

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TEST OF ACADEMIC ABILITY POLICY IN EQUIVALENCY EDUCATION

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the implementation of the Test of Academic Ability policy in equivalency education based on the dimensions of communication, resources, implementer dispositions, and bureaucratic structure within the Edwards III framework. The study employs a qualitative approach with a multisite study design at PKBM Hidayah and PKBM Salam Cordova in Probolinggo City. Data were collected from May to August 2026 through in-depth interviews with five key informants representing PKBM directors, tutors, and operators/proctors; two rounds of observation at each site; and analysis of policy and institutional documents. The analysis was conducted in two stages—site-specific analysis and cross-site analysis—through data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion verification. The research findings indicate that policy communication channels are available through official letters, coordination meetings, digital media, and guidelines; however, technical information does not always result in uniform operational understanding. Both PKBMs possess the basic resources to administer the Academic Ability Test, although the material capacity and technical competencies of the implementers vary. Implementers' attitudes tended to be positive and helped ensure the sustainability of implementation, but they could not replace the need for technical competence, clear information, and documented procedures. The bureaucratic structure was supported by task division and coordination, although the level of formalization of SOPs specific to the Test of Academic Ability and institutional documentation still needed strengthening. Findings across sites indicate that implementation challenges do not primarily lie in acceptance of the policy, but rather in transforming the policy into standardized operational capacity. The study recommends standardizing technical information, providing simulation-based training, strengthening technology risk management, and updating SOPs to support more consistent implementation of the Test of Academic Ability in equivalency education.

Keywords

Equivalency Education, Policy implementation, PKBM, Test of Academic Ability.



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INTRODUCTION

Equivalency education is an important part of the national education system because it provides learning opportunities for people who have not yet received educational services through formal channels. Flexibility in scheduling, the heterogeneous nature of the learner population, and variations in institutional capacity are the strengths of equivalency education, yet they also present challenges when academic achievement must be measured through standardized procedures. The implementation of policies in nonformal education is determined not only by the content of regulations but is also influenced by the readiness of educators, the availability of funding, facilities, and institutional support (Latief et al., 2024). Therefore, assessment policies applicable across educational pathways should be viewed not only as measurement instruments but also as implementation processes within organizations with varying conditions.

The government issued a revision to the national education evaluation policy through the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Regulation No. 9 of 2025, establishing the Test of Academic Ability as a standardized instrument for measuring academic achievement. The Test of Academic Ability is not only intended to obtain objective information on academic achievement, but also to ensure that students in non-formal education have access to the equivalence of learning outcomes and to support the assurance of educational quality (Harjono & Atikah, 2026; Jannah et al., 2026; Legi et al., 2022; Mirnawati et al., 2025; Safitri & Fahmi, 2026). However, an academic challenge arises in that uniform assessment standards must be applied to equivalency education institutions that have diverse characteristics in terms of students, resources, technology, and institutional capacity. Thus, the research question is not merely whether the Test of Academic Ability has been administered, but rather how the policy regarding the Test of Academic Ability is translated from national regulations into educational practices in equivalency education at the PKBM level.

The gap between uniform policy requirements and varying institutional capacities is evident at PKBM Hidayah and PKBM Salam Cordova in Probolinggo City. A preliminary study through direct observation revealed differences in institutional conditions, human resource readiness, equipment capacity, internet connectivity, and coordination mechanisms. PKBM Hidayah is a private PKBM with a B accreditation, while PKBM Salam Cordova has a C accreditation (Lestari, 2026). Although both institutions have received information regarding the Academic Ability Test, the technical understanding of those implementing it is not yet entirely uniform. The research

question, therefore, goes beyond whether the Test of Academic Ability has been administered; it also examines how national policies are translated into operational practices at equivalency education institutions with varying capacities. The issue is further complicated by the fact that learners in equivalency education vary in age, learning experience, study time, background, and academic readiness, whereas the Test of Academic Ability employs relatively uniform assessment procedures and standards (Kepmendikdasmen, 2025).

