

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE OPERATIONAL DESIGN CYCLE AND LEARNING COMPLETION BENCHMARKS IN THE SCOPE OF INSTRUCTIONAL ALIGNMENT

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Abstract

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The Lesson Implementation Plan (RPP) and the Minimum Completion Criteria (KKM) play a crucial role in curriculum design and instructional evaluation. However, previous literature often examines these two variables separately, leaving a theoretical gap regarding their integration in optimizing teaching quality. This study aims to examine the functional interconnection between the RPP and KKM as interconnected instruments within a competency-based education ecosystem. The novelty of this study rests on the formulation of an integrative conceptual model positioning planning and standardization/Evaluation as a mechanistic entity. Using a qualitative approach with a literature study method, this research elaborates on various academic references, current regulations, and accredited scientific journals. The study results confirm that the lesson plan facilitates a systematic instructional roadmap, while the minimum competency criteria (KKM) project quantitative parameters that define the limits of student mastery of the material. This circular synchronization between the learning design and completion indicators has been proven to minimize pedagogical disconnection, uphold assessment objectivity, and contribute theoretically for practitioners in engineering coherent classroom learning.

INTRODUCTION

The contemporary educational landscape demands a radical reorientation in classroom management, where the planning, implementation, and assessment phases of learning outcomes must be integrated into a cohesive pedagogical system. The reality on the ground requires educators to abandon their conventional role as static material distributors and transform into instructional architects capable of aligning learning objectives, teaching tactics, and assessment instruments (Sanjaya, 2015). This alignment of planning aspects is a crucial pillar that guarantees the success of knowledge transfer in a competency-based curriculum (Prasetyo & Hamami, 2020). In this context, the Lesson Implementation Plan (RPP) serves as a tactical compass for educators in orchestrating classroom instruction to achieve targeted competencies.

However, empirical evidence indicates a wide gap between the planning text on paper and the real dynamics in the classroom, primarily driven by the low consistency of teacher instructional governance (Bararah, 2017). In addition to the accuracy of the

design, the portrait of educational success is also determined by the validity of the testing system. The Minimum Completion Criteria (KKM) exists as a formal measuring instrument to map the lower limit of students' academic mastery of certain material (Hidayat, 2020). Determining the KKM score should not be trapped in mere administrative rituals; its calculation requires precision in assessing the weight of the material's difficulty (*complexity*), students' initial skills (*intake*), as well as the adequacy of school facilities and infrastructure so that the resulting completion index is valid and accommodating (Abdurrahman, 2020).

Although functionally the RPP and KKM are at different poles, epistemologically they are intertwined in one instructional circulation. The RPP represents blueprint scenarios, while the Minimum Competency Standards (KKM) act as a benchmark for competency performance. Unfortunately, polarization and sectoral egos between these two documents often trigger disorientation in learning in the field (Widyanto & Wahyuni, 2020). This phenomenon underlies the urgency of enforcing the concept *instructional alignment*. A principle of organic alignment between projected targets, classroom activities, and evaluation mechanisms rooted in the theory of global constructive alignment. A misalignment between what is planned and what is assessed can undermine the accuracy of the evaluation itself.

Most previous researchers tended to examine the characteristics of lesson plans as merely standalone teaching preparation tools, or to view the Minimum Competency (KKM) in isolation as merely part of grade reporting (Hidayat, 2020; Widyanto & Wahyuni, 2020). Comprehensive studies that bridge these two entities into a single pedagogical ecosystem based on quality alignment are still very rare in the context of curriculum governance in Indonesia. Allowing this chronic misalignment between teaching plans and graduation benchmarks to persist negatively impacts quality *output* educational institutions. The impact of this lack of a circular cycle is the loss of direction and accuracy in assessments, which in turn risks triggering the phenomenon of "pseudo-completeness," an anomalous condition in which students are declared administratively successful based on the Minimum Competency (KKM) score, but lack the substantive competencies mandated by curriculum standards due to the reduction of assessment functions to only pursue quantitative targets (Bararah, 2017; Prasetyo & Hamami, 2020).

