



## **Preparing for the IBDP: A Qualitative Evaluation of the Cambridge IGCSE Experience in ACS Jakarta**

**Lily Yuliani Sugiarto<sup>1</sup>, Sugiarto<sup>2</sup>, Heru Santosa<sup>3</sup>**

Postgraduate Universitas Negeri Jakarta

Email: lily.sugiarto80@gmail.com

### **ABSTRACT**

This study examines the implementation of the Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) curriculum at ACS Jakarta and its effectiveness in preparing students for the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP). With growing demand for international curricula in Indonesia's Satuan Pendidikan Kerja Sama (SPK) schools, the study evaluates how IGCSE supports academic transition to IBDP. Using the CIPP (Context, Input, Process, Product) evaluation model, qualitative data were collected through interviews with school leaders, teachers, students, alumni, and parents. Findings show that while IGCSE provides strong academic grounding and subject continuity, it does not fully equip students with the research, writing, and independent learning skills required in IBDP. Stakeholders identified the need for better instructional alignment, skill-based scaffolding, and student-centered academic guidance. The study contributes to understanding international curriculum pathways in SPK schools and offers recommendations to strengthen the IGCSE-to-IBDP transition.

### **Keywords:**

IGCSE; IBDP; international curriculum; SPK schools; academic transition

### **INTRODUCTION**

The demand for international curricula has been steadily increasing worldwide, driven by globalization, technological advancements, and the need for students to acquire skills relevant to a competitive and interconnected world. Scholars argue that international education responds to the challenges of the 21st century by equipping students with competencies such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and intercultural understanding, which are vital for global citizenship (Hayden & Thompson, 2013; Bunnell, 2016). In many countries, including Indonesia, parents increasingly seek educational pathways that combine high academic standards with preparation for entry into prestigious international universities (Brummitt & Keeling, 2013). This trend has spurred the growth of international curricula such as the Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) and the International Baccalaureate (IB), both of which are designed to cultivate globally relevant knowledge and skills (Cambridge International, 2025; ISC Research, 2025).

In Indonesia, this demand is particularly evident in urban centers such as Jakarta, where international and SPK (Satuan Pendidikan Kerja Sama) schools have expanded significantly to cater to globally minded families (Widiati & Arfani, 2019). Recent data from Cambridge International (2025) revealed a 26% increase in examination entries from Indonesian students in the November 2024 series, underscoring the nation's rising interest in globally aligned secondary education. ISC Research (2025) further notes that this growth mirrors broader global patterns, where international schools and curricula are increasingly sought after as strategic avenues





to develop future-ready graduates in line with the demands of an interconnected world.

Within Indonesia, SPK (Satuan Pendidikan Kerja Sama) schools—operating under a bilateral partnership framework—have emerged as leading providers of international curricula, merging Cambridge IGCSE and IBDP with compliance to national regulations such as Permendikbud No. 31/2014. Schools like Surabaya European School, Sinarmas World Academy, and Sekolah Pelita Harapan Lippo Cikarang exemplify this model by offering IGCSE in Grades 9–10 followed by IBDP in Grades 11–12 (Widiati & Arfani, 2019). Cambridge IGCSE is particularly valued in SPK schools for providing rigorous, internationally benchmarked qualifications that support the transition into more advanced programs like the IBDP (Global Investments, 2025).

The Anglo Chinese School (ACS) Jakarta serves as a compelling case study within this landscape. As a prominent SPK institution, ACS Jakarta implements Cambridge IGCSE in Grades 9 and 10 and transitions students into the IBDP in Grades 11 and 12. With a diverse student population and a strong reputation for academic excellence, ACS Jakarta offers a well-positioned context in which to examine the potential of IGCSE as a stepping stone to success in the IBDP framework.

Despite the growing popularity of the IGCSE curriculum in Indonesia, empirical research evaluating its local implementation—and its effectiveness in preparing students for the rigors of the IBDP—is scarce. Most prior studies have focused broadly on international education policy implementation or general school performance, without delving deeply into curriculum-specific outcomes at the programmatic level in SPK contexts (Widiati & Arfani, 2019).

To address this gap, the present study pursues two central objectives:

1. To analyze how effectively the Cambridge IGCSE curriculum prepares ACS Jakarta students for the academic rigor and pedagogical expectations of the IBDP.
2. To explore the challenges and opportunities associated with implementing IGCSE within the regulatory and cultural context of Indonesia's SPK system.

This research is guided by the following research questions:

1. How effectively does the Cambridge IGCSE curriculum prepare ACS Jakarta students for the IBDP?
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of its implementation at ACS Jakarta?
3. How do students, parents, and teachers perceive the IGCSE curriculum?

By exploring these dimensions, this study aims to fill a notable gap in the literature on international curriculum effectiveness in Indonesia, and to provide evidence-based insights for SPK schools, policymakers, and educators seeking to enhance international curriculum delivery.

## **Literature Review**

### **1. International Curriculum in Indonesia**

Indonesia's international schooling sector has experienced significant growth in recent decades, driven by national policies such as Permendikbud No. 31/2014, which authorize SPK (Satuan Pendidikan Kerja Sama) institutions to deliver global curricula in collaboration with foreign educational entities. While the regulatory



framework establishes formal guidelines, Widiati and Arfani (2019) note that the practical implementation of international education is largely shaped by non-state actors—including schools and private providers—who play crucial roles in interpreting and enacting policy at local and institutional levels. This dynamic has led to a marked proliferation of international curriculum offerings, especially in metropolitan areas like Jakarta, where globally oriented parents actively seek educational pathways that prepare students for entry into international universities.

