understand, interpret, evaluate, and use information in different contexts.

This shift is consistent with international literacy frameworks. Reading is now widely understood as an active process of constructing meaning, connecting prior knowledge, evaluating claims, and using texts for particular purposes (Mullis & Martin, 2019; OECD, 2023; Perfetti & Stafura, 2014). Literacy also includes social and cultural dimensions because readers interpret texts through purposes, identities, practices, and contexts (Freebody & Luke, 1990; Street, 1984; UNESCO, 2017). The Indonesian policy landscape reflects both dimensions: it keeps the school culture orientation while also adopting competency-based expectations through curriculum and assessment.

The challenge is coherence. If reading culture is not connected to curriculum goals and assessment expectations, school literacy activities may remain ceremonial. Students may participate in reading corners, literacy days, or fifteen-minute reading routines without systematic development of comprehension, vocabulary, argumentation, or text production. Conversely, if literacy is reduced to assessment performance, schools may focus on test-like tasks without building a meaningful reading environment. A strong policy framework needs both: a literacy-rich culture and clear competency progression.

2. Curriculum expectations and progression across levels

The Capaian Pembelajaran documents position literacy as a developmental process. At the early primary level, students are expected to build basic language and text engagement through listening, reading and viewing, speaking and

presenting, and writing. At the upper primary level, the expectations become more complex. Students are expected to understand main ideas, respond to texts, use vocabulary with greater precision, and produce texts for different purposes. At lower secondary level, the expectations move further toward interpretation, evaluation, argumentation, and more complex written expression (Badan Standar, Kurikulum, dan Asesmen Pendidikan, 2024a, 2024b, 2024c).

This progression is broadly consistent with literacy development research. Students move from learning to read toward reading to learn, although the two processes overlap and continue to interact (Duke & Cartwright, 2021; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). Foundational literacy includes decoding, fluency, vocabulary, and basic comprehension. Academic literacy adds disciplinary language, inference, evidence use, text structure, and argumentation (Kintsch, 1998; Perfetti & Stafura, 2014). The SD-SMP transition is therefore not just an administrative movement between levels. It is a shift in the cognitive and linguistic demands placed on students.

The documents provide a basis for this progression, but the connection across phases could be made more explicit for teachers. Curriculum documents tend to describe outcomes by phase, while implementation documents often discuss learning and assessment more generally. Schools need a practical bridge between these two layers. They need to know what changes from upper primary to lower secondary, which skills require consolidation, and which literacy demands become new. Without this bridge, teachers may treat literacy targets as separate grade-level statements rather than a cumulative pathway.

3. Assessment as a bridge between policy and classroom practice

Assessment is one of the strongest points of connection across the policy documents. The learning and assessment guide stresses that assessment should support learning, not merely record final achievement (Badan Standar, Kurikulum, dan Asesmen Pendidikan, 2024d). This is aligned with formative assessment theory, which argues that evidence of learning should be used to adjust teaching and help students

understand the next steps in their learning (Black & Wiliam, 2009; Wiliam, 2011).

The AKM framework gives a more specific signal about reading literacy. It emphasises the ability to access and retrieve information, interpret and integrate meaning, and evaluate and reflect on texts across different contexts (Pusat Asesmen Pendidikan, 2022). This framework has value because it shifts the focus from recalling content to using reading as a reasoning process. It also supports broader curriculum expectations by reminding schools that literacy is relevant across subjects, not only in Bahasa Indonesia.

However, there is a policy-to-practice issue. National assessment frameworks can guide system-level improvement, but schools still need classroom-level tools to diagnose learning needs. Rapor Pendidikan provides data for reflection and planning, but teachers need support to translate that data into instructional responses (Kementerian Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah, 2025; Kementerian Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah, 2025b). At school level, literacy improvement depends on whether teachers can identify which dimensions of literacy need attention, such as vocabulary, text structure, inferencing, evidence use, or writing coherence.

This means that assessment policy should be read together with curriculum progression. Assessment should not only answer whether students can read. It should help teachers see what kind of reading students can do, what kind of text they struggle with, and what support they need next. In this sense, formative assessment is not an additional instrument. It is the operational link between national literacy expectations and classroom decisions.