Previous research indicates that studies on Academic Ability Tests and assessments in equivalency education have evolved from several perspectives. Research on (Febrianti et al., 2025; Kurniawan et al., 2026; Latief et al., 2024; Saleha & Shofwan, 2025) found that leaders in non-formal education face challenges in translating national policies into institutional practice due to differences in learner conditions, educator readiness, and institutional support. A study titled, (Syamsuri et al., 2024) conducted at PKBM Luthfillah, also found that while the implementation of nonformal education policies can proceed smoothly, some tutors have yet to fully optimize the application of these policies. These findings suggest that the implementation of the Test of Academic Ability should be viewed not merely as the execution of an assessment procedure, but as a process involving managerial readiness, human resources, facilities, and infrastructure, as well as the institution's ability to adapt to new policies. Research on (Hertanto & Miranti, 2025; Hidayah et al., 2026; Nababan et al., 2025) found that the use of the Test of Academic Ability for Package C students can enhance motivation, engagement, independence, and perseverance in learning through the provision of feedback and follow-up on learning. Furthermore, the study (Juriyah et al., 2025) indicates that the implementation of the Test of Academic Ability is generally supported by policy communication, positive dispositions, and prior institutional experience; however, it still faces resource constraints, particularly gaps in digital infrastructure. Meanwhile, the study describes the Test of Academic Ability as an educational assessment innovation designed to provide objective, standardized information on academic achievement and to support educational quality control. Overall, the study indicates that the success of assessment in equivalency education is determined not only by the assessment instruments but also by the readiness of human resources, facilities and infrastructure, technology, policy communication, and institutional management (Alam et al., 2026; Faturohman et al., 2026; Sukamto et al., 2026).

Although research on the Test of Academic Ability is still in its early stages and covers a wide range of topics, these studies provide an important foundation but have not yet offered a

comparative analysis based on primary data regarding how the Test of Academic Ability policy is implemented by PKBMs with varying institutional capacities. Given this gap, the contribution of

this study lies not in the use of the Edwards III model, but in its application to generate a cross-site analysis of the implementation of the Test of Academic Ability in equivalency education. By comparing PKBM Hidayah and PKBM Salam Cordova, this study identifies contextual aspects of implementation at each institution as well as recurring patterns across both sites. This analysis enables the study to explain how differences in material capacity, the technical competence of implementers, policy communication, dispositions, and organizational structure interact to shape the operational readiness of PKBMs.

The theory of policy implementation used in this study draws on the ideas of Edwards III in his book *Implementing Public Policy* (Edwards III, 1980), Implementation is a critical stage in the policy process because the success of a policy is determined not only by how it is formulated but also by how the decision is carried out, thereby producing consequences for the policy's target audience (Febrianti et al., 2025; Kadji, 2015; Nuryana et al., 2025; Putri et al., 2026).

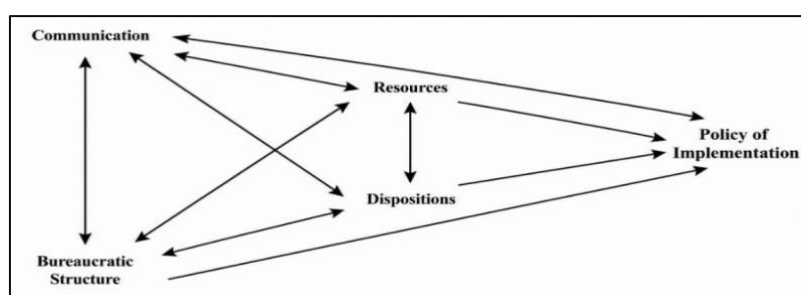


Figure 1. Policy Implementation Model According to Edwards III

The research analytical framework draws on Edwards III, who explains policy implementation through four main dimensions: communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure. Communication relates to the transmission, clarity, and consistency of policy messages; resources include staff, information, authority, facilities, and funding; dispositions relate to the acceptance and commitment of implementers; while bureaucratic structure encompasses standard operating procedures (SOPs), division of labor, coordination, and organizational fragmentation. These four dimensions were used in an integrated manner to examine the phases from preparation to the initial implementation of the Test of Academic Ability at both PKBMs.

