Curriculum Implementation at Elementary Schools
A Study on "Best Practices" Done by Elementary School Teachers in Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating the Curriculum

Dr. Rusman, M.Pd
Chairman of the Graduate Study Program Development Curriculum Indonesia University of Education.

Abstract

Applying a new curriculum, namely implementation of 2013 Curriculum at schools has been commenced in July 2013. The implementation of the curriculum is expected to give a push to an increasing quality of managing and processing educational efforts towards betterments at every unit of learning and education. Backgrounded by application of the curiculum, the present study is geard to reveal problematic aspects dealing with a query of "How do elementary school teachers respond to implementation of 2013 curriculum in Bandung city viewed from the activity of planning, implementing, and evaluating the curriculum?" and "What best practices are applicably implementable in terms of planning, implementing, and evaluating the curriculum done by elementary school teachers in Bandung city?" Results of the study indicate that school teachers' response to the implementation of 2013 curriculum falls into the category of *positive*. As of the activity of planning, it falls into the category of very *positive* while the activities of planning and evaluating the curriculum, they fall into the category of *positive*. There exists several "best practices" worth applying in terms of planning, implementing and evaluating the 2013 curiculum by the elementary school teachers in Bandung city. The best practices include activities of "sharing", "hearing", "in-house training", and "modeling real teaching" through their implementation at *KKG* or cluster *KKG*.
Keywords: 2013 Curriculum, Teachers' Responses, Curriculum Best Practice Implementation.

1. Introduction

The enactment of *Peraturan Pemerintah Nomor 32 Tahun 2013* concerning Revision on *Peraturan Pemerintah Nomor 19 Tahun 2005* concerning National Education Standards and *Permendikbud No. 81A* concerning Curriculum Implementation aiming at quality enhancement of education especially through the implementation of the new curriculum of the year 2013 commencing in July 2013 in schools and *madrasah*. There are several factors possibly the cause of being successful or the other way around in implementing the curriculum. Viewed from the dimension of curriculum, Hasan (2007:479) explains that curriculum implementation means the dimension of process. He further says that "....the dimension of process is the implementation of what is planned in the dimension of document. The implementation could probably be similar but could also be different from what is planned in the document". Accordingly, conclusion can be drawn that curriculum implementation (the dimension of process, is termed as *implemented*, *observed*, or *reality*) has strongly something to do with written document (dimension of document).

Ornstein & Hunkins (2009:250) echo the aforementioned idea that *"successful curriculum implementation results from careful planning, which focuses on three factors: people, programs, and process"*. They further elaborate that some schools have failed in implementing curriculum because of negtlecting the factor of people. Instead of focusing on the factor of people, the schools have devoted a lot of their time and budget on merely modifying the programs or on the process. On the other side, focusing on new programs give new ways to people to achieve new programs at schools. The process of organizing remains important for the reason that it motivates people to guide components needed to attain successful implementation.

As of the imlementation of curriculum (the case of *KTSP*) commenced since the year of 2006, problems raised on the development of the curriculum proved to be uncertainty on the curriculum developers' part at schools in the districts in developing the curriculum according to the potentials and characteristics owned by the schools and the districts. This is due to the low competency as owned by curriculum developers in making efforts to develop the curriculum. To make things worse, no actions of increasing the existing competencies are taken in the forms of training and technical assistance for the curriculum developers to work optimally.

Results of the research conducted in six Regencies/Cities of West Java Province show that experiences of the teachers as curiculum developers team involved in training or technical assitance in general fall into the category of *sufficient* with the percentage of 42%, and *less than sufficient* of 45%. Further explained is that 45% of the teachers as members of the curriculum developers team has never been involved in the training or technical assistance programs as run by the KTSP development, syllabus, and the *RPP* (Susilana, 2013:156). The findings are in line in terms of similarity with the results of the research showing in general that the quality of elementary school curriculum in the six regencies and cities of West Java Province falling into the category of insufficient of

2%, less than sufficient of 50%, and sufficient of 48% (Susilana, 2013:168).

Based on the findings, in the efforts of elevating curriculum developers team's competency at schools and districts while at the same time increasing the quality of *KTSP* document prepared by the team, it is urged that earnestly intensive steps be taken. One of possible steps would be running a program of training with assistance during the period of developping process and the process of structuring the curriculum.

