

CURRICULAR ALIGNMENT: ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF CURRICULUM ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IN FINAL EXAMINATIONS

Istiqomah Aprimargani Muliayu Ningsih^{*1}, Ari Prasetyaningrum², Siti Maysuroh³,
Usuluddin⁴

^{1,2,3,4}English Language Education Study Program, Hamzanwadi University

* Corresponding Author: istiqomahaprimargani@gmail.com

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ABSTRAK

This research examines the impact of curricular alignment on student performance in final exams. This research evaluates how much the match between the curriculum and the final exam influences student achievement. This research design uses a quantitative approach with 50 samples of grade-eleventh students at MA Mu'allimin NWDI Pancor, who follow an aligned and non-aligned curriculum. Data was collected through final exams and student perception surveys. Data analysis shows that students who follow an aligned curriculum obtain higher test scores compared to students who do not follow an aligned curriculum. The data collection revealed that the highest score was 78 and the lowest was 63. Out of the 25 pupils, 15 scored above 68, with an average score 68.6. Good curriculum alignment has been found to have a positive effect on exam scores. The majority of students' assessed that the material taught was appropriate to the exam format and helped them understand the concept being tested. This research shows that curriculum alignment plays an important role in improving student performance on final exams, and is relevant in efforts to improve the overall quality of education.

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INTRODUCTION

The curriculum plays a central role in the educational process, serving as the main guide in delivering content and developing students' skills. The curriculum not only represent the beliefs and goals of an educational institution, but also reflects national goals in developing society through education (Gregersen-Hermans, 2021). Curriculum alignment, which refers to the consistency between subject matter, teaching methods, and assessment processes, is critical to ensuring that students' acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to achieve optimal learning outcomes (Prasetyaningrum et al., 2023).

This research focuses on how curriculum alignment effects student performance in final exams the final exam is often the main determinant in evaluating a student's academic achievement, and therefore, the relevance and alignment between the material taught in class and the content tested in the final exam is very important (Chian et al., 2019). A curriculum that is aligned with the final exam not only helps students in exam preparation but also improve their understanding of the concepts being tested (Karanja & Malone, 2021).

Understanding learning objectives helps students manage their study time more efficiently (Shepard, 2019). Students manage their study schedules and provide adequate time to acquire critical ideas by prioritizing subjects linked with learning objectives, for as studying ecosystems for a biology test (Alghamdy, 2024). This systematic method not only improve their preparation, but it also reduces time spent on irrelevant content. Teachers, too can use students' understanding of learning activities. Group discussions and research projects promote active involvement and in-depth engagement with course content. Educators encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning journey by matching instructional techniques with learning objectives, which improves their overall academic performance.

This research is important because it highlights the impact of alignment on student performance in final exams, which is a key factor in determining educational success. By understanding the extent of alignment between the taught curriculum and exam material, we can improve the quality of learning and student academic results (Sunkur & Yilmaz, n.d.). additionally, this research provides insight into how teaching strategies and student preparation can be adjust to improve understanding of the concepts and skill tested. The main difference between this research and previous research is the focus on a more in-depth empirical analysis of the direct relationship between curriculum alignment and student final exam results. While previous research has discussed the importance of curriculum and final exam separately. This research also consider quantitative aspect, such as students' perception of exam preparation and the effectiveness of teaching methods, which provides a more comprehensive picture of the influence of curriculum alignment.

In contrast, a misaligned curriculum can impair pupils' performance on tests (Rahmi, 2014). When there is a gap between classroom instruction and exam content, students may fail to understand or apply the topics being assessed. This imbalance might result in lower motivation and active involvement in learning activities (Fhonna, 2014). Furthermore, a curriculum that does not fit with assessment expectations may ignore

different learning styles. Leaving certain students unprepared for assessments. This mismatch might increase tension and anxiety among students, since they may be unsure about exam expectations and their ability to satisfy them. Assessment issues due to curriculum misalignment might lower students' self-confidence and negatively effect their academic performance (Halim, 2019). This has an influence on their academic and personal development. Dissatisfaction among stakeholders, including parents and educators, can occur as a results of perceived shortcomings in educational delivery and support (Wahyuni, 2019).

To overcome these difficulties, all education stakeholders, including teachers, students, parents, and policymakers should be included (Algiovann & Roza, 2020). Involving these group in curriculum creation, implementation, and assessment ensures that educational methods are sustainable and successful. Continues professional development for teachers is required to improve their grasp of curriculum alignment and successful teaching strategies (Christopoulos & Sprangers, 2021). Integrating educational technology tailored to local circumstances may make courses more dynamic and relevant, addressing varied student requirements and learning styles.