SPK schools, as a result, function as pivotal platforms that merge global academic standards with Indonesian educational regulations, thereby enhancing overall educational quality (Hendrayana & Zulfitria, 2024). Rahmania (2023) emphasizes the potential of adopting a hybrid model that combines the structured rigor of the Cambridge curriculum with the contextual relevance and flexibility of *Kurikulum Merdeka*. This dual approach aligns with the SPK mandate to balance global benchmarks with national content requirements.

Leadership plays a decisive role in ensuring effective integration. Purnami et al. (2020) demonstrate how SPK principals employ School-Based Management to harmonize compliance with Indonesian policies while sustaining the delivery of internationally accredited programs through teacher recruitment, professional development, and stakeholder engagement. Similarly, Hayyi et al. (2022) highlight the adaptability of Cambridge in culturally specific contexts, citing its successful implementation in an Islamic boarding school that maintained both global competencies and local identity. Complementing this, Christiana et al. (2022) showcase the structured Cambridge adoption at SMP Bina Bangsa Malang, which established the school as a benchmark for SPK institutions, reinforcing its role in national competitiveness and creating a seamless pathway to higher-level Cambridge qualifications.

## **2. Cambridge IGCSE Framework**

The Cambridge IGCSE curriculum is internationally recognized and has been adopted in over 10,000 schools across more than 160 countries, making it one of the most widely implemented secondary education programs globally. Its design emphasizes inquiry-based learning, collaborative classroom practices, and higher-order questioning, all aimed at cultivating critical thinking, problem-solving, and analytical skills essential for 21st-century education (KidzoniaCredence International School, 2025; Ghaemi & Mirsaeed, 2017). Research shows that inquiry-driven instruction—central to the IGCSE framework—encourages self-directed questioning, evidence evaluation, and argument construction, thereby fostering deeper intellectual engagement and enhanced critical reasoning abilities.

Hendrayana and Zulfitria (2024) further demonstrated the effectiveness of this pedagogical approach by integrating Project-Based Learning (PBL) into the Cambridge curriculum, resulting in 80% of students surpassing performance benchmarks in critical thinking assessments. This alignment between inquiry-based learning and PBL underscores IGCSE's capacity to prepare students for complex problem-solving and independent learning, both of which are integral to advanced





academic programs such as the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP).

Additionally, studies have highlighted several distinctive features of the Cambridge framework. Ramadianti (2023) emphasized its structured syllabi, bilingual instruction, and global orientation as core strengths, enabling students to meet internationally benchmarked academic standards while building language proficiency. Ningrum (2022) reinforced this view, noting its effectiveness in improving English competency and higher-order skills necessary for success in higher education contexts. Meanwhile, Taqiyuddin and Aisyah (2023) demonstrated the curriculum's adaptability in Indonesian schools, showcasing diverse integration models that combine Cambridge with local requirements while preserving pathways to A/AS Levels and university preparation.

In evaluating Cambridge implementation through the CIPP model, Suri et al. (2024) concluded that factors such as access to Cambridge-aligned frameworks, qualified teachers, and resource-enriched environments are crucial to maximizing student outcomes. Their findings indicate that these elements not only drive academic performance but also build the global readiness competencies valued in SPK schools.

Collectively, these studies affirm that the Cambridge IGCSE's rigorous academic structure, inquiry-based pedagogy, and international relevance provide a strong foundation for developing future-ready learners. Its integration into Indonesia's SPK schools has proven effective in aligning local educational goals with global standards, thereby supporting students in achieving both national requirements and international competitiveness.

### **3. Transition to IBDP and Global Readiness**

The Cambridge IGCSE curriculum is widely recognized as an essential preparatory stage for advanced pre-university programs, particularly the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP). The IBDP builds upon the knowledge and skills developed in IGCSE while introducing greater academic rigor and conceptual depth through its six subject groups and three core components: Theory of Knowledge (TOK), the Extended Essay (EE), and Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS). These elements require students to engage in independent research, critical reflection, and holistic learning experiences that extend beyond conventional subject-based study.

Transition guides and scholarly research affirm that completion of the IGCSE effectively positions students for success in the IBDP, though bridging programs are often recommended to close potential content gaps and ease adaptation to the IBDP's demands, particularly regarding extended research projects and its integrated assessment framework (Christiana et al., 2022). Hendrayana and Zulfitria (2024) further highlighted how the inquiry-driven pedagogy inherent in IGCSE fosters skills directly applicable to IBDP's core components, such as analytical thinking, independent learning, and structured academic writing, thereby supporting a smoother transition to its research-intensive curriculum.

Empirical studies reinforce this linkage between IGCSE and global academic readiness. Taqiyuddin and Aisyah (2023) demonstrated that Cambridge Mathematics



at both the IGCSE and A/AS Levels equips students with the quantitative and logical reasoning skills required for international university entry standards. Likewise, Hayyi et al. (2022) underscored the importance of language proficiency and critical thinking cultivated through IGCSE, both of which are pivotal not only for excelling in IBDP but also for navigating global academic contexts.

Collectively, these findings affirm that Cambridge IGCSE establishes the academic foundation and skillset necessary for advanced programs like the IBDP, while simultaneously equipping students with future-ready competencies—from inquiry-based learning to global-mindedness—that prepare them for success in international higher education and beyond. This seamless alignment underscores the value of IGCSE within SPK schools as both a bridge to rigorous pre-university study and a driver of educational pathways with worldwide relevance.

#### **4. Challenges in Local Context**

The implementation of international curricula such as Cambridge IGCSE within Indonesian SPK (Satuan Pendidikan Kerja Sama) schools presents several persistent challenges. A primary issue lies in aligning global curriculum standards with national regulations, including compliance with local content mandates and language proficiency requirements. This often creates tension between maintaining internationally benchmarked academic rigor and fulfilling Indonesia's policy directives. Moreover, many students transitioning from more teacher-centered learning traditions face difficulties adapting to the student-centered, inquiry-driven pedagogy central to IGCSE. This shift demands significant adjustments in both teaching methods and learner mindsets, particularly in fostering independent learning, self-reflection, and research-oriented skills (Wongcharoensin, 2021).