Findings resulted from previous research conducted show a condition of slight difference. There are schools with no curriculum developers team and have no *KTSP*. A quite big number of schools claim to have *KTSP* by only adopting *KTSP* developed by other schools or other parties. As expected, *KTSP* is supposed to create a variety. However, as a matter of fact, *KTSP* brings with it similarities. The reality as indicated is, certainly, due to the various factors. One of them is a seemingly uncertainty on the curriculum developers team's part at schools, especially competencies as owned by the team in developing the *KTSP* and its supporting facilities.

Successful implementation of curriculum as coined by Ornstein & Hunkins (2009:250) is influenced by three facotrs, namely people, programs, and processes. As of the factor of people, in Indonesia, teachers are positioned as strategic point of departure in developing and implementing the curriculum at schools. Attainment of the goals as stated depends on the teachers' performances including their professional competencies, motivation, abilities, dedication, being determined in terms of self confidence, number of experiences, academic qualifications, active participation in professional education or training progrms, and the period of time for teaching practices. Other than the teacher factor, curriculum implementation has something to do, to some extent, with the factor of programs which, in this study, is assumed as curriculum document prepared by the curriculum developers team. The quality of well-structured curriculum document should bring with it a refference for the excecutives (the teachers in this sense) to implement the curriculum readily well.

In reference to the aforementioned explanation, the query of the present study is put forward as follows: How do elementary school teachers respond to the 2013 curriculum implementation in Bandung city in the light of planning, implementing, and evaluating the curriculum?, and What "Best Practices" would be worth adopting from the teachers in Bandung city in terms of implementing the 2013 curriculum implementation in its plan, implementation, and evaluation?

Based on the queries as formulated, the present study has its aim of gaining the picture of 2013 curriculum implementation, especially the one which has some crucial things to do with the "best practices" worth adopting in terms of planning, implementing, and evaluating how the curriculum works under the management of elementary school teachers in Bandung city. The present study also aims at providing practical uses and benefit besides serving as a direction to teachers and the school willing to implement the 2013 curriculum.

2. Theoretical Study

Upon consulting Oxford Advance Learner Dictionary, it is found that the word *"implementation"* means *"an action of putting something into effect"*. In relation to the meaning of *implementation* in the field of curriculum, Miller & Seller (1985) define the word *implementation* with three approaches, namely: a) implementation is defined as an activity; b) implementation means an effort made to enhance the process of interaction between the teacher developers and the teachers themselves; and c) implementation is an entity separated from curriculum components. Saylor and Alexander in Miller and Seller (1985:246) echoes the idea that curriculum implementation as a process of applying the curriculum planning (program) in the form of learning activity involves a student-teacher interaction in the context of school environments. So do Fullan & Pomfret in Marsh (2004:65) emphasizing that the term *"implementation"* refers to "actual use" of curriculum/syllabus or anything in practices. Hasan (1984:11) echoes what Fullan and Pomfret put forward that curriculum implementation is *"efforts made to realize ideas, concepts, and values in the written form into reality"*.

Marsh (2004:65-75) further explains that curriculum is a plan in the first place. Curriculum turns into a reality only when teachers implement it to students and the class in a real world. Planning and developing thoroughly put into actions is indeed very important. Nevertheless, those actions would be meaningless if the teachers are not aware of producing outputs and not skilled enough to implement the curriculum in their classes. As Fullan and Scott in Marsh (2004) point out, a set of curriculum, however close-to-perfect it is planned, must be implemented if it is to bring outcomes to the benefit of learners. There are thousands of curriculum documents held in stacks and have never been implemented in a smart way. The importance of curriculum, as a matter of fact, does not automatically bring with it an understanding of what is demanded from a set of curriculum and what problems it may raise.