This study aims to analyze the implementation of the Test of Academic Ability policy in equivalency education at PKBMs in Probolinggo City based on the four implementation aspects identified by Edwards III—namely, communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure—while comparing its implementation at PKBM Hidayah and PKBM Salam Cordova. In practical terms, the research findings are expected to serve as input for the government and education agencies in strengthening the dissemination, guidance, monitoring, and evaluation of the Academic Ability Test, as well as for PKBM administrators in improving resource readiness, coordination, and guidance for learners, so that the implementation of the Test of Academic Ability not only meets administrative requirements but also supports quality, recognition of learning outcomes, equity, and the equitable distribution of equivalency education.

METHOD

This study is a qualitative research project with a multisite study design. The research sites consist of the PKBM Hidayah in Kanigaran Subdistrict and the PKBM Salam Cordova in Wonoasih Subdistrict, Probolinggo City. Both sites were selected through purposive sampling because they both provide equivalency education and are involved in the implementation of the Academic Ability Test, yet exhibit variations in institutional capacity, human resources, and technological infrastructure. A multisite design was used to generate an in-depth understanding of each case while identifying recurring or differing patterns across sites. There were five research informants, selected purposefully based on their direct involvement, knowledge of Test of Academic Ability policies, and experience in preparing for or administering the Academic Ability Test. The informants represented PKBM directors, tutors, and operators/proctors at both research sites. To maintain confidentiality, individual identities are represented using informant codes in the presentation of results. Personal names are not included in quotations, while institutional names are retained as per the research context. Data were collected from May to August 2026 through in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis. Each interview lasted approximately 20–30 minutes, was recorded, and transcribed verbatim.

The interviews focused on the four dimensions of Edwards III—communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure—as well as on implementation challenges and strategies. Observations were conducted twice at each site, focusing on the readiness of the space, computers, network, task allocation, coordination, participant mentoring, and the implementation

process. The documents reviewed included circular letters, the Test of Academic Ability Guidelines, task allocation decrees, available standard operating procedures (SOPs), participant lists, infrastructure documents, coordination minutes, and implementation reports. The analysis was conducted in stages through data condensation, data presentation, and the derivation and verification of conclusions.

The first stage involved on-site analysis to identify implementation patterns at each PKBM. The second stage involved cross-site analysis using a comparison matrix based on the dimensions of communication, resources, disposition, bureaucratic structure, constraints, and implementation strategies. Coding was performed deductively using Edwards III's four dimensions as initial categories, which were then expanded to include themes emerging from the data, such as shared operational understanding, technical capacity, and technological risk management needs. The credibility of the findings was strengthened through triangulation of sources and techniques by comparing statements among informants and verifying their consistency with observations and available documents. Interpretations were not based on a single quote but on the consistency of patterns emerging from multiple types of evidence. Informant confidentiality was maintained by anonymizing individual identities and restricting information that could lead to personal identification. Cross-site analysis was used to generate analytical generalizations limited to implementation patterns in the two cases studied, not to claim statistical representation of all PKBMs.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The research findings indicate that both PKBMs have entered the preparation phase leading up to the initial administration of the Academic Ability Test, supported by communication, basic resources, task allocation, and coordination. However, operational readiness is not entirely uniform. Policy communication channels are available, but the depth of technical information is not always consistent; basic facilities are relatively available, but the technical competence of implementers still varies; implementers' attitudes tend to be positive; and work structures are in place, although the level of formalization of SOPs specific to the Test of Academic Ability differs across sites.

The research findings have shown that implementation readiness cannot be assessed solely based on the existence of regulations or tools, but must be viewed as a combination of understanding, human capacity, material support, and organizational procedures.