Starting from the conceptual gap and the urgency of the emergency, this study offers theoretical novelty through the construction of a paradigm *instructional alignment* which weaves the RPP and KKM into a circular instructional governance cycle. The presence of this model is urgently needed to educate educators to break the chain of dysfunctional assessment bureaucracy (Juwita et al., 2024). Through this systemic, iterative, and continuous restructuring of the relationship, the KKM evaluation score is no longer viewed as a static final output. Instead, the KKM is repositioned as a feedback valve (*feedback loop*) adaptive to revitalize and refine the draft lesson plan for the next academic quarter. Through the operationalization of this circular model, the quality of teacher teaching performance can be continuously improved to guarantee the emergence of authentic student competencies.

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A Lesson Plan (RPP) is understood as an instructional scenario structure created by educators that serves as an operational guide during classroom activities (Sanjaya, 2015).

Theoretically, a RPP goes beyond bureaucratic formalities and acts as a teaching architecture tool that conditions all learning activities to lead to the achievement of standard competencies (Hamalik, 2003). In a curriculum design roadmap, the anatomy of a RPP at least summarizes the formulation of objectives, material substance, selection of tactics, activity sequences, and testing methods (Uno, 2023). Instructional design is essentially a structured process in formulating learning experiences to trigger changes in student behavior. Planning accuracy is positively correlated with the efficiency of instructional outcomes because it minimizes teaching disorientation (Bararah, 2017). In the current era of educational disruption, the significance of instructional design is undergoing a paradigm shift; planning orientation is no longer trapped in the dichotomy of conventional classroom management, but is instead required to be accommodating and output-oriented (*outcome-based education*), and responsiveness in adopting digital modes to facilitate learning differentiation strategies (Juwita et al., 2024). Consequently, modern lesson plans must be highly flexible and pivoted to student needs to offset fluctuations in learning outcomes in the field.

On the other hand, the Minimum Completion Criteria (KKM) is defined as a quantitative threshold for mastery of material, which serves as the primary barometer for validating student learning outcomes (Hidayat, 2020). KKM serves not merely as a demarcation line for passing scores, but as a composite indicator of teaching quality that reflects the level of material difficulty, the diversification of student input, and the supportive capacity of the learning environment (Abdurrahman, 2020). Furthermore, KKM carries a strategic educational function because it serves as the initial basis for formulating further intervention schemes, in the form of improvement programs (*remedial*) and enrichment (*enrichment*) (Uno, 2023). Based on this, the KKM operates not only as a value judgment tool, but also as an integral part of a sustainable academic quality control system. Viewed from the perspective of instructional *alignment* Lesson Plan (RPP) and Minimum Competency (KKM) are two interconnected entities that cannot be separated (Sanjaya, 2015). The RPP directs the instructional design, while the KKM validates the achievement of those design targets. Therefore, a holistic understanding that unites these two variables within a single integrated assessment ecosystem is an absolute prerequisite for educational effectiveness (Widyanto & Wahyuni, 2020).

RESEARCH METHODS

This research adopts a qualitative approach by utilizing the literature study method (*library research*). Referring to the view (Snyder, 2019), literature review is very reliable to be applied to dissect, conceptualize, and align the scattered literature to produce a new conceptual model or reconstruct a certain theoretical area radically without the need to penetrate the search for empirical data in the field. The focus of this research investigation is directed at analyzing the circular interconnection between the Learning Implementation Plan (RPP) and the Minimum Completion Criteria (KKM) in the paradigm of instructional alignment (*instructional alignment*). The data collection in this study is sourced from primary and secondary literature that directly intersects the domains of curriculum management, classroom device implementation, and minimum completion-based evaluation methodology. Data searches were conducted digitally by targeting national policy databases and reputable journal indexes, including Google Scholar, Garuda (Garba Rujukan Digital), and DOAJ.