Language barriers further complicate the adoption of Cambridge curricula, as instruction is primarily delivered in English. Students with limited English proficiency may struggle to fully engage with inquiry-based learning or comprehend the advanced academic tasks required by programs like IGCSE and its progression to IBDP (e.g., extended research essays and Theory of Knowledge). Ramadianti (2023) also emphasized uneven parental support and resource disparities as impediments, noting that not all families can provide the linguistic or academic reinforcement needed for success in an English-medium curriculum.

Infrastructure limitations and insufficient teacher training exacerbate these issues. Ningrum (2022) highlighted gaps in professional development for educators, particularly in mastering Cambridge pedagogy, formative assessment methods, and bilingual instruction. Without continuous capacity-building initiatives, teachers may find it challenging to effectively deliver inquiry-based lessons or balance the demands of dual curricula (Cambridge and national).

Dempster's (2025) analysis of Cambridge's influence in African syllabi offers relevant parallels, illustrating how an over-reliance on Western frameworks can marginalize local knowledge systems and reduce curriculum relevance to students' lived contexts. For SPK schools in Indonesia, this underscores the need to contextualize Cambridge content while retaining its global standards, ensuring that







international education does not alienate learners from their cultural and societal realities.

To address these challenges, pedagogical innovations such as Multiple Intelligence (MI) theory offer promising solutions. Setyawan et al. (2024) argue that MI-based approaches can create more inclusive and holistic learning environments by accommodating diverse learning profiles while complementing Cambridge's learner attributes of confidence, responsibility, reflection, and innovation. By blending such adaptive pedagogies with Cambridge's rigorous framework, SPK schools can better support critical and creative thinking development, ease the cultural shift toward active learning, and enhance curriculum relevance within Indonesia's educational landscape.

## **METHOD**

### **1. Research Design**

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design to explore the implementation and effectiveness of the Cambridge IGCSE curriculum at ACS Jakarta, with specific reference to its role in preparing students for the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP). The research was guided by the CIPP evaluation model – Context, Input, Process, and Product – developed by Stufflebeam (1971). This model was selected because it provides a comprehensive framework for evaluating educational programs by examining the rationale behind their implementation (Context), the resources and strategies employed (Input), the delivery and execution (Process), and the resulting outcomes (Product). By applying this model, the study systematically analyzed how the Cambridge IGCSE curriculum functions within the Indonesian SPK school context and how it aligns with the academic demands of the Data Collection. Data collection involved semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key stakeholders, including:

- a. Students in Grades 9 and 10 (currently enrolled in IGCSE),
- b. Students in Grades 11 and 12 (currently enrolled in IBDP),
- c. Alumni who completed IGCSE and transitioned to IBDP,
- d. Parents of current and former IGCSE students,
- e. The Dean of Academics, Heads of Departments (HODs), and IGCSE subject teachers.

Interviews were designed to elicit participants' perceptions and experiences of the IGCSE curriculum, its instructional practices, and its effectiveness in preparing students for IBDP. Additionally, document analysis was undertaken to triangulate interview data. This included reviewing school curriculum guides, student assessment data (including IGCSE results and IBDP readiness indicators), lesson plans, and relevant educational policy documents (e.g., SPK regulations and Cambridge curriculum standards).

### **2. Sampling**

The study utilized purposive sampling to deliberately select participants who were most knowledgeable and experienced with the IGCSE curriculum at ACS



Jakarta. This approach ensured representation across multiple stakeholder groups: administrators who oversee curriculum implementation, teachers who deliver IGCSE instruction, students and alumni who directly experienced the curriculum, and parents who provide an external perspective on its impact. By involving diverse stakeholders, the research aimed to capture a holistic view of IGCSE implementation and its implications for IBDP preparation.

### **3. Data Analysis**

Data analysis was conducted using thematic coding aligned with the CIPP evaluation model. Interview transcripts and documentary evidence were coded inductively to identify recurring patterns, themes, and insights within each CIPP dimension. For instance:

- a. **Context analysis** focused on the rationale for adopting IGCSE and alignment with school vision and SPK regulations.
- b. **Input analysis** examined teacher qualifications, resources, and professional development.
- c. **Process analysis** investigated teaching methodologies, assessment strategies, and classroom practices.
- d. **Product analysis** explored student outcomes, perceived preparedness for IBDP, and overall stakeholder satisfaction.

Emerging themes from each dimension were compared and synthesized to draw conclusions about the effectiveness of IGCSE in preparing students for IBDP, as well as the challenges and opportunities within ACS Jakarta's implementation context.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **1. Introduction to the Findings Section**

This section presents the findings of a qualitative study investigating how the Cambridge IGCSE curriculum is implemented at ACS Jakarta and how it serves as a foundation for students transitioning into the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) in Grades 11 and 12. The analysis follows the CIPP evaluation model—Context, Input, Process, and Product—to assess the curriculum's relevance, supporting resources, pedagogical practices, and overall impact on student preparedness. The data were collected through in-depth interviews with six key stakeholder groups:

- a. the Dean of Academics,
- b. Heads of Departments (HODs),
- c. subject teachers,
- d. current IGCSE students,
- e. alumni who are now in or have completed the IBDP, and
- f. parents of IGCSE students and alumni.

Their perspectives provide a multifaceted understanding of how the IGCSE curriculum functions as a preparatory stage for IBDP and how well it equips students with the necessary academic skills, learning attitudes, and global readiness. Each of the four CIPP components is used to thematically present and discuss the results,





incorporating representative quotes and cross-stakeholder insights to enrich the analysis.