Table 1. Framework for Analyzing the Implementation of the Test of Academic Ability Policy

	Policy Communication	Resources	Implementers' Disposition	Bureaucratic Structure
Focus of Analysis	The Flow and Interpretation of Policy Information	Organizational capacity to implement policies	Acceptance and Willingness of implementers	Organization of tasks and procedures
Key Indicators	Transmission; clarity; consistency; channels of clarification	Human resources; information; authority; tools; network; funding	Commitment; support; response to obstacles; initiative	Decisions/division of tasks, SOPs; coordination; monitoring, and evaluation

Source: (Lestari, 2026)

Policy Communication: Channels Available, Technical Understanding Not Yet Uniform

In terms of communication, both PKBMs have received information through several channels, including circulars, guidelines, online meetings, WhatsApp groups, internal meetings, and direct communication. The diversity of channels accelerates the transmission of information but does not automatically result in a shared technical understanding. The more prominent issue is not the lack of information, but rather the level of detail required to translate policies into operational actions—particularly regarding schedules, role assignments, equipment needs, oversight mechanisms, and procedures in the event of disruptions.

“Kalau untuk sosialisasinya sendiri sebenarnya di awal pelaksanaan itu tidak ada, hanya ada surat edaran ... setelah itu secara berkala ada Zoom ... lalu dilanjutkan di grup WhatsApp.” (KP1-01).

Administrators at other sites also described that communication had taken place, but technical information was not always received in a complete and structured manner. This meant that implementers still needed to seek clarification on their own when they encountered aspects they did not understand.

“Komunikasinya ada, tetapi belum terlalu intensif. Kami masih sering harus mencari informasi sendiri atau bertanya ketika ada hal yang belum kami pahami. Akan lebih baik kalau informasi mengenai regulasi, jadwal, teknis pelaksanaan, dan perubahan kebijakan disampaikan lebih lengkap dan terstruktur”. (KP2-01).

The similarity in patterns across both sites suggests that the communication issue is better understood as a matter of the quality and depth of information rather than merely the number of channels. Administrative information tends to be more easily accepted, whereas technical information requires opportunities for clarification, simulation, and guidance. Within the

framework of Edwards III, this situation underscores that transmission is insufficient if clarity and consistency have not yet resulted in a shared operational understanding.

Resources: Basic Facilities Are Available, but the Technical Capacity of Human Resources Needs to Be Strengthened

The resources at the two PKBMs showed varying levels of capacity. PKBM Hidayah reported 45 computers, a 300 Mbps fiber-optic connection, and 13,000 watts of electrical power, with eight participants. PKBM Salam Cordova reported 10 computers, a 100 Mbps fiber-optic connection, and 4,400 watts of electrical power, with three participants. These data indicate that both institutions possess the basic equipment to support implementation; however, inventory numbers alone are insufficient to determine the level of readiness. Operational readiness is also determined by the condition of the equipment, network stability, session management, supporting equipment, and the readiness of technical staff.

In terms of human resources, there is a relatively sufficient number of staff, but technical competence is not yet uniform. One of the staff members at the PKBM Salam Cordova is relatively new to the role of operator, so a period of adaptation and consultation with operators from other institutions is still necessary. These findings indicate that the appointment of personnel via an official decree does not automatically result in equivalent technical capacity. Tutors also need to understand the mechanics of the Test of Academic Ability so that their guidance to learners is not solely focused on practice questions but also on readiness to take the assessment.

The cost at both sites was not specifically charged to the learners at the time of the observed administration, but was covered by the institutions' internal resources, such as tuition fees/donations, or the institutions' own funds. Diversifying funding sources allows PKBMs to meet operational needs; however, funding capacity varies and can affect their ability to provide backup equipment, technical support, or infrastructure repairs. Thus, resources should be understood as a combination of facilities, competencies, information, authority, and funding—not merely as the number of computers.

