



School Readiness for the Implementation of the Academic Competency Test at SMA Negeri 2 Percut Sei Tuan

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the school's readiness to implement the Academic Ability Test (TKA) for Grade XII students at SMA Negeri 2 Percut Sei Tuan. A descriptive qualitative approach was employed. Research informants were selected using purposive sampling and included the vice-principal for curriculum affairs, Grade XII teachers, proctors, technicians, and students. Data collection involved observation, interviews, and documentation, while data analysis utilized the Miles and Huberman interactive analysis model. Data validity was verified through source and technique triangulation. The results indicate that the school has undertaken various preparations for the TKA, including disseminating information to students and parents, strengthening classroom instruction, conducting trial tests and simulations, providing Computer-Based Test (CBT) facilities and infrastructure, and coordinating among the principal, teachers, proctors, technicians, and educational staff. Nevertheless, challenges remain, such as disparities in students' academic abilities, the reasoning-based nature of the test questions, and the need to optimize technological infrastructure. Overall, the study concludes that the school has demonstrated a high level of readiness for TKA implementation, supported by effective communication, adequate resources, strong commitment from the entire school community, and well-coordinated execution. This study provides empirical evidence regarding school readiness for TKA implementation and serves as a reference for schools and policymakers in improving the implementation of academic assessment policies.

Keywords: school readiness, implementation, academic ability test

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a vital role in enhancing the quality of human resources and realizing national educational goals. One of the government's efforts to improve educational quality involves refining the learning evaluation system. Driven by scientific advancements and the demands of 21st-century competencies, Indonesia's educational evaluation system continues to evolve; it now aims to measure not only mastery of subject matter but also critical thinking, reasoning, and problem-solving abilities. One such reform is the implementation of the Academic Ability Test (TKA), as stipu-

lated in the Regulation of the Minister of Basic and Secondary Education of the Republic of Indonesia Number 9 of 2025 concerning the Academic Ability Test. Article 1, paragraph (1) defines the Academic Ability Test as a process for measuring students' academic achievement in specific subjects. Furthermore, Article 3 outlines the objectives of the TKA: to obtain standardized data on student academic achievement, serve as a basis for academic selection, improve the quality of assessment by educators, and support educational quality assurance (Ministry of Basic and Secondary

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Education, 2025). Additionally, Article 13, paragraph (3) explains that TKA results may be used as a factor in the selection process for admission to higher levels of education.

The implementation of the Academic Ability Test as a new policy requires readiness not only from students but also from schools, which serve as the primary implementers. Schools are responsible for ensuring that every stage of the TKA process adheres to government-established regulations. This readiness encompasses human resources, facilities and infrastructure, instructional management, and coordination among those responsible for implementation. These requirements are underscored in Article 7, paragraph (1) of the Regulation of the Minister of Basic and Secondary Education Number 9 of 2025, which mandates that educational institutions administering the TKA meet specific criteria—including the availability of computer equipment, internet connectivity, a reliable power supply, proctors, technicians, and other supporting tools. These provisions demonstrate that the successful implementation of the TKA depends not only on students' academic abilities but also on the school's readiness to implement the policy effectively. SMA Negeri 2 Percut Sei Tuan is one of the schools administering the Academic Ability Test (TKA) for Grade XII students. Preliminary observations indicate that the school has undertaken various preparations prior to the test, including disseminating information to teachers, students, and parents; conducting trial runs and simulations; appointing proctors and technicians; and providing facilities and infrastructure for Computer-Based Testing (CBT). Nevertheless, several challenges remain, such as disparities in students' academic abilities, the reasoning-based nature of the test questions, and the need to optimize technology infrastructure and coordination among the implementation team. These conditions demonstrate that school preparation is a crucial factor in ensuring the successful implementation of the Academic Ability Test.

Research on the Academic Ability Test (TKA) has been conducted by several researchers. Mubarak et al. (2026) stated that the TKA enhances students' critical thinking, analytical, and problem-solving skills. Marzuki and Mazlan (2026) explained that the application of deep learning contributes positively to improving TKA results. Naiborhu et al. (2026) revealed that TKA implementation still faces challenges regarding school readiness, resource provision, policy communication, and the adjustment of learning processes. Chalida et al. (2026) explained that the successful execution of the computer-based TKA is influenced by the readiness of facilities and infrastructure, teacher competence, and the conduct of simulations prior to the actual assessment. Meanwhile, Alam et al. (2026) stated that the successful implementation of the TKA is influenced by the readiness of school principals, teachers, and educational staff, as well as available support systems.

This study employs George C. Edward III's policy implementation theory, which posits that successful policy implementation is influenced by four key aspects: communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure (Edward III, 1980). These four aspects are considered relevant for analyzing school readiness in implementing the TKA, as they reflect the factors influencing the success of policy implementation at the educational unit level.