## **2. Context Evaluation: Relevance and Rationale of IGCSE as Foundation for IBDP**

The implementation of the Cambridge IGCSE curriculum at ACS Jakarta is grounded in the school's strategic vision to provide a globally competitive education and to ensure a smooth academic transition into the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP). The Dean of Academics affirmed that IGCSE is deliberately positioned as a foundation for the IBDP, describing it as a preparatory stage that trains students in exam discipline, analytical thinking, and content mastery. He emphasized that subject choices and instructional approaches in IGCSE are closely aligned with IBDP expectations. For instance, subjects like Additional Mathematics and English Literature are selected not only for their rigor but also for their ability to support students' readiness for IBDP Mathematics and Language A respectively.

Similarly, Heads of Department (HODs) reinforced the rationale that IGCSE offers continuity into IBDP subjects. They highlighted how curricular mapping is carried out between the two programs—for example, History source analysis, literary commentary, and Science practicals in IGCSE directly inform the expectations in IBDP's Internal Assessments (IA) and Theory of Knowledge (TOK). The Humanities and Aesthetics departments in particular emphasized that analytical and creative skills fostered during IGCSE become essential tools for IBDP assessments, especially in the Extended Essay (EE) and CAS (Creativity, Activity, Service) components.

From the teachers' perspective, the IGCSE curriculum is seen as a robust platform that introduces international academic standards while allowing students to explore their learning preferences. Teachers believe IGCSE supports the development of cognitive skills, and several noted its ability to balance exam-based knowledge with project-based or inquiry-driven learning, depending on the subject.

Among students and alumni, awareness of the IGCSE-IBDP connection varies. Some students, such as Alexander, recognized the scaffolding provided by IGCSE, especially in subjects like Geography and Literature, which helped ease the transition to IB. However, other students noted that teachers rarely made the connection explicit, which led to uncertainty about how current learning would relate to the IBDP. Alumni shared a more reflective view: while they acknowledged that IGCSE helped them grasp content efficiently, they also emphasized that the shift in academic expectations in IBDP—particularly regarding independent research and time management—required an additional leap beyond what IGCSE typically demands.

The parents interviewed largely perceived the IGCSE as a globally relevant curriculum that offers their children access to international academic benchmarks and prepares them well for future challenges. They viewed the IGCSE as a strategic advantage in the SPK context, aligning with their aspirations for university admissions abroad and holistic academic development. However, several parents expressed a desire for the school to provide clearer guidance on how IGCSE leads into IBDP and to involve students more directly in understanding that pathway.





Collectively, the findings indicate that while ACS Jakarta has clearly positioned the IGCSE as a feeder program to the IBDP, greater emphasis is needed on explicitly communicating the academic continuum to students and integrating more targeted transitional guidance into the curriculum framework.

### **3. Input Evaluation: Resources and Readiness for Transition**

This section evaluates the quality and availability of inputs that support the implementation of the IGCSE curriculum at ACS Jakarta, especially in its role of preparing students for the IBDP. Key themes include teacher readiness, subject continuity, academic guidance, and stakeholder perceptions of student preparedness.

From the leadership perspective, the Dean of Academics described a structured process of curriculum mapping between IGCSE and IBDP subjects. He explained that subject offerings are designed intentionally to align with the six IBDP subject groups. Benchmark data such as mock exam scores, teacher recommendations, and student preferences inform decisions about IBDP subject placement. This process is supported by the IB Coordinator, HODs, and the Dean himself through mentoring conversations with both students and parents.

Heads of Department (HODs) echoed this approach, noting that subject-specific continuity is emphasized within their departments. For example, the English Department ensures that students gain experience with textual analysis, commentary writing, and comparison essays – skills directly transferable to IBDP English. The Art and Aesthetics departments also emphasized exposure to technique exploration and art theory, preparing students for the conceptual demands of IBDP Visual Arts. However, some departments, such as Physical Education (PE) and Mandarin, indicated that while IGCSE content provides breadth, deeper research-based preparation for IBDP remains an area for improvement.

From the teachers' perspective, there is a general consensus that professional training in IGCSE pedagogy is adequate, but targeted development for bridging IGCSE to IBDP is limited. For instance, while teachers incorporate formative tasks and exam practice, not all are equipped or encouraged to embed pre-IBDP skills such as academic referencing, extended inquiry, or IBDP-specific terminology into their lessons. Mr. Ferdinand (Geography) and Ms. Preethi (Mathematics) noted that some of these skills are learned implicitly through exam preparation, but would benefit from more deliberate instruction.

Students and alumni provided varied feedback about their perceived preparedness. Many praised the breadth of exposure across disciplines, which helped them discover their strengths and interests. Alexander noted that writing practice and content coverage in IGCSE gave him confidence for IBDP. However, both he and Kayla expressed concerns about insufficient instruction in learning strategies, research skills, and long-term project planning. These gaps were echoed by alumni, who shared that transitioning to EE and Internal Assessments in IBDP was challenging due to a lack of structured research training during IGCSE.

Parental feedback also underscored these concerns. While parents recognized that the school offered extensive support through teacher consultations and subject fairs, they also noted that students themselves are not always the primary audience of





this guidance. Instead, much of the strategic advice is directed at parents, leaving students to rely on informal sources such as peers or tutors for academic decisions.

In summary, while ACS Jakarta provides a strong academic structure and subject alignment between IGCSE and IBDP, there is a need for more targeted teacher training, student-facing guidance, and explicit skill development in areas critical for IBDP success, particularly in research, academic writing, and subject-specific transitions.

#### **4. Process Evaluation: Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Practices**

This section explores the implementation practices of the Cambridge IGCSE curriculum at ACS Jakarta, focusing on how pedagogical approaches, assessment methods, and classroom strategies contribute to preparing students for the IBDP.

