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A portrait of affective assessment implementation in junior high schools: Assessing its ideality

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Abstract

Ideal assessment in teaching and learning should involve the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains following the Merdeka Belajar curriculum, which emphasizes Pancasila values. However, whether teachers can develop affective domain assessments optimally is still questionable. A literature study has been conducted by researchers and found that in Indonesia, teachers tend to develop cognitive domain assessments more than affective and psychomotor domain assessments. Therefore, this research uses a phenomenological approach to investigate the implementation of affective domain assessment conducted by school teachers. The participants of this study consisted of 18 middle school teachers in Indonesia. Data were collected through open-ended questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions (FGDs). Data analysis was conducted using the model by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, which consists of three stages: 1) data reduction, 2) data display, and 3) conclusion drawing. The study found that teachers understand affective assessment well and emphasize the importance of instilling affective values in education to reduce moral problems. They also emphasize the need for changing teaching strategies and providing relevant materials to help students understand their lessons. However, the planning for affective assessment is time-consuming and the implementation in middle schools is not ideal. Subject teachers often handle this assessment, which should be the responsibility of all teachers, rather than just Religion, Guidance and Counseling, and Civic Education.

Keywords: affective assessment; affective domain; junior high school; phenomenology

Introduction

Assessment and learning should encompass cognitive, affective, and psychomotor components. Teachers should conduct assessments in these three domains to monitor students' progress and provide comprehensive information about them. Teachers assess to evaluate the quality of their teaching and curriculum. The current curriculum focus on character development appears to be biased. Affective competence refers to abilities related to one's behavior and attitude. Affective competence includes attitudes, values, interests,



appreciation, and adjustment to social feelings. Affective learning aims to develop attitudes, emotions, and values (Richards & Schmidt, 2013). Measurement in the affective domain enhances students' achievement, particularly in acceptance, participation, assessment, organization, and internalization (Raimundo et al., 2013). Additionally, it can improve students' attitudes, interests, self-concept, values, and morality.

Incorporating affective aspects into behavior, values, and commitments supports students' learning achievement (Siswanto et al., 2019). The affective domain involves students' emotions and influences decision-making (Collins & O'brien, 2011). Ethnic identity also affects language learning success, involving students' subjective experiences (Widharyanto & Binawan, 2020). Emotions also affect mathematical problem-solving processes (McLeod in Cuan Li et al., 2019). Character development with affective responses contributes to positive student responses (Anderson, 1972). These aspects involve observing students' feelings and expressions, deep thinking, goal setting, and emotional control, which play a role in holistic student character development.

Mardapi states that students' affective characteristics can be explained in four aspects: attitude, interest, self-concept, and values. Attitude refers to the actions taken by students in response to something (Mardapi, 2008). Positive attitudes reflect students' favorable perceptions of specific learning experiences. Students' positive attitudes toward the learning process indicate the success of teachers in creating a pleasant learning environment. Interest is defined as a disposition that motivates students toward something. Students with strong interests will be able to overcome the difficulties they face, showing a high level of intensity in their interests. Values are related to students' beliefs about actions. These values influence students' attitudes and interests in certain things. Self-concept involves students' efforts to understand themselves in specific aspects better. Saifuddin explains that the anxiety experienced by referees often affects their decision-making during matches (Saifuddin et al., 2022). This is related to the ability to recognize strengths and weaknesses within oneself. Self-concept is important because it allows students to recognize themselves and predict themselves in the future. These four types of affective characteristics are important for teachers so that students' learning outcomes are not only evaluated based on the cognitive domain.

Furthermore, parental support in the affective aspect of the home environment also has a significant impact. It is important to recognize and reward students' achievements not only in cognitive aspects but also in affective aspects. This phenomenon contradicts the primary goal of education, which is to shape good character in the nation's children. The affective domain plays a crucial role in character education and provides a foundation for character formation in students. Prasetyono describes that students involved in communities often show a lack of affective competence, such as disrespectful behavior, dishonesty, intolerance, and irresponsibility (Prasetyono et al., 2018). Students' character is closely related to teachers' ability to assess affective aspects. Conducting an affective assessment can help students internalize these values in their daily lives. Mandura, McCoach, and Gable explain that the development of affective instruments should consider the underlying theoretical construction (McCoach et al., 2013). Teachers can accurately depict and evaluate students' affective abilities by developing effective assessment instruments. A study by Tannock and Rubinsten states that anxiety directly harms students' learning outcomes because it affects their emotions (Rubinsten & Tannock, 2010). Therefore, it is important to train students in emotion management to prevent the emergence of negative emotions. Another study by Lailiyah shows that anxiety affects students' performance (Lailiyah et al., 2021). Rubinsten and Tannock also explain that affective stimulation helps students understand information faster than those who do not receive such stimulation (Rubinsten & Tannock, 2010). Setiadi's research (2016) proposes three stages to improve assessment: planning, implementation, and reporting. In the planning stage, it is recommended that the government prioritize socialization and training in creating an assessment framework before formulating questions, as well as provide training in analyzing assessment instruments and creating rubrics for essay questions.