Pinar and Irwin (2005:118-120) say that curriculum implementation can be understood from two matters namely curriculum implementation as instrumental action and as situational praxis. Firstly, curriculum implementation as instrumental action. Program implementation can be found in producer-consumer paradigm. In other words, this paradigm views the implementation in one-way angle in which a specialist produces something for an ordinary person as his consumer. A curriculum specialist produces a program (of curriculum) for a consumer represented by teachers and students. The act of implementing the curriculum in this paradigm raises a basic

problem related to how communication takes place effectively with those who are not well-involved in terms of stating objectives, planning human resource, teaching-learning strategy, and planning an evaluation. Therefore, a matter of implementation has often been viewed in terms of effectiveness in communication. In this perspective, a competent teacher implementing curriculum should be the one who has skills and techniques oriented to an efficient control. A concept of *"know how to do"* in this implementation sticks together in the framework of scientific and technological thought and action lessening human's competency towards instrumental reason and instrumental action. Right here, teachers are categorized rule-oriented ones. Secondly, curriculum implementation as situational praxis. Other view of implementation is based on experiences in a class situation, and this proves to be the world of teachers' experiences with their students. If interpreting the curriculum implementation as praxis should take place, the differing assumption underlying the implementation as instrumental would be as follows.

Assumption 1: basic human vocation. In this view, a teacher being asked to implement X curriculum should not be regarded being as thing but being as human who has an interest to become something in accordance with what he and other people expect to see while an instrumental view of the implementation technizises the teacher, thus in this case subjectivity being hidden.

Assumption 2: a human having an ability to change the reality (in this case, changing himself and the X curriculum). In this view, a teacher is regarded as a person who acts and also a person who creates his own reality. Therefore, he interprets according to his school of thought about X curriculum and situationally involved in this change.

Assumption 3: education is never neutral. In this view, curriculum implementation is a political action. In the context of social relationship, an activity of implementation is a matter of power and control.

3. Research Methodology

The present study is conducted in Bandung city with 25 elementary school teachers being the target. The elementary schools selected as a model or piloting project of the 2013 curriculum implementation is 10 in number. The method used is a survey with questionnaire as instrument and a list of form to be filled with an experience. Data analysis is done using percentage-descriptive and qualitative-descriptive statistics.

4. Findings

There are 2 findings resulting from the present study namely teachers' response to 2013 curriculum implementation, and "best practices" of 2013 curriculum implementation.

a. Teachers' Response

The response of elementary school teachers to 2013 curriculum implementation in Bandung city on the three activities (planning, implementing, and evaluating) falls into the category of *positive*. The response is illustrated below.
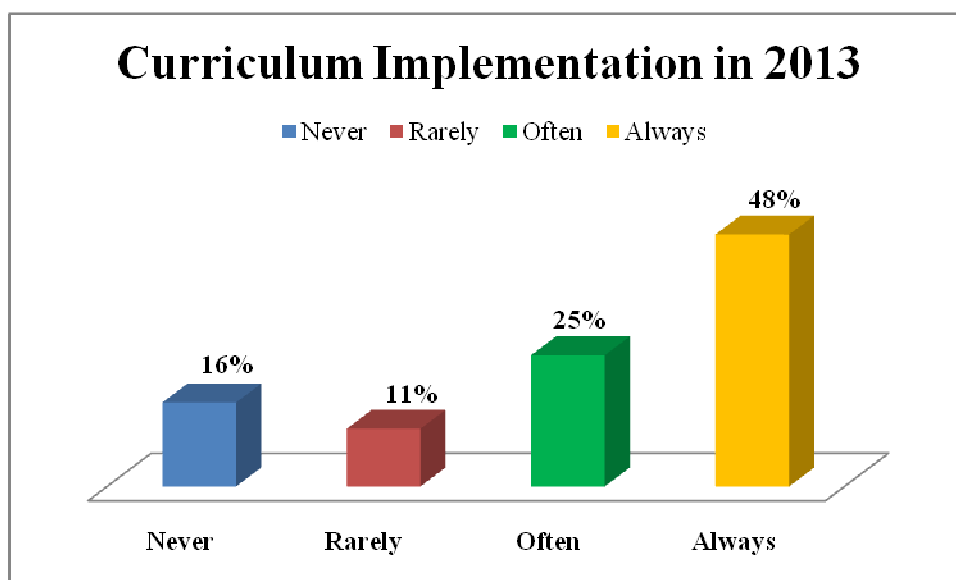

Illustration 1. Teachers' Response to 2013 Curriculum Implementation

The illustration above indicates that teachers' response to 2013 curriculum implementation is positive. Still, there are teachers who have not implemented 2013 curriculum on the three activities as much as 16% although all respondents of the study are teachers who have participated in 2013 curriculum training. It means that a number of elementary school teachers have not yet grasped the 2013 curriculum and therefore have not yet got the ability of implementing the curriculum. To cope with, headmaster or otherwise other person in charge at educational local offices involved should take necessary steps to socialize and srengthen the 2013 curriculum implementation at the learning processes in schools.