Implementers' Attitudes: Positive Acceptance as a Temporary Buffer

In contrast to issues regarding technical communication and competencies, the attitudes of implementers at both sites tended to be positive. PKBM directors, tutors, and operators/proctors demonstrated acceptance of the Test of Academic Ability and made efforts to meet implementation needs despite existing limitations. This commitment was evident in the provision of facilities,

internal coordination, support for learners, and efforts to seek additional information when technical guidelines were not sufficiently clear.

“Kalau kebutuhan warga belajar, bagaimanapun kita akan memfasilitasi. Kita harus membantu meskipun itu opsional, karena bisa saja suatu saat dibutuhkan.” (KP1-02).
 “Karena semuanya demi anak. Kami ingin anak-anak mendapatkan kesempatan yang lebih baik untuk melanjutkan pendidikan. Jadi meskipun persiapannya tidak mudah dan dukungan yang kami terima belum maksimal, kami tetap berusaha melaksanakan Tes Kemampuan Akademik sebaik mungkin.” (KP2-03).

Findings across sites indicate that a positive disposition can serve as a temporary buffer when technical information and implementation capacity are not yet optimal. However, this function has its limits. Personal commitment cannot replace technical competence, accurate information, reliable equipment, and documented procedures. Therefore, positive acceptance of policies needs to be institutionalized within the work system so that implementation does not rely too heavily on the initiative of specific individuals.

Bureaucratic Structure: Division of Labor Is in Place, but Formalization of SOPs Is Not Yet Uniform

The bureaucratic structure at both PKBMs was evident through the division of tasks, the appointment of operators/proctors, internal coordination, and the involvement of leadership in preparations. Personnel were selected based on their roles and capabilities; technical tasks were assigned to staff who understood the systems or equipment, while tutors played a greater role in mentoring learners. In organizations with limited staff, some roles may be combined, making flexibility an integral part of implementation practices.

“Karena jumlah tim kami tidak banyak, pembagian tugas memang harus dilakukan secara fleksibel. Kalau ada kegiatan, saya menunjuk langsung siapa yang bertanggung jawab ... beberapa pekerjaan akhirnya dirangkap.” (KP2-04).

Although the division of labor is already in practice, the level of procedural formalization varies. At the PKBM Salam Cordova, the specific Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the Test of Academic Ability is still in the process of being drafted and refined; therefore, it would be inaccurate to conclude that all formal procedures are fully established at both sites.

“Untuk SOP sebenarnya sudah ada arahnya, tetapi saat ini masih dalam proses penyusunan dan penyempurnaan. SOP yang secara khusus mengatur pelaksanaan Tes Kemampuan Akademik masih kami olah agar sesuai dengan kebutuhan lembaga.” (KP2-05).

These findings distinguish between existing operational structures and documented formal structures. Task allocation and coordination may function effectively in practice, but without up-to-date, specific SOPs, the organization remains at risk of relying on individual experience. Therefore, SOPs should be treated as living documents that are updated based on policy changes, simulation experiences, technical constraints, and post-implementation evaluations.

Table 2. Comparison Across Sites

No	Dimension	PKBM Hidayah	PKBM Salam Cordova	Cross-Site Synthesis
1	Communication	Letters, guidelines, Zoom, WhatsApp, and meetings; technical details still need to be clarified.	Digital channels and meetings are available; implementers are still seeking clarification on some technical information.	Communication channels are available; the main issues are the depth of information and shared understanding.
2	Human Resources	Personnel are available; some technical functions still require competency building.	Personnel are available; some implementers are relatively new and still need time to adapt or require consultation.	Technical capacity is more critical than mere personnel numbers.
3	Facilities	45 computers; 300 Mbps internet; 13,000 watts of power; 8 participants during the observation period.	10 computers; 100 Mbps internet; 4,400 watts of power; 3 participants during the observation period.	Both sites have basic facilities, but readiness cannot be assessed based solely on the amount of equipment.
4	Funding	Utilizes available institutional funding sources.	Utilizing tuition fees/donations, the Equality Operational Budget (BOP Kesetaraan), and support from foundations or institutional funds.	Financial independence aids implementation, but each institution's capacity varies.
5	Disposition	Leaders and implementers accept and strive to facilitate the Academic Aptitude Test.	Leaders and staff accept and support the implementation.	Consistent positive acceptance is a strength, but it is no substitute for technical capacity.
6	Bureaucratic Structure	Task allocation and coordination are in place; documentation needs to be continuously updated.	The division of tasks is flexible; specific SOPs for the Academic Aptitude Test are still being refined.	An operational structure has been established, but the level of procedural formalization varies across sites.