Additionally, effective implementation requires simplifying assessment guidelines, socialization, training in assessing affective competencies, and teacher guidance in analyzing assessment instruments. In the reporting stage, policymakers should evaluate using a 1-4 rating scale to assess students' knowledge and skills. Although the study covers all three domains simultaneously, research on affective assessment is still limited. Therefore, this study aims to explore the implementation of affective assessment at the junior high school level in Indonesia.

Method

We conducted qualitative research by adopting a phenomenological approach to explore the perceptions and experiences of junior high school teachers in conducting affective assessments. We focused on their thoughts regarding the planning, implementation, and reporting of affective assessment and the challenges teachers face. This research began with discussions with junior high school teachers from various regions in Indonesia. We selected participants for this study from schools in three regions of Indonesia (West Indonesia Region, East Indonesia Region, and Central Indonesia Region) to understand their diverse experiences.

We conducted semi-structured, in-depth interviews to collect data. We allowed participants to share their experiences and express their views on implementing affective assessment. A total of 18 teachers participated in our interviews. We used a simple interview protocol to guide the interview process. We allowed participants to share their experiences and perspectives on the topic. The interviews were conducted synchronously through Zoom, an online meeting platform, and all participants permitted us to record them. We ensured each participant received an explanation of the ongoing research and provided their consent. The interviews were conducted in Indonesian, the national language used in the field of education in Indonesia, and both the researchers and participants are fluent in Indonesian. Subsequently, the interviews were translated word by word into English. The recorded interview sessions for each participant lasted approximately one and a half hours. Questionnaires were also provided to gather additional information from the participants in this study.

Data analysis is conducted using the model by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), which consists of three stages: 1) data condensation, 2) data presentation, and 3) conclusion. The data obtained from the open-ended questionnaires and interviews through FGDs are then summarized. Data condensation involves selecting and simplifying the data by categorizing the necessary information. The results of the condensation stage, which have been organized, can be verified with field facts, and conclusions can be drawn based on them.

We used credibility and dependability criteria to validate qualitative research's reliability. Trustworthiness in this study consisted of credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. All participants voluntarily participated in the study. The interview protocol was reviewed before its use. Findings were checked as data were obtained, and all participants confirmed their interviews.

Furthermore, we transcribed the interview findings in detail and conducted an iterative data review for the study. The participants agreed with the study findings' description and provided their consent. Authenticity criteria are related to fairness, ontological, educative, catalytic, and tactical (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Although it is challenging to measure the achievement of these criteria, we encouraged authenticity criteria through the interviews. We allowed participants to gain new knowledge and awareness, understand others, be continuously encouraged and facilitated, and have expectations to apply the findings concretely in line with the research context.

Data collection was ensured to comply with the permission of all research participants. The researchers guaranteed the confidentiality of all data, including identities. All data were used solely for research purposes, ensuring that it would not impact the participants' future.

Results and Discussion

The Importance of Affective Assessment

The affective component consists of a person's evaluation of liking or emotional response toward an object or person (de Laat et al., 2013). Excessive fondness for something can cause a person to lose control over it. The high number of moral cases in Indonesia is suspected to result from suboptimal learning processes. Affective learning strategies need to be further developed. Affective learning strategies hold great promise for balancing the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains (Sipos et al., 2008). The affective domain is a part of the learning experience and is a companion to the cognitive domain (Thompson & Mintzes, 2002). Affective learning can be tailored to the learners' circumstances, situations, and conditions during the learning process. It can also be elaborated with issues relevant to the learners. This is expected to play a role in shaping the desired character traits. Teachers can initiate the design of affective learning by 1) formulating predetermined learning objectives that describe the desired outcomes and 2) analyzing the needs and characteristics of the learners. Each school's learners have unique characteristics, enabling teachers to develop their affective learning strategies accordingly, and 3) determining the type of learning to be communicated. Teachers and learners can agree to focus on aspects of the students' affective domain.