Based on the literature review, most previous studies have focused on the functions of the TKA, learning strategies, student learning outcomes, or policy implementation in general. Research specifically examining school readiness for TKA implementation—using George C. Edward III's policy implementation perspective, particularly regarding Grade XII students—remains relatively limited. Furthermore, no research has yet examined school readiness for TKA implementation at SMA Negeri 2 Percut Sei Tuan. This situation indicates a research gap that serves as the basis for conducting this study. Based on the preceding de-



scription, the research problem focuses on how SMA Negeri 2 Percut Sei Tuan prepares to administer the Academic Ability Test (TKA) for Grade XII students, examined through the lenses of communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure. This study aims to analyze the school's preparations for the test based on these four policy implementation aspects. The findings are expected to contribute to the study of educational policy implementation and serve as a basis for evaluation by the school and stakeholders to enhance the quality of the Academic Ability Test administration.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive design to gain an in-depth understanding of the school's preparations for the Academic Ability Test (TKA) for Grade XII students at SMA Negeri 2 Percut Sei Tuan. This approach was selected for its ability to depict actual conditions in the field from the informants' perspectives. The analysis utilizes George C. Edward III's policy implementation theory, which encompasses four indicators: communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure (Kadji, 2015).

The research was conducted at SMA Negeri 2 Percut Sei Tuan, Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatra. Informants were selected using purposive sampling (Sugiyono, 2019; Razak, 2017) based on their involvement in and knowledge of the Academic Ability Test administration. The informants included the Deputy Principal for Curriculum Affairs, Grade XII teachers, proctors, technicians, and Grade XII students.

Data were collected through observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted to examine various forms of school preparation; interviews were used to gather information regarding preparations, challenges, and school efforts in addressing the Academic Ability Test (TKA); and documentation served as supporting data, including school pro-

files, TKA preparation schedules, committee appointment decrees, socialization records, and other documents related to TKA implementation.

Data validity was verified using source triangulation and technique triangulation (Sugiyono, 2019). Data analysis employed the Miles and Huberman interactive model, comprising data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data were analyzed based on George C. Edward III's four policy implementation indicators to obtain an overview of how SMA Negeri 2 Percut Sei Tuan prepares for the Academic Ability Test (TKA) for Grade XII students.

RESULTS

School preparations for the Academic Ability Test (TKA) for Grade XII students at SMA Negeri 2 Percut Sei Tuan involved various initiatives designed to support student readiness prior to the assessment. Based on observations and interviews, these preparations focused not only on enhancing students' academic abilities but also encompassed administrative, technical, and psychological aspects. The entire preparation process was carried out through coordination among the school administration, subject teachers, guidance and counseling teachers, educational staff, students, and parents, ensuring that the TKA was conducted in accordance with established regulations.

The initial step taken by the school was to conduct a socialization session regarding the Academic Ability Test for all Grade XII students. This session took place prior to the exam to provide an understanding of the TKA policy, implementation mechanisms, registration procedures, participant data verification, exam schedules, and the use of the Computer-Based Test (CBT) system. Information was conveyed in stages to ensure all students understood the necessary preparatory steps before taking the assessment. Through this socialization, students gained an overview of the TKA implementation process, enabling them to prepare in advance and reducing confusion during the actual exam. Outreach efforts are directed not only at stu-

dents but also involve parents, serving to strengthen the partnership between the school and the family. Parental involvement aims to foster an understanding of the importance of the Academic Ability Test (TKA) and to encourage a supportive learning environment at home. Through communication between the school and parents, the student preparation process extends beyond classroom activities, continuing at home with parental guidance and supervision of the child's studies. This approach demonstrates the school's commitment to establishing communication that engages all parties involved in the implementation of the TKA.

In addition to raising awareness, the school has adjusted its instructional processes to enhance students' academic readiness. Based on research findings, teachers have developed teaching strategies tailored to the characteristics of the Academic Ability Test (TKA), which emphasizes critical thinking, analytical skills, and reasoning. One such adjustment involves reinforcing learning materials covered from Grade 10 through Grade 12. This review helps students recall previously learned concepts and strengthens their understanding of material likely to appear on the TKA.

Instructional reinforcement is also achieved through intensive practice with test questions. Teachers provide practice questions that mirror the characteristics of the TKA and discuss the solutions in detail. These activities aim to familiarize students with questions that require analytical and reasoning skills. Furthermore, the school collaborates with various learning platforms and organizations that administer mock exams, giving students the opportunity to practice with a wider variety of questions. These partnerships broaden the learning experience and help students recognize the types of questions they are likely to encounter during the actual TKA.