The regulatory corridor used as the primary reference in this analysis includes the latest Indonesian national education standards regulations that address instructional scenario governance and learning outcome assessment systems. The legal product examined definitively centers on the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Regulation No. 12 of 2024 concerning the Curriculum for Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education, and Secondary Education. This regulation serves as the official legal umbrella for the national implementation of the Independent Curriculum, which regulates the principles of flexible learning design and continuous assessment. Although Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Regulations No. 16 of 2022 and No. 21 of 2022 legally and formally lead to the standardization of the Independent Curriculum, which introduces the terms Teaching Module and Learning Objective Achievement Criteria (KKTP), this literature review continues to operate the terms RPP and KKM as the primary units of analysis. This repositioning of terminology is based on the principle of functional substance equivalence (*functional equivalence*) in instructional design theory. In the new national curriculum paradigm, the Teaching Module is essentially a blueprint for class planning that is equivalent to the fundamental function of the RPP, while the KKTP is a paradigmatic evolutionary form of the KKM that reflects the limit of completeness through the approach of competency achievement indicators. Thus, the operation of the terms RPP and KKM in this study does not refer to a rigid dichotomy between curricula, but rather to the universal principle of circular instructional design. This terminological limitation serves as a conceptual strategy to maintain data coherence with the majority of national scientific literature in the last ten years, while facilitating the practical needs of educators in the field who are still adapting curriculum transition documents.

As for the selection of scientific literature in the form of journal articles, researchers apply strict inclusion criteria, including: (1) articles published within the last five years (2021–2026) to capture the escalation of the dynamics of quality and trends in the contemporary national curriculum, (2) the substance of the discussion focuses on the dynamics of implementation, disparities, or integration between class design and completion standards, and (3) manuscripts come from SINTA-accredited national journals or reputable international journals. Meanwhile, the use of reference textbooks (*textbook*) fundamentals containing basic theories of instructional design and learning evaluation are excluded from the five-year chronological limit in order to maintain the originality and authenticity of the basic theory.

The textual data collected from various regulatory documents and scientific literature were then analyzed using descriptive qualitative interpretation techniques using an interactive model based on a schema (Miles et al., 2013). The operationalization of the analysis took place in a circular and iterative manner (*iterative*), including three determinant phases: data condensation (*data condensation*), data presentation (*data display*), and drawing/verifying conclusions (*conclusion drawing/verification*). In the data condensation stage, the researcher selects, filters, summarizes, and classifies premises from the literature to separate key theses regarding teacher constraints and the urgency of RPP-KKM integration. Entering the data presentation stage, the summarized core concepts are then structured into a theoretical matrix to compare the syntheses of experts, before finally being transformed into a visual representation in the form of a flowchart of the conceptual model of the RPP-KKM cycle. In the final phase, the researcher conducts an in-depth synthesis review to formulate conclusions in the form of