Not only focusing on the strategies teachers use in affective learning but also the urgency of the affective domain is that students' cognitive knowledge should not be the sole measure of learning achievement. The importance of affective learning is closely related to the extent of affective assessment. Miller emphasizes the significance of the affective domain in education (Miller, 2005). Firstly, educating the affective aspect of children means educating their own emotions. In this case, teachers play a controlling role in fostering stable feelings within students. Secondly, emotional states, values, attitudes, and sensitivity can hinder learning in other domains. Thirdly, schools as socialization institutions that foster morals, values, social integration, and interpersonal relationships can influence students' future lives. Interviews conducted with teachers in Eastern Indonesia, Central Indonesia, and Western Indonesia revealed that assessing students' affective aspects are done to measure their attitudes, character, behavior, interests, and values. Moral development within schools is a primary focus due to the occurrence of related cases. Puspitorini states that many individuals acquire knowledge through schooling but do not exhibit responsible behavioral changes accompanying values transfer (Puspitorini et al., 2014). The affective assessment also evaluates interactions during teaching and learning activities to monitor students' development.

Affective assessment is related to the values that can be embedded within students. Gable (1986) explains that according to Getzels, Tyler, and Rokeach, values are: 1) beliefs about what is desirable, important, or esteemed, and personally and socially accepted; 2) values that influence or guide something, such as interests, attitudes, and satisfaction; 3) values are enduring, meaning they tend to remain stable over a long period. Anderson also states that values are more challenging to change (Anderson & Bourke, 2000). The tendency for affective values to resist change is manifested through accompanying learning strategies, allowing them to integrate within students fully. These values can be used as indicators in assessing students' affective domain. The values referred to here include honesty, discipline, responsibility, confidence, and politeness. There are also values based on national values, such as love for the homeland, national defense, and tolerance. The values depicted through students' attitudes naturally require significant time; thus, teachers must plan effective assessments thoroughly.

Planning the Affective Assessment

Assessment planning is an important activity for teachers before evaluating students. The assessment conducted by teachers needs to be done accurately, thus requiring careful planning. Teachers must possess the skills to plan evaluations for students. Designing assessment frameworks and developing instruments pose challenges for teachers. Teachers are expected to prepare assessments so that the implementation can run smoothly. The current assessment

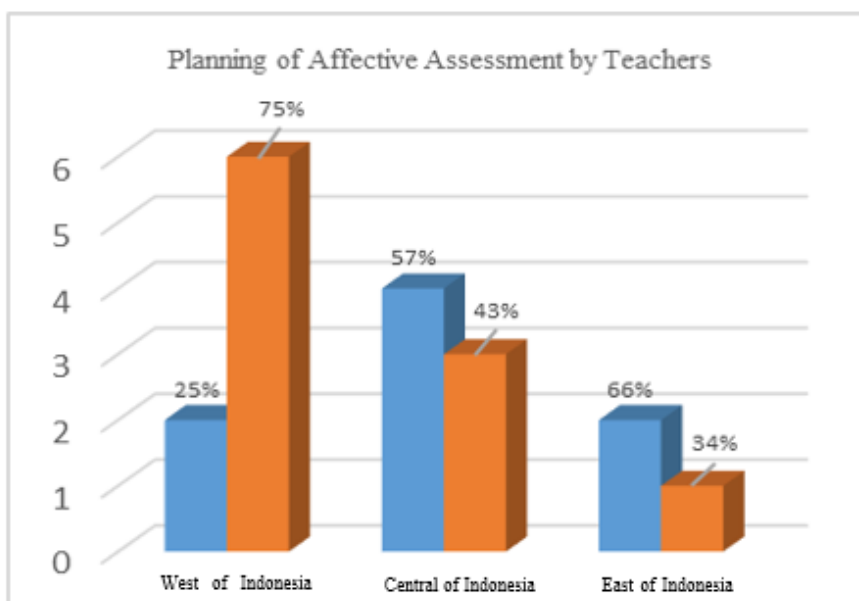
standards used by educational institutions in Indonesia state that evaluation should be conducted in all three domains: cognitive, affective, and psychomotor. Teachers must assess all three domains. There is no longer a tendency to focus solely on one domain. The affective domain, or students' attitudes, consists of politeness, concern, honesty, responsibility, confidence, and discipline. However, teachers can also plan assessments for other aspects of students' attitudes.