Source: (Lestari, 2026)

Discussion

The research findings indicate that the implementation of the Test of Academic Ability at PKBM Hidayah and PKBM Salam Cordova has progressed from the policy introduction stage to the operational preparation stage. Both institutions have established communication channels, prepared facilities and funding, designated implementers, and established coordination. However, this support has not yet fully resulted in uniform operational readiness. When linked to Edwards III's theory (1980), this study both reinforces and places limitations on the assumption regarding the importance of communication in policy implementation. The findings indicate that the four implementation variables are interrelated: communication provides direction for action, resources provide capacity, disposition provides willingness, and bureaucratic structure provides mechanisms for organizing action. Weaknesses in one element can be partially offset by another element, but they cannot be permanently replaced. Edwards III also explains that transmission, clarity, and consistency are the most important elements in implementation, as a policy is difficult to implement effectively and to the fullest extent if the information received by implementers is interpreted differently.

Communication: From Dissemination to Shared Operational Understanding

Findings indicate that the transmission of the Test of Academic Ability policy has already taken place through various channels, but the sheer number of channels does not automatically result in operational readiness. In Edwards III's model, communication involves not only whether the message reaches the implementers but also whether the message is clear and consistent. Conditions at both PKBMs reveal a gap between the policy as a normative message and the policy as an operational guideline. The process of conveying information regarding the Test of Academic Ability has essentially been taking place through various communication channels. However, the information received has not yet fully provided a shared understanding of the technical aspects of its implementation. Implementers are also aware that the Test of Academic Ability must be prepared for, but in certain aspects, they still require clarification regarding technical procedures, equipment requirements, supervision, or responses in the event of disruptions. This pattern indicates that, structurally, communication channels are already in place, consistent with research on (Dewi & Hazin, 2024; Farhah & Hazin, 2024; Fitria et al., 2025; Hazin & Devi Rahmawati, 2023; Luatul Azizah & Hazin, 2024; Putri et al., 2026; Suhartatik et al., 2025; Syani et al., 2017). These findings indicate that this study does not entirely contradict Edwards III's perspective but rather places a more

contextual emphasis on the dimensions of communication. The success of communication cannot be judged solely by whether policy messages have been conveyed to implementers, but also by the extent to which those messages are understood uniformly and can serve as a basis for determining the actions to be taken.

This pattern aligns with, which indicates that policy documents that are not sufficiently clear can lead to gaps in understanding at the school level. Also emphasize the importance of interorganizational communication that ensures accuracy and a shared understanding, while indicating that the quality of implementation can improve as communication processes and the experience of implementers evolve (Aditama et al., 2024; Devi et al., 2024; Sururi et al., 2023). The study (Afriyani et al., 2024) on the readiness of the PKBM Kartini to implement the Merdeka Curriculum indicates that tutors still need to strengthen their understanding despite having participated in training, discussion forums, and collaboration. This principle aligns with the recommendations, which state that changes to assessment standards require outreach and training so that the changes are not only understood technically but also deeply internalized (Satria, 2024). Therefore, communication regarding the Test of Academic Ability should not stop at the distribution of letters, guidelines, or meetings, but should be followed up with clarification mechanisms such as Q&A sessions, simulations, FAQs, tutorials, checklists, and official channels for clarification. Therefore, a relevant indicator of effective communication is not the number of messages or meetings, but the formation of a shared understanding: PKBM directors, tutors, operators/proctors, and relevant parties understand the objectives, procedures, division of tasks, and problem-solving mechanisms in a relatively consistent manner.