Across departments, there is a shared recognition that IGCSE encourages structured and rigorous instruction, primarily shaped by Cambridge's exam-oriented approach. However, teachers and HODs also highlighted subject-specific efforts to infuse inquiry-based learning, critical thinking, and IB-style assessments to facilitate a smoother transition to the IBDP. For instance, the English and Humanities departments regularly assign analytical essays, commentaries, and source-based tasks that mirror the demands of the Extended Essay and Theory of Knowledge (TOK) components in the IBDP.

Teachers from subjects such as Geography, Business Studies, and Mandarin explained that students are given opportunities to engage with real-world issues, apply evaluative reasoning, and practice presentation skills. Mr. Ferdinand (Geography) shared how students learn to structure responses using PEEL (Point, Evidence, Explanation, Link), which parallels expectations in IB writing. Similarly, Mr. Xu Hui (Mandarin) emphasized the emphasis on vocabulary mastery and contextual writing, essential for success in IBDP Language B. However, teachers also noted that most IGCSE subjects still prioritize summative assessment formats, and as such, independent research, referencing skills, and synthesis writing are not consistently embedded into teaching practices.

Students confirmed that IGCSE equipped them well with exam techniques, concise writing, and time management. Alexander, a Grade 10 student, shared that IGCSE taught him how to structure arguments logically and write efficiently under timed conditions. Kayla appreciated how her Literature and Additional Mathematics classes trained her to think critically and adapt her writing style depending on subject needs. However, both also acknowledged the lack of explicit instruction in research methods or longer-term academic writing projects—skills that are crucial in IBDP.

These concerns were also echoed by alumni. They reflected that while they were well-prepared for IBDP content-wise, they were often underprepared for formally structured research, academic referencing, and planning extended assignments. This suggests that the process of skill development in IGCSE classrooms—while strong in exam preparation—requires deeper alignment with IBDP methodologies to ensure students are ready for the shift in academic culture.

From a structural perspective, some departments have taken steps to bridge this gap. HODs mentioned efforts such as assigning mini research tasks, simulating



IB internal assessments, or providing feedback on writing beyond Cambridge marking rubrics. However, these initiatives remain teacher-dependent and vary across subjects.

Parents also observed that while IGCSE helped their children become more independent and confident learners, the shift in assessment expectations during the IBDP sometimes came as a surprise. They suggested that the school introduce more cross-grade orientation programs or bridging modules that gradually expose students to IBDP formats.

In conclusion, the teaching and learning processes in IGCSE at ACS Jakarta foster discipline, structure, and foundational thinking skills. However, there is an opportunity to strengthen IBDP preparedness by more intentionally integrating inquiry, research writing, academic referencing, and holistic formative assessment into daily classroom practice.

### **5. Product Evaluation: Outcomes and Perceived Impact**

This section examines the outcomes of IGCSE implementation at ACS Jakarta, particularly in terms of how well the curriculum prepares students for the academic and non-academic demands of the IBDP. Drawing on perspectives from alumni, students, teachers, and parents, the analysis highlights both the strengths of IGCSE as a foundational program and areas where its effectiveness could be enhanced.

Among alumni, there was general agreement that IGCSE provided a strong grounding in subject knowledge, exam technique, and structured writing. Subjects like Sciences, English Literature, and Mathematics were cited as particularly beneficial in creating familiarity with IBDP content. Anya and Arthur, now IBDP seniors, emphasized that the discipline of time-bound writing, exposure to analytical texts, and topic continuity made the academic transition more manageable. However, they also noted that IGCSE did not fully prepare them for the independent learning expectations of the IBDP, particularly in the areas of research design, formal academic writing, and self-directed inquiry required for the Extended Essay and Internal Assessments.

This perception was echoed by current IBDP student Nasya, who shared that while she felt confident with the content carried over from IGCSE, she struggled initially with the deeper analytical thinking and open-ended tasks that are hallmarks of IB assessments. She also expressed concern over the lack of training in referencing, data interpretation, and long-form writing, which were not emphasized in her IGCSE experience.

From the teacher perspective, there is recognition that high-performing IGCSE students tend to thrive in IBDP, especially those who internalized the academic discipline and learning strategies during their IGCSE years. However, some teachers observed a gap between students' exam-readiness and their ability to independently manage research-oriented projects. Teachers such as Mr. Nitin (Business) and Ms. Preethi (Math) pointed out that while IGCSE provides strong cognitive scaffolding, affective and metacognitive skills—such as resilience, curiosity, and intellectual risk-taking—require further nurturing.





Student feedback reinforces this observation. While students appreciated the clarity and structure of IGCSE assessments, they reported that the curriculum did not sufficiently train them to handle open-ended tasks, extended investigations, or the emotional demands of sustained academic workload. Kayla, a Grade 10 student, admitted feeling anxious about entering IBDP, despite performing well in IGCSE, because the “culture of fear” around IB's difficulty was not addressed systematically during her IGCSE years.

Parents viewed the IGCSE experience as positive overall, citing noticeable improvements in their children's academic confidence, discipline, and sense of responsibility. However, several parents noted that the transition to IBDP could be stressful, particularly for students unaccustomed to independent study routines, and recommended that the school strengthen its transitional support system, including skills workshops, counseling, and early exposure to IB-style tasks.

Overall, the IGCSE curriculum at ACS Jakarta successfully supports the academic progression into IBDP, especially in terms of content mastery and cognitive skills. However, to fully optimize its role as a preparatory program, enhancements are needed in fostering research literacy, academic writing, self-management, and resilience – all of which are essential for success in the IBDP and beyond.

## **6. Cross-Stakeholder Comparison**

A cross-analysis of the interview findings reveals both convergence and divergence in how different stakeholder groups perceive the implementation of the IGCSE curriculum and its effectiveness in preparing students for the IBDP at ACS Jakarta.