Throughout the preparation process, teachers act not only as instructors delivering content but also as mentors who provide motivation and guidance. They actively offer advice on study strategies and test-taking techniques while

encouraging students to remain confident as they approach the assessment. This support is provided both during regular classroom instruction and through supplementary activities, such as ongoing practice sessions and question reviews. The teachers' role as mentors positively impacts student motivation and helps alleviate the anxiety that often arises leading up to the Academic Ability Test.

The school's preparation is also evident in the provision of facilities and infrastructure to support the Computer-Based Test (CBT) format of the Academic Ability Test. Research indicates that the school has prepared computer laboratories, hardware, internet connectivity, and testing rooms, and has inspected all equipment prior to use. These preparations ensure that all facilities function correctly, thereby preventing technical issues during the assessment. Given that the TKA is administered using a computer-based system, infrastructure readiness is a key aspect requiring the school's attention.

Beyond merely providing facilities, the school also conducts simulations of the Computer-Based Test (CBT) system prior to the actual exam. These simulations aim to familiarize students with the mechanics of the computer-based exam—ranging from logging into the system and answering questions to concluding the test. Through these simulations, students become more accustomed to using computer equipment, thereby reducing the likelihood of technical errors and alleviating anxiety during the actual TKA. The simulations also allow the school to identify potential issues, enabling necessary adjustments to be made before the assessment takes place.

As part of the strategy to enhance student readiness, the school regularly conducts practice tests and exam simulations. These practice sessions provide students with the opportunity to gauge their academic abilities while identifying material they have not yet mastered. By reviewing the results, students can pinpoint their remaining weaknesses and establish study priorities before taking the Academic Ability Test (TKA). Meanwhile, teachers utilize the results to evaluate which topics



require reinforcement during the instructional process.

Conducting practice tests serves not only as a means to evaluate academic proficiency but also as a way to practice time management during exams. Students gain experience answering questions within the allotted time, enabling them to adjust their problem-solving strategies for the actual exam. This process boosts student confidence by providing experience that closely mirrors the conditions of the actual Academic Ability Test.

Overall, SMA Negeri 2 Percut Sei Tuan's preparation for the Academic Ability Test is carried out systematically through a range of complementary activities. Initiatives such as disseminating information to students and parents, strengthening the learning process, providing Computer-Based Test (CBT) infrastructure, offering teacher guidance, and conducting practice tests and simulations demonstrate the school's commitment to building comprehensive student readiness. These preparations aim not only to improve academic performance but also to ensure technical and psychological readiness, thereby better equipping students for the Academic Ability Test.

DISCUSSION

School preparation for the Academic Ability Test (TKA) is a key factor determining the successful implementation of the policy at the educational unit level. Implementing the TKA requires not only the readiness of students—the primary participants in the assessment—but also the school's readiness to manage the various aspects that support the policy's effective execution. Research findings indicate that SMA Negeri 2 Percut Sei Tuan has undertaken various preparatory measures, including informing students and parents, reinforcing the learning process, providing CBT-based infrastructure, and conducting practice tests and exam simulations. These various forms of preparation demonstrate the school's efforts to build students' academic,

technical, and psychological readiness in an integrated manner, ensuring that the Academic Ability Test is conducted in accordance with the established objectives.

When analyzed using George C. Edward III's policy implementation theory, the various preparatory measures undertaken by the school reflect the execution of four key dimensions of policy implementation: communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure. These four dimensions are interconnected and play a crucial role in determining the success of a policy's implementation. Edward III explains that a well-designed policy does not guarantee the achievement of its objectives if the implementation process lacks effective communication, adequate resources, the commitment of implementers, and clear organizational coordination. Therefore, the successful execution of the Academic Ability Test (TKA) depends not only on the policy's content but also on the school's capacity to implement it. The communication aspect is evident in the information sessions conducted for students and parents prior to the Academic Ability Test. These sessions serve as a vital initial step, providing an understanding of the policy's objectives, implementation mechanisms, administrative procedures, and the use of the computer-based testing system. Delivering information in stages allows students to grasp every phase of the TKA process, ensuring they have sufficient time to prepare. Furthermore, the involvement of parents in these sessions demonstrates that the school views students not merely as the targets of the policy but also regards families as partners in ensuring the successful implementation of the TKA.

According to George C. Edward III, communication is the process of conveying information clearly, consistently, and in a manner easily understood by all parties involved in policy implementation. Poorly conveyed information can lead to divergent perceptions, potentially hindering the policy's execution. In this study, the information sessions conducted by SMA Negeri 2 Percut Sei

Tuan demonstrate the school's effort to minimize the risk of misinformation by communicating early with all stakeholders. The communication established among the school, students, and parents also reflects a level of coordination that fosters student readiness for the Academic Ability Test. These findings align with research (Chalida et al., 2026) indicating that the effectiveness of outreach and information dissemination is a key factor determining the successful implementation of technology-based Academic Ability Tests. Systematic communication enhances students' understanding of assessment procedures, thereby better preparing them for the exam. Research by Alam et al. (2026) further demonstrates that effective communication among schools, teachers, students, and parents contributes to the successful implementation of educational policies by fostering a shared understanding of policy objectives and operational mechanisms.