Resources: Human Capacity as a Critical Point in Implementation

Findings regarding resources indicate that basic infrastructure is relatively available at both sites, but human capacity remains the critical factor. Within the Edwards III framework, resources include staff, information, authority, and facilities. Therefore, the availability of computers cannot be separated from the operators' skills, technical support, network stability, and procedures for handling disruptions. Cross-site data also confirms that comparisons of the number of computers must be considered in conjunction with the number of participants and the condition of devices that are actually active; a larger inventory does not automatically mean higher implementation capacity.

From a human resources perspective, research findings in Probolinggo City indicate that there is a relatively sufficient number of personnel, but technical competencies are not yet evenly

distributed. This situation is particularly evident among new personnel serving as operators or proctors (Fathoni et al., 2025).

These findings are consistent with (Ismayani & Wahyudin, 2025; Iswanto, 2025), which indicates that a shortage of trained personnel and operational support can hinder implementation even when a policy framework is in place. Also, identify internal capacity and competency development as crucial components of organizational readiness. In the context of Academic Ability Tests, human resource development should focus on practical skills, including system management, simulations, troubleshooting, handling network disruptions, participant administration, data security, the division of roles between proctors and technicians, and emergency procedures. Thus, policy interventions focused solely on providing equipment risk, creating a false sense of readiness. Implementation readiness is more accurately viewed as the capacity to implement, that is, an organization's ability to consistently operate its resources when facing real-world conditions.

Disposition: A Commitment to Support Implementation, but Not to Replace the System

A positive disposition is a consistent strength at both sites. Within the Edwards III framework, disposition is not merely verbal acceptance but the willingness of implementers to translate policies into action. At both PKBMs, commitment was evident through efforts to provide facilities, seek additional information, support learners, and resolve technical issues. These findings indicate the presence of agency at the implementer level: when guidelines were incomplete, implementers did not stop but found ways to ensure activities could continue. This is important because new policies often create uncertainty and additional workloads (Cahyono et al., 2026).

However, the data also show that commitment should not be positioned as a permanent substitute for organizational capacity. Personal initiatives can help in the early phases of implementation, but reliance on individuals makes the system vulnerable when there are changes in PKBM directors, operators, tutors, or other personnel. Therefore, it is more accurate to state that a positive disposition serves as a temporary buffer, not as a causal factor capable of compensating for all communication and resource gaps. Commitment needs to be institutionalized through the division of tasks, work targets, preparation schedules, SOPs, evaluations, and competency development. According to research (Hermawan, 2012), the establishment of PKBMs also demonstrates that the existence of an organizational structure is a crucial component in building the institutional capacity of community education.

This finding is consistent with (Devi et al., 2024), which indicates that the commitment of educational units is crucial for program implementation but still requires support from resources and stakeholders. For PKBMs, institutionalizing commitment means transforming individual enthusiasm into documented organizational routines that are sustainable and not dependent on any single individual. In this way, positive acceptance of policies can develop into a more stable capacity for implementation.

Bureaucratic Structure: Standardization of Procedures and Organizational Learning

The bureaucratic structure links information, resources, and decisions to actions. The division of labor clarifies who is responsible, while SOPs provide certainty regarding how tasks are performed. At both PKBMs, the division of labor and coordination are already in place, but the level of formalization of SOPs differs. This difference is important because the implementation of standardized assessments requires procedural consistency, particularly in registration, participant verification, simulations, implementation, supervision, handling of disruptions, and reporting.

Indicates that policy documents serve as guidelines for implementation and planning at the school level. In the context of the Academic Ability Test, SOPs should not be viewed merely as administrative formalities but as instruments for quality control and the preservation of organizational knowledge (Safitri & Setyowati, 2023). SOPs updated based on implementation experience enable individual learning to be transformed into organizational learning, allowing for reuse when personnel or policy changes occur.

External coordination also needs to be clarified because PKBMs do not operate within a closed organizational space. Emphasizes the importance of cross-sectoral coordination in non-formal education (Khamidah et al., 2025). For the implementation of the Academic Ability Test, coordination channels with the education office, supervisors, other operators, and relevant parties must have clear points of contact so that technical issues can be resolved quickly without leaving room for misinterpretation.