Final exams are important milestones in education since they indicated students' academic achievements at the end of a school term. Exams are more than just assessment, they also indicate the consequence of students' educational experiences (Dunn & Mulvenon, 2019). Final exams, with their high evaluative weight, have become critical variables in fulfilling educational objectives. Researchers explore deeper into final exams to better understand how they not only reflect academic accomplishment but also instructional efficacy .(Shufutinsky, 2020)By emphasizing the importance of final exams, researchers hope to better understand how the results of these evaluations shape students' perceptions of learning, provide valuable insights to educators, and ultimately support continuous improvement efforts in the education system (Prasetyaningrum et al., 2023).

Moreover, the success of an educational system is indicated by the learning results of its students. Academic success indicates a students' development of cognitive, social, and skill sets in addition to their knowledge of the subject matter (Jacob et al., 2020) effective learning experience in the rapidly evolving field of education depend on an understanding of and assessment of students' learning outcomes (Moşteanu, 2021). Researchers can examine the effects of learning outcomes on students' overall development by describing several aspects of learning outcomes, such as knowledge and skills. This investigation convers both cognitive and effective domains in an effort to

provide a comprehensive picture of the function and importance of students' learning outcomes in determining the course and caliber of education (Wahyuni, 2019).

Making more general decisions regarding the education system, improving teaching methods, and creating education policies all depend on having a thorough knowledge of this link. Analyzing students' final exam results can help determine how effective a curriculum and teaching strategies are, according to (Albreiki et al., 2021). It can also help make the required adjustment to raise the standard of education generally and provide insight into the degree to which educational goals have been met. Thus, improving learning experiences and assisting students in reaching higher goals are facilitated by the complex interaction that exist between the curriculum, final exams, and students' test outcomes (Fhonna, 2014).

Thus, there are significant effects on students' learning outcomes when there is a balance between the curriculum that is taught and the material covered in the final exams. The degree to which the curriculum closely matches the material of the final exam has a substantial impact on students' comprehension and skill development (Adler, 2022). Researchers can look into how a sustainable learning process can be supported by properly integrating learning content and final evaluating by examining this relationship. Learning outcomes can take into account elements like student motivation, engagement, and thorough comprehension of the material. Researches may better match the curriculum and final exams by identifying solutions based on a knowledge if these dynamics, which will lay a solid foundation for the best possible learning outcomes for students (Stahl & King, 2020).

The issue of curriculum alignment is worth paying attention to because it has a direct impact on student's academic success, especially in final exams, which are often the main benchmark for educational assessment (Ahmed, 2024). A mismatch between the curriculum taught and the exam material can result in various problems, such as difficulty understanding the material, low motivation to learn, and stress due to uncertainty about the material to be tested. This not only affects students' academic achievement but also their self-confidence and personal development (Maysuroh et al., 2022).

This research is important because it provides deep insight into how effective alignment between curriculum and final exams can improve the quality of education. By exploring this relationship, this research not only provides solutions to improve students' understanding and skills but also helps teacher and policymakers in designing curricula that more appropriate to learning goals. For readers, this research is relevant because it touches on fundamental aspects of the education system that affect all parties-students,

teachers, parents, and policymakers. The results of this research can be used to improve the quality of teaching and learning so that students can reach their maximum potential and the education system can be more effective in meeting its academic goals. Thus, this research offers a real contribution to efforts to improve educational standards and student learning outcomes.

RESEARCH METHOD

In this study, the researcher employed a quantitative descriptive approach to examine the effect of curricular alignment on student performance on final exams. According to (Rao, 2019), "data collection techniques involved surveys and document analysis." The survey asked students on their perceptions of the relationship between the curriculum and the final test, as well as their experiences with the exam. Furthermore, data were gathered from official records regarding the curricula used and the students' final exam results. The data analysis strategy used regressions analysis to evaluate how much curricular compliance affected students' performance on the final exam (Islam et al., 2022).

Data collection was carried out using two main instruments, namely questionnaires and student final exam score data. Questionnaires were used to measure students' perceptions of curriculum alignment, while final exam score data were used to assess student performance. The collected data is then summarized using descriptive statistics such as mean, median, standard deviation, and frequency distribution, which provide a general picture of students' perceptions and final exam results (Uska et al., 2022). Validity in this research refers to the extent to which the instrument used actually measure what is intended to be measured. To ensure validity, the questionnaires instrument was designed based on theory and previous research regarding curriculum alignment and student perceptions (Rahmi, 2014).