Table 1 shows that 20% of the teachers have negative response to the implementation of learning and the evaluation of learning. It explains to a certain extent that the implementation of leraning based on 2013 curriculum emphasizes on thematic and scientific approaches, and the evaluation of learning based on the 2013 curriculum emphasizes on authentic approach. These two kinds of approaches sound a bit new to the teachers giving negative responses possibly due to their less comprehensive understanding on the matter, while, as indicated, as of planning for learning based on 2013 curriculum, quite positive responses are gained. Part of the reason is that in general teachers see no significant difference between the new curriculum of 2013 and the previous one.

Table 1
Teachers' Responses to the Planning, Implementing,
and Evaluating 2013 Curriculum Implementation

No	Statement	Never	Rarely	Often	Always	Total
1	Learning Plan	8%	6%	23%	63%	100%
2	Implementation of Learning	20%	14%	23%	42%	100%
3	Assessment of Learning	20%	13%	28%	38%	100%
	Average	**16%**	**11%**	**25%**	**48%**	**100%**

b. Best Practices

Information given by teachers using format to be filled about the "best practices" in the activities on implementing 2013 curriculum is as follows.

1) "Best Practices" in the activity of planning the learning activity.

In the activity of planning the learning process, teachers are obliged to make an *RPP*. To make it easy in doing the activity of developing the *RPP*, elementary school teachers in Bandung city do it colaboratively in *KKG* or a group of *KKG* in one cluster. RPP is made by referring to the teacher's book and student's book prepared by the Government, with some developing using additional materials and methods. KKG activities are held once a week and there discussed issues of things like: 1. reading the syllabus to be applied in the RPP; 2. RPP is made a day before the implementation of learning activities; 3. tools/materials/media to be provided is prepared accordingly with the condition of the school environments; 4. analyzing teacher's book and student's book to schedule the implementation of learning, just in case that there is something needs revising.

In some schools in Bandung city, say for example SDPN Sabang, early every academic year, teachers hold an in-house training where competent resource persons are invited to deliver speeches on 2013 Curriculum. In this event, parents of the students are asked to participate in socializing the curriculum and made willing to understand and collaborate as well in implementing the 2013 Curriculum. On Thursdays, a KKG activity is held and all teachers, class teachers and subjects disciplines teachers are asked to involve in discussing every part of the whole set of the 2013 curriculum. Among the parts include preparing the UTS pre-designed problems and the problems themselves, and an evaluation of 2013 Curriculum. Other than that, meetings on KKG activities inter clusters and inter municipalities are held to discuss potential problems and constraints along the way of implementing the 2013 Curriculum. Right in the very school, headmasters urge every class teacher and subjects teacher to submit the RPP they have prepared in a week on Mondays.

Elementary school teachers in Bandung also prepare alternative activities just in case other activities not planned in the RPP happen. The alternative activities are among others: 1. Getting

ready for students to have pictures having to do with the materials to be colored; 2. Preparing quizes on the materials for the learners to answer; 3. Asking the learners to have songs to sing; 4. Preparing a guessing game on connecting words – all of which are meant to give students a chance to learn more about vocabularies at the same time in an interesting way.

To make it easier to monitor the attainment of KI.1 and KI.2, schools in Bandung city are readily available with facilities of using a folder consisting of stampede or *good point* in the forms of stickers of "star" awarded once any students are successful in showing an indicator of skill in assessing attitude well. Teachers use this strategy to monitor student's attitude every single day based on the indicator formulated every end of the week. The folder is given to students to bring home to be cross-checked by their parents so that communication between parents and teachers in terms of their children's development.

As of lower grades students' reading ability, elementary school teachers in Bandung city facilitate their students with activities integrated in *"class clinic"* providing time especially for students whose reading ability is yet developed. Beginners in reading are supposedly benefit from such an activity. Time alotted could be before or after school hours.

Other activities possibly worth doing by elementary school teachers in Bandung city in implementing the 2013 curriculum may include the followings: 1. Holding various discussions before and after class sessions on findings and constraints found during the teaching-learning process; 2. Doing observation by peer teachers; 3. Adding to the existing materials relevant resources from the Internet or other banks of information like newspapers or magazines.