In the planning process, teachers identify which attitudes will be assessed. The stages of planning for developing affective instruments, according to Djemari Mardapi, are as follows (Mardapi, 2008): 1) determining instrument specifications, 2) writing the instrument, 3) determining the instrument scale, 4) establishing the scoring system, 5) reviewing the instrument, 6) conducting a pilot test, 7) analyzing the instrument, 8) assembling the instrument, 9) implementing the measurement, and 10) interpreting the measurement results. Teachers can determine the instrument's form, including attitude, interest, self-concept, and value instruments. The instrument's specification, which is part of the planning process, involves determining the assessment objectives and then developing the instrument while considering the instrument's specifications. Teachers can also determine the form and format of the instrument and its length. The planning of affective assessment needs to be tailored to the needs and specifications of the instrument. Interest instruments aim to inform teachers about students' interests in subjects or topics that capture their attention in the learning material. Attitude instruments aim to assess students' attitudes in responding to an object in the learning process. Self-concept instruments aim to identify students' strengths and weaknesses. Value instruments are interpreted as students' beliefs about something, reinforcing positive aspects of students and minimizing negative elements within them.

Figure 1 shows that in the Western region of Indonesia, 25% of teachers engage in affective assessment planning, while 75% of teachers do not engage in affective assessment planning. In the Central region of Indonesia, 57% of teachers engage in affective assessment planning, while 43% do not. In the Eastern region of Indonesia, 66% of teachers engage in affective assessment planning, while 34% have not yet engaged in affective assessment planning.

Figure 1.

A Description of How Teachers Have Implemented Affective Assessment Planning (blue color indicates the teacher made an affective assessment, orange color indicates the teacher did not make an affective assessment)



The results of the interviews conducted through Zoom video conferences indicate that teachers are aware of the importance of planning in assessment. However, almost all teachers face a common difficulty: understanding the stages involved in creating affective assessment instruments as part of the assessment planning process. The planning referred to by the teachers pertains to the technical aspect of the implementation time. This phenomenon suggests that many teachers do not understand how to create affective assessment plans.

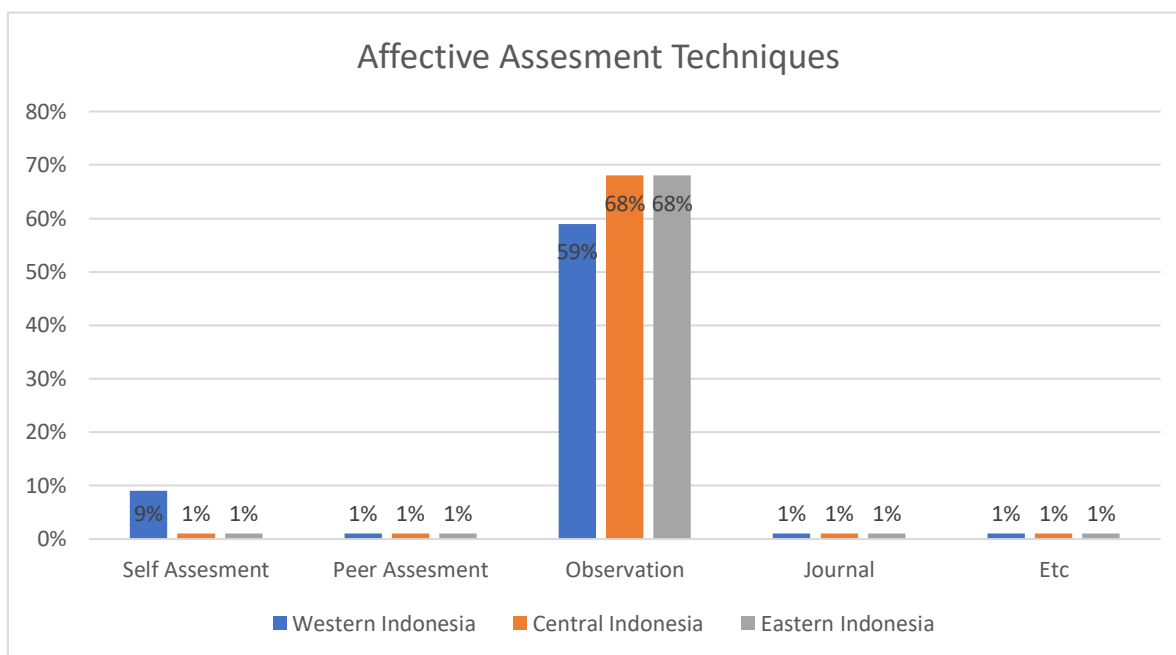
The Implementation of Affective Assessment

Affective assessment is considered to have its complexities. This was also expressed by Retnawati, stating that assessing attitudes is one of the significant obstacles to implementing affective assessment (Retnawati et al., 2016). The implementation of affective evaluation is an advanced stage of the planning process conducted by teachers. Assessment implementation is carried out in various ways. Teachers can use interviews, observations, self-assessment, peer assessment, etc. Teachers can also choose multiple techniques for evaluation. From the results of the conducted Focus Group Discussion (FGD), much information was obtained that teachers often only use observation techniques in conducting effective assessments. Teachers assess affective aspects by simply giving scores of 1-4 in the affective assessment column without considering attitude indicators. This can lead to bias, making the affective assessment unable to accurately depict students' proper attitudes. Another phenomenon observed from the FGD is that teachers conduct affective assessments when reporting students' learning outcomes. The convenience of reporting learning outcomes on the report card application means that teachers do not consider it an affective evaluation.