Beyond communication, successful school preparation also relies on resource-related factors. In George C. Edward III's policy implementation theory, resources encompass not only the availability of personnel but also human resource competencies, supporting facilities, budgets, and the technology utilized in policy execution. Research findings indicate that SMA Negeri 2 Percut Sei Tuan has effectively leveraged its resources by strengthening teacher competence in preparing students for the Academic Ability Test. Teachers have adjusted their instructional strategies by integrating curriculum content across grades X through XII, increasing the focus on reasoning-based questions, and providing practice exercises tailored to the specific characteristics of the Academic Ability Test.

Adjusting teaching strategies in this manner demonstrates that teachers are not merely focused on delivering curriculum content but are also striving to cultivate the critical thinking, analytical, and problem-solving skills that are hallmarks of the Academic Ability Test (TKA). This approach enables students to grasp concepts deeply rather than simply rote-memorizing subject matter.

Reinforcing learning through continuous practice exercises helps students recognize question patterns and enhances their ability to solve problems requiring reasoning.

The reinforcement of learning—achieved through content review, practice exercises, mock tests, and teacher guidance—reflects the school's commitment to boosting student readiness for the Academic Ability Test. This aligns with findings by Mubarak et al. (2026), who explain that student success in the TKA is influenced by a learning process centered on conceptual understanding and the development of higher-order thinking skills. Marzuki and Mazlan (2026) further suggest that implementing "deep learning" can improve TKA results by encouraging students to comprehend concepts more comprehensively. Additionally, Irawati et al. (2025) explain that intensive teacher guidance contributes to improved academic and psychological readiness among students, while Vidyadhari et al. (2026) state that teacher support can alleviate academic anxiety, thereby better preparing students for the assessment.

The preparatory measures taken by SMA Negeri 2 Percut Sei Tuan also demonstrate that the implementation of the Academic Ability Test focuses not only on student readiness but also serves as part of the school's broader effort to enhance the quality of instruction. This is consistent with Elga Andina (2025), who explains that the TKA functions not merely as a tool for academic selection but also as an instrument for monitoring and ensuring educational quality. TKA results can serve as a basis for evaluating student academic achievement, improving instructional quality, and formulating educational policies. The difference is that Elga Andina's research places greater emphasis on the function of the TKA as an instrument for ensuring educational quality, whereas this study focuses on school preparedness for the TKA's implementation.

In addition to strengthening instruction, the availability of facilities and infrastructure is a crucial factor in supporting schools as they prepare for the TKA. Conducting a Computer-Based Test



(CBT) requires schools to provide computer laboratories, computer hardware, internet connectivity, and examination rooms, as well as to run simulations of the CBT system prior to the actual exam. Such preparedness aims not only to ensure the smooth conduct of the assessment but also to help students adapt to the computer-based testing system.

The importance of infrastructure readiness is also highlighted by Juriyah et al. (2025), who state that technological facilities are a key indicator of successful implementation regarding the Academic Ability Test. Similarly, Chalida et al. (2026) explain that the readiness of computer hardware, internet networks, and the conduct of simulations contribute to minimizing technical issues during the assessment. Therefore, resource readiness at SMA Negeri 2 Percut Sei Tuan is reflected not only in teacher competence but also in the availability of facilities capable of optimally supporting the administration of the Academic Ability Test.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that SMA Negeri 2 Percut Sei Tuan has adequately prepared for the Academic Ability Test (TKA) for Grade XII students through various efforts. These include disseminating information to students and parents, strengthening instruction, conducting trial tests and simulations, providing Computer-Based Test (CBT) infrastructure, and coordinating among the school community. These preparations demonstrate the school's commitment to supporting the TKA implementation across academic, technical, and administrative aspects. When viewed through the lens of George C. Edward III's policy implementation theory, the school's preparations reflect the aspects of communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure. Nevertheless, challenges remain, such as disparities in students' academic abilities, the nature of test questions requiring critical thinking and reasoning skills, and the need to optimize technological facilities to support computer-based assessments.

The study results indicate that the success of the school's preparation for the Academic Ability Test is determined not only by student readiness but also by the school organization's readiness to manage communication, resources, coordination, and ongoing instructional support. Therefore, efforts to improve instructional quality, strengthen teacher competence, and optimize facilities and infrastructure must be sustained to ensure the Academic Ability Test can be implemented more effectively in the future.

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