Across all groups, there is strong consensus that IGCSE provides a solid academic foundation, particularly in terms of subject content knowledge, exam skills, and discipline in structured writing. Teachers, HODs, and the Dean of Academics consistently described the IGCSE as a curriculum that emphasizes clarity, consistency, and global academic standards, with strategic subject offerings designed to lead into the IBDP. Parents echoed this view, expressing confidence in the school's curriculum framework and its alignment with international university expectations.

However, distinctions arise when examining perceptions of preparedness for IBDP-level tasks, particularly in the realm of independent learning, research skills, and academic writing. For example, while teachers generally felt that their students are “well-prepared” by the end of Grade 10, many students and alumni expressed concern that they had not been explicitly taught how to conduct research, cite sources, or navigate long-term projects like the Extended Essay. These insights point to a possible disconnect between teacher assumptions and student experiences, especially regarding implicit versus explicit skill instruction.

Another contrast emerges in perceptions of academic guidance. School leaders and teachers highlighted the presence of mentoring structures, counseling, and data-driven placement processes for IBDP subject selection. However, students and alumni reported that subject counseling was often directed at parents, leaving them to make key decisions based on peer input or trial-and-error. This signals a gap in student-



centered academic mentorship, which may hinder learners from confidently navigating transitions and aligning their interests with subject choices.

Differences are also evident across departments. Subjects like English, Humanities, and Art were frequently cited by students and teachers as offering tasks and assessments that resemble IBDP expectations. These include text analysis, thematic research, and portfolio development. In contrast, Science and PE teachers acknowledged a greater emphasis on content delivery and exam technique during IGCSE, with limited focus on research planning or open inquiry, despite these being essential in IBDP Internal Assessments. This variation may lead to uneven readiness across subject areas, depending on the student's chosen IBDP path.

In terms of emotional preparedness, students and alumni reported feelings of stress and anxiety upon entering the IBDP, despite achieving well in IGCSE. This sentiment was less frequently mentioned by teachers or school leaders, indicating that affective readiness may be underestimated in current transition planning. Parents noticed similar struggles, particularly related to time management and coping with unstructured assessments in the first year of IBDP.

Taken together, the cross-stakeholder analysis suggests that while ACS Jakarta's IGCSE program is academically strong and strategically positioned, there is room to deepen skill alignment, strengthen student-facing guidance, and create more consistent department-wide efforts to scaffold IBDP readiness—both cognitively and emotionally.

## **7. Synthesis and Link to Literature**

The findings of this study confirm the central role of the Cambridge IGCSE curriculum in supporting students' academic development and preparing them for the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP). However, while ACS Jakarta's implementation demonstrates alignment with global benchmarks and curriculum continuity, stakeholder feedback reveals both strengths and limitations that are consistent with, and in some cases expand upon, prior research on international curriculum transitions.

The literature underscores that international curricula like Cambridge IGCSE are widely adopted in Indonesia due to their academic rigor, global recognition, and alignment with university preparation pathways (Hendrayana & Zulfitria, 2024; Widiati & Arfani, 2019). The study findings corroborate this, as all stakeholder groups acknowledged the IGCSE's strong content base, structured assessments, and foundational relevance to IBDP subject knowledge. Teachers and leaders also described deliberate curriculum mapping efforts to ensure progression from IGCSE to IBDP—a practice supported by studies like Christiana et al. (2022), who emphasize the importance of alignment across program levels in SPK schools.

However, this study also highlights a nuanced gap between content preparedness and skill readiness, particularly in the domains of research, academic writing, and independent learning—skills that are essential for success in IBDP but not always explicitly taught in IGCSE. This echoes findings by Hayyi et al. (2022) and Taqiyuddin & Aisyah (2023), who note that while Cambridge curricula support







content mastery, pedagogical depth and learner agency vary significantly depending on context and instructional quality.

From a CIPP perspective, the Context and Input components appear well-established at ACS Jakarta, supported by leadership vision, curriculum design, and parent expectations. However, the Process evaluation suggests inconsistency in classroom practices and limited integration of higher-order academic tasks such as referenced writing, open inquiry, and sustained research projects. This finding mirrors Dempster (2025), who criticized the superficial adoption of international curricula in non-Western contexts when not accompanied by deep pedagogical shifts.

The Product evaluation revealed that while students perform well in IGCSE and gain confidence in exam conditions, they may experience a steep learning curve upon entering IBDP. Alumni feedback in this study reinforces the need for bridging programs, academic mentoring, and skill-based scaffolding, aligning with Ramadianti's (2023) recommendation that SPK schools should adapt Cambridge delivery to meet both global standards and local learner needs.

This study contributes uniquely to the literature by offering a multi-stakeholder perspective on curriculum transition within an SPK school context in Indonesia. Unlike previous research that often relies solely on teacher or school leader voices, this study incorporates reflections from students, alumni, and parents, thus broadening the understanding of curriculum impact beyond the classroom.

In conclusion, the implementation of IGCSE at ACS Jakarta has laid a strong foundation for student success in the IBDP, particularly in content knowledge and academic discipline. However, to fully leverage IGCSE as a feeder program, the school would benefit from:

- a. Enhancing instruction in **research and academic writing** during IGCSE,
- b. Establishing formal **bridging programs** between IGCSE and IBDP,
- c. Providing **student-centered academic counseling**, and
- d. Promoting a more **coherent pedagogical approach** across departments.

These recommendations not only support smoother transitions into IBDP but also strengthen the long-term mission of SPK schools in Indonesia to produce globally competent, resilient, and self-directed learners.

## CONCLUSION

### a. Conclusion

This study has explored the implementation of the Cambridge IGCSE curriculum at ACS Jakarta, with a particular focus on its role in preparing students for the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) in Grades 11 and 12. Guided by the CIPP (Context, Input, Process, Product) evaluation model, the research drew insights from a range of stakeholders including the Dean of Academics, Heads of Departments, subject teachers, current students, alumni, and parents.