Cross-Site Synthesis and Research Contributions

A cross-site comparison shows that similarities in implementation patterns are more dominant than differences. Both PKBMs have communication channels, basic facility support, a positive disposition, task distribution, and coordination mechanisms. Differences are primarily evident in material capacity and the level of procedural formalization, while the need for clarity in technical information and human resource capacity building emerged at both sites. Since the

findings stem from two case studies, these patterns should be interpreted as cross-site indications requiring further testing, rather than as generalizations applicable to all PKBMs.

The empirical contribution of this study lies in the finding that policy acceptance does not automatically result in standardized implementation capacity. Communication channels and a positive disposition are important prerequisites, but operational readiness still requires a shared understanding, technical competence, reliable material support, and documented procedures. In the two cases studied, a positive disposition appeared to help sustain implementation when technical information or competencies were not yet optimal, but this mechanism has its limits. These findings reinforce the relevance of Edwards III while emphasizing that the relationships between dimensions are mutually supportive, not mutually exclusive.

In practical terms, PKBMs need to shift their focus from merely being ready to implement to being ready to implement in a standardized manner (Asnah et al., 2026). This shift can be achieved by establishing an implementation team; developing or updating specific SOP for the Test of Academic Ability; creating readiness checklists; conducting simulations; training operators/proctors and technicians; providing backup equipment; establishing procedures for network disruptions; documenting changes in information; and conducting post-implementation evaluations. At the local government level, support should be directed toward the standardization of technical information, official clarification channels, case-based guidance, and training that emphasizes practical application rather than merely disseminating regulations.

Based on a synthesis of the research findings, there are several contributions that can strengthen the position of this study. First, positive disposition was found not only to be an implementation variable but also a compensatory factor that helps maintain the sustainability of implementation when technical information and training are not yet optimal. Second, implementation bottlenecks have shifted from infrastructure issues to human capacity issues. Third, technical communication issues emerged at two sites, indicating a cross-site nature and the potential for these to become systemic issues in policy communication. Fourth, the study shows that implementation readiness is contextual, as the number of devices is not the sole indicator of readiness. Fifth, the implementation of the Test of Academic Ability requires a balance between standardization and adaptation: core procedures must be uniform to ensure fairness and consistency in assessment, while operational strategies can be tailored to the specific conditions of each PKBM.

CONCLUSION

Based on the Edwards III model analysis, the implementation of the Test of Academic Ability policy in equivalency education at PKBM Hidayah and PKBM Salam Cordova indicates that the availability of the policy and the acceptance of implementers do not yet fully correlate with implementation capacity. Policy communication has taken place through various channels, but has not yet fully resulted in uniform technical understanding. Basic material resources are available at both sites to varying degrees, while the technical competencies of operators/proctors and technical support remain areas requiring strengthening. Implementers' attitudes tend to be positive and help maintain the continuity of the process, but they cannot replace the need for clear information, technical competencies, and documented procedures. Bureaucratic structures have supported task distribution and coordination, but the level of formalization of SOPs specific to the Test of Academic Ability varies across sites, and documentation needs to be continuously updated. A cross-site synthesis indicates that common challenges arise more from the transformation of policy into consistent operational capacity than from acceptance of the policy itself. Therefore, efforts to strengthen implementation should focus on standardizing technical information, simulation-based training, technology risk management, regularly updated SOPs, and monitoring from the preparation stage through post-implementation evaluation. This study has limitations because it was conducted at only two PKBMs in a single city, involved five key informants, and captured the early phase of policy implementation. The findings are not intended to be statistically generalized to all PKBMs but rather to provide an analytical understanding of implementation patterns within the context of this study. Future research could expand the number of sites, involve actors at the education agency level and external stakeholders, and use a longitudinal design to observe changes in implementation capacity after several cycles of the Test of Academic Ability.

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