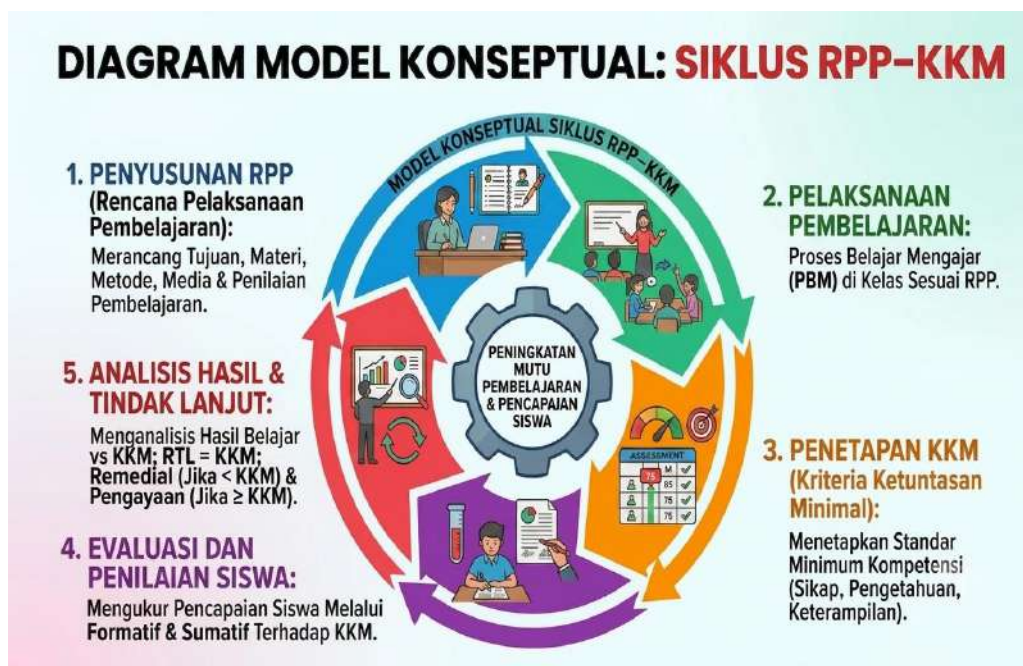
a model instructional *alignment comprehensive*, where quantitative data from KKM is repositioned into a feedback generator (*feedback loop*) which is dynamic for revising the RPP draft in the next learning period.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the theoretical explanation confirm that the Lesson Implementation Plan (RPP) holds the primary control as a classroom architecture instrument that guides the course of all teaching activities (Sanjaya, 2015). The RPP is positioned as *blueprint* A tactical approach that formulates learning objectives, methodology selection, and sequential class steps (Uno, 2023). However, the success of a lesson plan depends heavily on the reality of its implementation when dealing with students. Empirical evidence suggests that deviations between written plans and actual teaching are still common due to disparities in educators' pedagogical competencies and the complexity of classroom governance (Juwita et al., 2024). This indicates that the lesson plan should not be treated as a rigid administrative document, but rather as a dynamic document that demands high flexibility in the field (Bararah, 2017). Furthermore, the Minimum Completion Criteria (KKM) operates as an evaluation parameter to measure students' competency levels (Hidayat, 2020). This KKM score serves as the basis for educators in formulating intervention policies in the form of remedial or enrichment classes (Hamalik, 2003). Furthermore, KKM data also plays a role as a reflection instrument to boost the quality of teacher instruction at a macro level (Abdurrahman, 2020).

The conceptual model that was born in this research proves that the harmony of relationships (*instructional alignment*) between the RPP and KKM does not move in a linear, unidirectional manner, but rather manifests in the form of a continuous circular cycle. The construction of this systemic network is explained in detail in Figure 1.

Figure 1: CONCEPTUAL MODEL DIAGRAM: RPP-KKM CYCLE



Based on the description in Figure 1, the convergence between the design and evaluation domains crystallizes on a single achievement axis, namely accelerating the quality of learning and improving student academic performance (Prasetyo & Hamami, 2020). This cycle integrates five operational phases that continuously influence each other. In the initial stage, educators construct lesson plans by assembling fundamental teaching elements, including target formulation, selection of teaching materials, classroom strategies, supporting media, and assessment instruments (Uno, 2023). The draft plan is then tested in the actual Teaching and Learning Process (PBM) in the classroom as the second stage (Widyanto & Wahyuni, 2020). Along with the dynamics of teaching, educational units and teachers formulate the Minimum Competency Competency Standards (KKM) as the third stage to establish a holistic minimum competency threshold, encompassing the affective, cognitive, and psychomotor domains (Abdurrahman, 2020). After the class scenario is running and the value reference is agreed upon, the fourth stage is filled with the implementation of periodic evaluations via formative and summative instruments to track the position of student learning achievements when compared directly with the KKM indicators (Hidayat, 2020).