Figure 2.

A Description of How Teachers Implement Affective Assessment

(blue color indicates the teacher made an affective assessment, orange color indicates the teacher did not make an affective assessment)



Another example is one teacher who plans for peer assessment in project-based learning activities but fails to implement it. Time is the biggest constraint for teachers. Teachers often face pressure related to cognitive learning outcomes, so even if there is free time, it is usually utilized to create cognitive-based questions. Figure 2 depicts the implementation of assessments conducted by teachers. Observation is one of the favorite methods among teachers because it is considered practical, as teachers perceive creating affective assessment instruments as challenging. Some teachers in the FGD also expressed that creating attitude instruments is a difficult task. School principals rarely inquire about affective assessment instruments, as they understand teachers' difficulties. The perception that affective assessment is underestimated also impacts teachers' lack of attention to it. Cognitive domain assessment

results are considered more important than affective assessment results. The constraints often experienced by teachers come from within themselves. Low self-confidence often prevents teachers from developing themselves and creating affective assessment instruments. Subject Teacher Meetings (MGMP) also do not allow teachers to elaborate on affective assessment. In some schools, it was found that affective assessment is solely assigned to Religious Education teachers, Guidance and Counseling teachers, and Pancasila and Civics Education teachers. Another challenge in conducting affective assessment is that teachers struggle to provide scores and categorize based on assessed attitudes. This was also discussed in Setiadi's study, which identified the following difficulties: 1) too many formats that confuse teachers, 2) the need for appropriate assessment tools, 3) difficulty in observing many students, and 4) requiring a significant amount of observation time. Teachers must learn to categorize and describe students' attitudes in reporting learning outcomes (Setiadi, 2020).

In the end, the implications of this research highlight the importance of understanding teachers' experiences, perceptions, and perspectives when exploring challenges and potential solutions related to affective assessment practices. Teachers are aware of the role of affective assessment in promoting students' moral development and social awareness. However, there is a need for support and resources to assist teachers in creating appropriate and effective assessment tools that align with their affective assessment goals. Religious studies teachers, guidance and counseling, and civic education often handle affective assessment in secondary schools. However, this indicates that affective assessment should be the responsibility of all subject teachers. This implies the need for collective efforts among teachers from various disciplines to integrate affective assessment into their teaching practices. Further training for teachers in developing affective instruments is necessary to effectively measure the implementation of Pancasila values in the Merdeka Curriculum.

Conclusion

As a result of the analysis, the following conclusions can be drawn: 1) Teachers understand affective assessment well and even explain the importance of instilling affective values concerning current moral issues. Teachers also mention the importance of changing teaching strategies following the development of the times so that students find it easier to grasp the material presented by teachers; 2) Teachers face constraints in affective assessment planning due to time limitations, and they have not yet developed affective assessment instruments; 3) The implementation of affective assessment in junior high schools is not ideal, as the assessment that every subject teacher should carry out is often assigned to Religious Education, Guidance and Counseling (BK), and Pancasila and Civics Education (PPKn) teachers. The assessment conducted by these subjects is mainly limited to the online report card filling process. The difficulties experienced by teachers in creating and implementing affective assessments need to be reassessed by relevant stakeholders. The government can also collaborate with Teacher Training and Education Institutes (LPTK) to provide training related to affective assessment. This aims to enhance teachers' understanding of implementing an ideal affective assessment process.

It is important to emphasize that affective assessment should be integrated across all subjects, rather than being the responsibility of specific teachers (such as religious studies, guidance and counseling, civic education, for example). Affective values and moral issues are relevant in various subjects, and all teachers should be encouraged to incorporate and assess the affective domain within their respective subjects. This can be achieved through collaborative planning, where teachers from different subjects develop assessment strategies that align with the Merdeka Belajar curriculum. Providing relevant resources and materials to support teachers in developing affective assessments would be beneficial. These resources should include examples of effective assessment instruments, guidelines for aligning assessments with Pancasila values, and teaching strategies that promote the development of affective skills. Providing teachers with the necessary resources, they will be better prepared to design and implement assessments that effectively target the affective domain.

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