2) **"Best Practices" in the activity of learning implementation**
There are several "best practices" done by elementary school teachers in Bandung city in implementing learning activities. Among the activities are the availability of rooms for students to ask, reason, try to make use of real medium of instruction (local environments), varied methods of teaching, and class arrangements. Grouping takes place by taking turns every week with the care of students' level of intellectuality. First thing of all before learning starts, reading short verses of Al-quran and daily prayers is said. Values on characters are inserted well before learning takes place. Forms of activities may include singing a song, inspiring words coming from teachers or students motivating students to behave positively and trigger spirit of learning. *KOCAK*, for instance, may work well. KOCAK stands for *Kreatif* (Creative), *Optimis* (Optimistic), *Cerdas* (Smart and bright), *Antusias* (Anthusiastic), *Komunikatif* (Comunicative). *KOCAK* is equivalent to COSbAC in English. Equipping learning with attractive media, for example, could trigger anthusiasm. Video showing of which materials are relevant to the subject being taught sounds like fun for students. Furthermore, understanding on the topic learned could be high in degree. SDPN VI of Subang elementary school, for instance, run this program in all grade four classes (IV A, IV B, IV C, IV D, and IV E) using the facility of *infocus* installed in every classroom.

Resource books used are not stricted to those issued by the Government. Books intended for enrichment are also of importance to the process of teaching-learning. One or two books are assisted by audio-visual which may include the followings: 1. LCD used to monitor; 2. "Star" sticker to denote good work on student's part; 3. Stamp to indicate student's good job and excellences to motivate students; 4. Sharing teaching experience by way of practices, and doing a real teaching mode of one cluster in which peer teachers evaluate or give advices for betterments upon a completion of performance of a model teacher.

3) **"Best Practices" in the activity of evaluating learning.**
As of the activity of evaluating the learning process, elementary school teachers in Bandung city are used to construct problems after defining pre-making of the problems for examination, both for daily exam (*UH-Ujian Harian*), mid-smester exam (UTS-Ujian Tengah Semester) and final exam (UAS-Ujian Akhir Semester) – all of which are prepared in KKG under the suspicion of headmaster and the observer. Problems written for exams are referred to the pre-making of the problems and the teacher's book as well as the student's books. Teachers collaborating with students' parents inform students' level of learning progress during a certain period.

Evaluation of KI.1, KI.2, KI.3, and KI.4 is done per sub-theme. Evaluation of KI.1 is done when students are saying prayer before learning. Other objects to be evaluated include possibilities of not saying prayer or, talking to other students, skipping any one of the five time a day of *Shalat* (prayers) of *Dzuhur*, *Asar*, *Magrib*, *Isya*, and *Subuh*. Evaluation of KI.2 is done when students submit their written assignments on time or after the due date. Other objects of evaluation include attending the class on time or coming late to class. Those who violate the rules have their names posted on the board for everyone to see. Students with achievements are awarded Star stickers also posted on the same board. Social attitudes are evaluated through a monthly competition of very best students in terms of criteria like being disciplined, responsible, self-confident, polite, caring, adorable as model. The very best students are chosen by fellow students in the classroom. Evaluaton of KI.3 is done to see if students are doing well in daily exams of *UH*. After finishing a sub-theme, written exams of PPKn., Indonesian Language, Mathematics, Science, and social science are for students to take. Those students with incompleteness in terms of exams and being unable to achieve *KKM* are given the chance to take *remedials* for each basic competency unachieved. After being evaluated and being given remedial, the scores or marks are recorded in the file in a laptop in order to have an access when the process of inputing data of rapport other than the exams. Take-home assignments are also possible to generate scores or marks. Evaluation of KI.4 is done directly on the spot of learning activities and at the time students do the assignments. To make it a lot easier, rapport writing uses mailing and application modes.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

Based on the findings and the data analysis, conclusion can be drawn as follows:

a. Elementary schools teachers' response to the 2013 curriculum implementation in Bandung city falls into the category of *positive*. As of the planning activities, they fall into the category of very *positive* while for the activities of implementation and evaluation of the curriculum, they fall into the category of *positive*.