Findings indicate that the IGCSE curriculum at ACS Jakarta is strategically aligned with the IBDP framework and international education pathways. Stakeholders acknowledged its strengths in fostering content mastery, exam discipline, and analytical thinking, especially in core subjects such as English,



Sciences, and Mathematics. The institution has invested in subject continuity, curriculum mapping, and a structured academic progression model that reinforces IGCSE as a preparatory stage for IBDP.

However, the study also identified several key challenges. While IGCSE effectively builds foundational knowledge, it is less consistent in preparing students for independent research, extended academic writing, and self-regulated learning – critical skills for success in the IBDP. Students and alumni expressed that transitioning to IBDP expectations – particularly for the Extended Essay (EE), Internal Assessments (IA), and Theory of Knowledge (TOK) – often required a significant adjustment. In addition, inconsistencies in academic guidance, departmental practices, and skill instruction suggest that more cohesive and student-centered strategies are needed.

Overall, the findings confirm that while IGCSE at ACS Jakarta fulfills its foundational purpose, its role as a feeder curriculum to IBDP can be significantly enhanced through targeted interventions, cross-departmental collaboration, and structured transition support.

#### **b. Recommendations**

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are proposed for school leaders, curriculum developers, and teaching staff at ACS Jakarta and similar SPK schools implementing the Cambridge IGCSE curriculum:

##### **a. Embed Research and Writing Skills in IGCSE**

- a) Integrate mini research projects, formal writing tasks, and academic referencing into IGCSE subjects to develop early familiarity with IB-style assessments.
- b) Align internal assessments and classroom activities with IBDP skill expectations.

##### **b. Develop a Structured IGCSE-to-IBDP Bridging Program**

- a) Create a bridging module or transition course in Grade 10 that introduces students to EE, TOK, and IBDP learning approaches.
- b) Include workshops on time management, inquiry-based learning, and critical reading to build confidence before entering IBDP.

##### **c. Enhance Student-Centered Academic Guidance**

- a) Ensure that subject counseling is directed at students, not just parents, through advisory sessions, interest inventories, and peer mentorship programs.
- b) Provide personalized guidance on subject selection based on student strengths, interests, and university aspirations.

##### **d. Standardize Pedagogical Practices Across Departments**

- a) Encourage all departments to align teaching strategies with IBDP learning outcomes, especially in formative assessment, inquiry tasks, and open-ended discussions.
- b) Facilitate professional development for teachers on IBDP expectations to ensure a consistent preparatory experience across subject areas.

##### **e. Strengthen Emotional and Cognitive Transition Support**





- a) Address student concerns about IBDP workload and stress by introducing academic coaching, reflective journaling, and well-being check-ins during Grade 10.
- b) Foster a growth mindset culture that emphasizes resilience and adaptability in the face of academic challenges.

By implementing these recommendations, ACS Jakarta can strengthen the effectiveness of its IGCSE program not only as a standalone international curriculum but as a purposeful and strategic foundation for the IBDP and lifelong academic success.

### **Acknowledgment**

The author humbly offers praise and gratitude to the Almighty God for His enduring love and guidance throughout the process of writing this research article. He is also sincerely thankful to his beloved parents and husband, whose steadfast prayers, affection, and encouragement have been a cornerstone of his academic journey.

Heartfelt appreciation is extended to Winda Dewi Listyasari, M.Pd., Ph.D., Coordinator of the Master's Program in Educational Management at Jakarta State University, for her valuable insights and direction. Deep gratitude is also conveyed to the author's academic supervisors, Dr. Sugiarto, M.A., and Dr. Heru Santosa, M.Pd., for their expert advice, motivation, and thoughtful feedback throughout the writing process.

The author also acknowledges the camaraderie and support of fellow classmates from the 2021/2022 cohort of the Educational Management Master's program, whose shared spirit and encouragement have been invaluable during their academic journey.

Special thanks are extended to the interviewees from ACS Jakarta High School who generously shared their time and experiences. The author is particularly grateful to Dr. Lee Khen Seng, Executive Principal of ACS Jakarta, Mr. Giovanni, Dean of Academics (Secondary School), and the following Heads of Department:

1. Mr. Andhika Wicaksana – Head of Aesthetic Department
2. Ms. Erni Farida Sri Ulina Ginting – Head of Indonesian Department
3. Ms. Ira Vetty Arifin – Head of Chinese and Korean Language Department
4. Mr. Irfan Nabi – Head of Science Department
5. Mr. Nadzi Sujad – Head of Physical Education and CCA Department
6. Mr. Nathaniel Schmidt – Head of English Department
7. Ms. Rashidah Zulkifli – Head of Humanities Department

The author also expresses sincere appreciation to the IGCSE subject teachers who participated and generously shared their insightful teaching practices:

1. Mr. Amiel Lorenzo Vijandre – IGCSE Physics Teacher
2. Mr. Ferdinand Borromeo Laya – IGCSE Geography Teacher
3. Mr. Nitin Chand – IGCSE Business Studies Teacher
4. Ms. Preethi Chand – IGCSE Mathematics Teacher
5. Mr. Xu Hui – IGCSE Mandarin Teacher



Warm thanks are also extended to the students and alumni who took part as interviewees and shared their experiences:

1. Alexander Boenjamin – Grade 10 student, AY 2024/2025
2. Anya Rahardja – Grade 12 student, AY 2023/2024
3. Arthur Wigo – Graduate, AY 2023/2024
4. Grace Widyadi – IGCSE Program Alumna, AY 2020/2021
5. Kayla Aida Daniswara – Grade 9 student, AY 2024/2025
6. Nasya Regina – Grade 11 student, AY 2024/2025

The author also expresses gratitude to the parents of students and alumni who shared their invaluable perspectives:

1. Ms. Lucy Sego
2. Ms. Agnes Camelia
3. Ms. Ida Arijani
4. Ms. Ivo Andayani
5. Ms. Susana Ang
6. Ms. Vonny Harsono

The contributions, encouragement, and trust of all those mentioned above have played a significant role in shaping this research. It is the author's hope that this article will serve as a meaningful contribution to the ongoing pursuit of transformative and impactful education.