4. Policy coherence and possible gaps

The analysis identifies a broad alignment across the documents. The policy direction is consistent in placing literacy as a core competency, linking literacy to learning quality, and encouraging schools to use data for improvement. The curriculum documents describe learning outcomes. Assessment documents define measurable literacy demands. School literacy guidelines promote a reading culture and school-wide support. Rapor Pendidikan connects literacy to planning and accountability. Together, these

documents provide a reasonably strong policy ecosystem.

At the same time, several gaps remain visible. The first is conceptual variation. Literacy appears as habit, competence, culture, assessment domain, and school improvement indicator. These meanings are compatible, but they need a clearer organising framework. The second gap concerns vertical progression. The documents show movement from basic to more complex literacy, but the transition from SD to SMP requires clearer explanation for teachers and school leaders. The third gap concerns horizontal alignment. Curriculum, assessment, school literacy programmes, and Rapor Pendidikan are connected in principle, but they are presented in separate documents with different purposes and audiences.

The fourth gap concerns implementation language. Policy documents often use broad terms such as strengthening, improving, developing, or supporting literacy. These terms are useful at policy level, but schools need more operational guidance. For example, they need examples of how reading literacy in AKM relates to classroom reading tasks, how Capaian Pembelajaran can be translated into formative assessment, and how a school literacy programme can support subject-based learning. This does not mean that policy documents must prescribe every classroom action. It means that the system needs clearer translation tools.

D. FINDINGS

The findings point to the need for an integrated literacy expectation framework for SD-SMP. Such a framework would not replace existing documents. Instead, it would help schools read them together. The framework should contain at least four layers. The first layer is the definition of literacy. Literacy should be understood as the ability to access, understand, evaluate, use, and produce texts in different contexts. The second layer is competency progression. Schools need a clear map of how literacy develops from early primary, upper primary, and lower secondary levels. The third layer is assessment use. Assessment should help teachers identify literacy strengths and needs, not only report achievement. The fourth layer is school support. Literacy requires

classroom instruction, reading culture, subject integration, leadership, and data-informed planning.

This framework would also help address the common separation between literacy programmes and subject learning. In many schools, literacy activities risk being placed outside the regular curriculum. Students read for a short period, join campaigns, or complete reading logs, but the activity is not always connected to comprehension strategies, academic vocabulary, text-based discussion, or writing. A more coherent approach would position literacy as part of daily instruction across subjects while retaining the value of school-wide reading culture.

At policy level, the most practical recommendation is not to add more documents. The more urgent need is to improve navigation across existing documents. Schools would benefit from a cross-document literacy matrix that links curriculum phases, AKM dimensions, Rapor Pendidikan indicators, classroom assessment examples, and school literacy practices. This kind of matrix would help teachers and school leaders see the system as one connected literacy agenda. It would also help local education offices design support programmes that are more focused on progression and alignment.

E. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This article has examined how literacy policy and curriculum expectations are constructed across key Indonesian documents for primary and lower secondary education. The analysis shows that Indonesian literacy policy has moved beyond a narrow view of reading habit. Literacy is now framed as a foundational competence that includes comprehension, reasoning, information use, text production, and cross-curricular learning. This shift is visible in curriculum documents, assessment frameworks, school literacy guidelines, and Rapor Pendidikan.

The documents show broad coherence in their direction, but several areas still need strengthening. The meaning of literacy should be made more explicit across policy layers. The progression from SD to SMP should be easier for schools to interpret. The relationship between curriculum expectations, AKM, formative assessment, and school literacy activities should be presented in a more integrated way. Without this integration, schools may respond to

literacy through isolated programmes rather than sustained instructional improvement.

The article suggests three practical steps. First, education authorities should develop a concise literacy expectation matrix that links SD-SMP curriculum phases, AKM reading dimensions, classroom assessment, and school literacy activities. Second, schools should use Rapor Pendidikan not only for administrative planning but also for professional discussion about teaching and assessment. Third, teacher development programmes should help teachers design text-based learning across subjects, not only reading activities in Bahasa Indonesia. Future research can extend this work by examining how teachers and school leaders interpret these policy expectations in local contexts.

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