b. A number of "best practices" are worth adopting from elementary school teacher in Bandung city in terms of 2013 curriculum implementation in the activities of planning to implement curriculum. Among the bests are collaboratively developing the *RPP* in *KKG* and cluster KKG respectively, sharing program and in-house training with national instructor or resource person in 2013 Curriculum, developing an alternative activity beyond what has been planned in RPP, and running the program of "class clinic" for students whose ability in reading needs brushing up.

c. Several other "best practices" worth adopting from elementary school teachers in Bandung city include the implementation of curriculum. The teachers are successful in optimizing learning sources available around in the process of learning concurrently with electronic learning. Taking turns in managing the classes and organizing students into groups is also one of the practices in doing their activity. Innovation in the learning process results in the use of LCD to monitor the activities, the use of "Star" sticker in evaluating attitude, the use of Stamp for good jobs and excellences to motivate students. Giving more practices to share experiences and, giving input on learning as it is practiced by model teacher.

d. Other "best practices" are also good to adopt, namely evaluating the curriculum. The teachers have an authentic evaluation using various ways and through different activities like *"hearing"* with students' parents in monitoring students' learning progress. The teachers make use of computer application to make it easier to prepare a report on results of the evaluation.

Suggestions based on the results of the present study are as follows:

There are three major activities teachers do in implementing the curriculum, namely planning, implementing, and evaluating. Competencies in doing the three activities are of an obligatory requirement to a teacher.

Enhancement of the three major competencies can be done through various ways. "Best Practices" as demonstrated by elementary school teachers in Bandung city are good examples and worth adopting. They include activities of *"sharing"*, *"hearing"*, *in-house training*", and modeling real teaching" done in KKG or cluster KKG. These activities prove to be useful in helping teachers to increase teacher's competencies. Therefore, teachers are recommended to actively participate in those activities, either individually or in groups. Quality competencies are expected to trigger enhancement of image to attain teacher values running like "teacher as professional profession bearer".

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The author is Chairman of the Program Graduate School Curriculum Development (SPs) Indonesia University of Education. Born in Indramayu on 5th of May 1972. History of Education initiated formal from SDN Kedokan Bunder III of 1985, SMPN Krangkeng 1988, SPGN Indramayu State in 1991, a Bachelor of Education Teachers' Training College Bandung on Department of Curriculum and Educational Technology, 1997. Master of Education in Prodi Development Curriculum Graduate Program UPI 2002. In March 2007 Author Achieved Doctoral degree Cum Laude with the Graduate School Curriculum Development Division (SPs) Indonesia University of Education.

Author of Teaching in S3 IN Subjects: Development of Basic Education Curriculum, Curriculum implementation, in S2 AT Course: Basic Education Curriculum, Information Systems Education, Curriculum Implementation, And Learning Through Media, in S1 in the Course Models of Learning, Computer Based Learning, Learning Media, Media TV/Video, And Curriculum and Learning.

Is the author of Curriculum Development in 2013 in Puskurbuk Kemendikbud Jakarta (2010-2012), guest speaker at the 2013 National Curriculum Implementation Agency for Education and Culture of Human Resource Development and Education Quality Assurance Kemendikbud Jakarta (2013-2014), Chairman of the Indonesian Association of Curriculum Development (HIPKIN) Region West Java (period 2013-2018), Being a Teacher Certification Assessor Position hearts, assessors Lecturer Workload And Also Actively Research in the Field of Curriculum and Educational Technology. Wrote an article in the Journal Various Both local and national as well as Active Resource person hearts upgrading activities, seminars, workshops and workshops of Curriculum and Educational Technology Good Local, national, and international levels.

Essay form that has published books of which is: Management Curriculum Development: Theory and Practice Application of SBC (PT. Sarana Panca Karya Nusa-Bandung), Curriculum and Learning (Rajawali Press-Jakarta), Educational Technology: Region and It's Application (Pustekkom-Jakarta), Models of Learning: Developing a Professional Teacher (Rajawali Press-Jakarta), Management Curriculum: Grade School Management Series (Rajawali Press-Jakarta), Learning-Based Information and Communication Technology (Rajawali Press-Jakarta), Learning and Computer-Based Learning (Alfabeta Bandung), and Integrated Thematic Learning: Theory, Practice, and Assessment (Press-Jakarta Eagles).

Author now staying at Jln. Geger Kalong Tengah No. 28 A 40154 Bandung West Java, Indonesia. Email Address: rusman_71@yahoo.com.

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