## REFERENCE

- Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 9(2), 27–40. <https://doi.org/10.3316/QRJ0902027>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Brummitt, N., & Keeling, A. (2013). Charting the growth of international schools. *International Schools Journal*, 32(2), 77–85.
- Bunnell, T. (2016). The changing landscape of international schooling: Implications for theory and practice. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 77, 105–115. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2016.03.004>
- Cambridge International. (2025, February 17). Growth in Cambridge exams in Indonesia highlights rising demand for international education. PR Newswire Asia. <https://en.prnasia.com/releases/apac/growth-in-cambridge-exams-in-indonesia-highlights-rising-demand-for-international-education-476316.shtml>
- Christiana, M., Fardiah, D., & Sumarni, W. (2022). Implementation of Cambridge Curriculum at SMP Bina Bangsa Malang as an SPK School. *Journal of Education and Learning*, 11(2), 159–168.
- Christiana, R. A., Supriyanto, A., & Juharyanto. (2022). Implementasi kurikulum Cambridge di Sekolah Menengah Pertama. *Jurnal Pembelajaran, Bimbingan, dan Pengelolaan Pendidikan*, 2(4), 288–295. <https://doi.org/10.17977/um065v2i42022p288-295>





- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Dempster, E. R. (2025). Influence of Cambridge International Education on environmental content in seven African syllabi. *South African Journal of Science*, 121(3/4). <https://doi.org/10.17159/sajs.2025/18607>
- Ghaemi, F., & Mirsaeed, S. J. (2017). The impact of inquiry-based learning approach on critical thinking skill of EFL students. *EFL Journal*, 2(2), 89-100.
- Hayden, M., & Thompson, J. (2013). International schools: Antecedents, current issues and metaphors for the future. In R. Pearce (Ed.), *International education and schools: Moving beyond the first 40 years* (pp. 3-24). Bloomsbury Academic.
- Hayyi, M., Zaen, B., & Hambali, M. (2022). Strategi kepala sekolah mengimplementasikan kurikulum Cambridge untuk membentuk siswa berdaya saing internasional di SMP Thursina International Islamic Boarding School Malang. *re-JIEM (Research Journal of Islamic Education Management)*, 5(1). <https://doi.org/10.19105/re-jiem.v5i1.4891>
- Hendrayana, D., & Zulfitria. (2024). Mengembangkan cara berpikir kritis siswa melalui penerapan kurikulum Cambridge dengan metode project-based learning. *Jurnal Pendidikan Indonesia: Teori, Penelitian dan Inovasi*, 4(1). <https://doi.org/10.59818/jpi.v4i1.731>
- ISC Research. (2025). *Global report on international schools market growth 2025*. ISC Research.
- KidzoniaCredence International School. (2025, January 21). Encouraging critical thinking through the Cambridge approach.
- Ningrum, I. A. K. (2022). Analisis implementasi kurikulum Cambridge di Indonesia: Tantangan dan peluang dalam konteks pendidikan nasional. *Pedagogy: Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan*, 9(4). <https://doi.org/10.19105/re-jiem.v5i1.4891>
- Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Purnami, J. H., Tampubolon, H., & Kamaluddin. (2020). Strategi kepala sekolah satuan pendidikan kerjasama (SPK) dalam menegakkan manajemen berbasis sekolah (MBS). *Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan*, 9(1).
- Rahmania, T. (2023). Komparasi kurikulum Cambridge terhadap pengembangan kurikulum pendidikan di Indonesia. *Jurnal Pendidikan*, 2(2).
- Ramadianti, A. A. (2023). Analisis global implementasi kurikulum Cambridge dalam dunia pendidikan. Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama Sumatera Utara.
- Setyawan, J., Lumbantoruan, J. H., Listiani, H., & Judijanto, L. (2024). Integration of multiple intelligence theory in curriculum implementation for developing student potential in Indonesia. *Mimbar Sekolah Dasar*, 11(1). <https://doi.org/10.53400/mimbar-sd.v11i1.68906>
- Stufflebeam, D. L. (1971). The relevance of the CIPP evaluation model for educational accountability. *Journal of Research and Development in Education*, 5(1), 19-25.
- Stufflebeam, D. L., & Coryn, C. L. (2014). *Evaluation theory, models, and applications* (2nd ed.). Jossey-Bass.





- Suri, S., Sholeh, M., & Roesminingsih, E. (2024). Evaluasi implementasi kurikulum Cambridge dengan model CIPP. *Cetta: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan*, 7(1). <https://jayapanguspress.penerbit.org/index.php/cetta>
- Taqiyuddin, M., & Aisyah, N. (2023). A glimpse of mathematics Cambridge curriculum (IGCSE and A/AS level) implementation in Indonesian secondary schools. In *ISMEI 2022 Conference Proceedings*. [https://doi.org/10.2991/978-94-6463-220-0\\_18](https://doi.org/10.2991/978-94-6463-220-0_18)
- Widiati, U., & Arfani, J. W. (2019). International education beyond state regulations in Indonesia: Practices from Y province-based public and private high schools. *Policy & Governance Review*, 3(3), 258–271. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/335772087>
- Wongcharoensin, I. (2021). Thai parents' reasons for sending their children to premium international programs. DePaul University (unpublished thesis).