As the final phase, marking the beginning of a new cycle, scoring results are mapped and follow-up actions are designed to determine the next intervention model. In this fifth stage, teachers' work focuses on developing a Follow-Up Action Plan (RTL), which is strictly designed based on the achievement of the Minimum Completion Criteria (KKM). The RTL pattern produced is based on a comparison between students' objective scores and the KKM indicators agreed upon by the school. Through this synchronization, the achievement targets of the programs within the RTL are based on the KKM standards to ensure measurable recovery and enrichment of student competencies, without blurring the conceptual boundaries between action programs (RTL) and quantitative parameters (KKM).

In order to avoid ambiguity in the evaluation parameters at this stage, the categorization of RTL actions is divided explicitly into two instructional corridors that place KKM results data as the basis for their intervention:

- Remedial Program (Value < KKM): If the evaluation portrait shows that the student's accumulated grades are below the completion limit (Value < KKM), then the teacher has a professional responsibility to organize a remedial program as a form of curative intervention.
- Enrichment Scheme (Value ≥ KKM): On the other hand, when the student's learning achievement successfully matches or exceeds the completion limit (Score ≥ KKM), then the enrichment scheme (*enrichment*) must be rolled out to escalate their academic horizons, while also successfully destroying the culture of administrative formality in school assessment governance.

The operationalization of the RPP-KKM circular model practically brings transformative implications to the way educators prepare Learning Implementation Plans (RPP) and determine the Minimum Completion Criteria (KKM).), which in the context of the Independent Curriculum as mandated by Permendikbudristek No. 12 of 2024 is implemented equally through the Teaching Module and Learning Objective Achievement Criteria (KKTP). Considering that the Teaching Module and KKTP are forms of *functional equivalence* (functional equivalence) of the RPP and KKM, the integration between these two components should no longer be trapped within rigid administrative barriers. When

educators reposition the completion limits (KKM/KKTP)) as a feedback *loop*, the preparation of learning plans (RPP/Teaching Modules) in the next quarter will be more flexible and adaptive to the diversity of student learning rates. This implication simultaneously strengthens the essence of authentic assessment and the principles of differentiated learning; these benchmarks of completion are no longer simply absolute numbers for punishing or passing students, but rather generators of data for adjusting classroom strategies. Thus, through the implementation of this circular cycle, the core spirit of the Independent Curriculum—namely, the flexibility of instructional design and the accuracy of interventions based on actual student performance can be organically and sustainably upheld in the classroom.

CONCLUSION

Based on the conceptual study conducted, it can be concluded that the Lesson Implementation Plan (RPP) and the Minimum Completion Criteria (KKM) are two main components in a competency-based learning system that are integrated with each other. The RPP functions as a planning instrument that directs the learning process, while the KKM functions as an evaluation standard that measures the achievement of student competencies. The findings of this study confirm that learning effectiveness is determined not only by the quality of each component, but also by the level of alignment between the RPP and the KKM within the instructional alignment framework. The integration of the two results in a learning system that is more focused, measurable, and oriented towards optimal competency achievement.

Furthermore, the Minimum Competency Criteria (KKM) also serves a strategic function as a basis for follow-up learning through remedial and enrichment programs, thus contributing to the continuous improvement of learning quality. Practically, teachers need to ensure alignment between the lesson plan (RPP) and the Minimum Competency Criteria (KKM) from the planning stage to avoid gaps between learning objectives and assessment standards. Therefore, learning planning is not only oriented towards the preparation of the lesson plan alone, but also on its integration with the evaluative indicators used. Theoretically, this study contributes to enriching the instructional design literature by developing a conceptual model of instructional alignment that integrates planning and evaluation aspects in a systemic, iterative, and sustainable learning cycle.

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