Triangulation was carried out to increase the reliability and validity of research findings. In this research, triangulation was achieved using two different data sources, students' perception (through questionnaires) and students' academic performance (through final exam scores). By comparing the results from these two sources, researchers get more comprehensive picture of the impact of alignment on student performance. The results of the questionnaire and value data show a consistent pattern, this strengthens the validity of the research findings (Qadir et al., 2020). After the data is collected and analyzed, the results are interpreted to draw conclusions regarding the impact of curriculum alignment on student performance in final exam. Regression analysis is used

to measure the effect of curriculum alignment on student performance, with the independent variable in the form of curriculum alignment and the dependent variable in the form of final exam results (Morris et al., 2021). The regression results help in identifying how much influence curriculum alignment has on student academic achievement.

The result of the analysis are presented comprehensively using table, graphs, and narrative descriptions to facilitate understanding and decision making for stakeholders. Comprehensive presentation ensures that research findings can be understood clearly and can be used to improve the quality of education, especially in terms of curriculum alignment. With this approach, research not only produces reliable data but also provides in-depth insight into how curriculum alignment influences student learning outcomes.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

FINDINGS

As the current study investigated the impact of curricular alignment on students' performance in final exams, this section presents results based on two categories; a comparison of students' final exam results and student questionnaire results. At the outset, a description of the test scores of students who followed the curriculum and those who did not follow the curriculum is presented in table 1.

Table 1. Average Exam Results Based on Curriculum Status

Class	Number Of Students	Average Result (%)	Curriculum Status
IPA 1	25	68.4	Following The Curriculum
IPA 2	25	31.2	Not Following The Curriculum

Table 1 depicts the classification of the final exam results of the two classes, namely Class 11 IPA 1 and Class 11 IPA 2, show significant differences in students' academic performance. Class 11 Science 1, which follows the curriculum, has an average exam result of 68.4%. This means that most of the students in this class were able to answer more than half of the questions correctly. On the other hand, Class 11 IPA 2, which does not follow the curriculum, only achieved an average exam result of 31.2%. This shows that most of the students in this class have difficulty answering exam questions correctly.

From this data, students who follow the curriculum have a significant positive impact on students' academic performance, as evidenced by the quite large difference in average exam results between the two classes. Students who follow the curriculum tend to get better results in the final exam compared to students who do not follow the

curriculum. As obtained from the students, the questionnaire results are presented in table 2.

Table 2: Percentage of Questionnaire Results on Teaching Quality and Curriculum

No	Questions	Students following the curriculum %	Students not following the curriculum %
1.	Quality of teaching in preparing for the final exam	64%	32%
2.	The suitability of the curriculum with the weight of the material in the final exam	48%	28%
3.	Level of readiness after completing the curriculum	52%	20%
4.	Suitability of teaching methods to the final exam format	56%	28%
5.	How much the curriculum helped master the concepts tested	56%	20%

Table 2; the questionnaires results demonstrate substantial disparities between students who followed the curriculum and those who did not in numerous elements of final exam preparation.

The results of the questionnaire showed significant differences in students' perceptions of final exam preparation between students who followed the curriculum and students who did not. Students who follow the curriculum generally say that they are more satisfied with the quality of the instruction they receive and feel that the instruction they receive really helps them prepare for final exams. Students who did not follow the curriculum, on the other hand, showed lower levels of satisfaction. Students who follow the curriculum believe that the curriculum reflects the exam material well and meets their expectations. Students who do not follow the curriculum, on the other hand, tend to find discrepancies or deficiencies in the material being taught.

Students who follow the curriculum are also better prepared for the final exam compared to students who do not follow the curriculum. This shows that the curriculum provides a more solid foundation for preparing for the exam. Students who follow the curriculum also believe that the learning methods in the curriculum are more appropriate to the exam format. They believe that the method better prepares them for the types of questions that will appear on the final exam. Students who do not follow the curriculum, on the other hand, believe that the method does not suit the exam format, which may affect their readiness for the exam.

Students who take part in the program feel more helped in understanding the concepts tested in the final exam, and they believe that the program really helps them

understand the material. Students who do not participate in the program, on the other hand, feel less supported and may have difficulty understanding the concepts being tested. Students who follow the curriculum also assess the material taught as more relevant and in line with what is expected from the exam. Students who do not follow the curriculum, on the other hand, feel that the material taught does not match the exam content, which can make it more difficult for them to prepare for the exam.

Students who follow the curriculum are more confident in preparing for the final exam than students who do not follow the curriculum. Students who follow the curriculum feel more confident and confident in facing the final exam because they feel they have prepared themselves well. Finally, students who follow the curriculum feel that the material taught is relevant to the types of questions that appear in the final exam. They also feel that what they learn in class is often or always related to exam questions, which can affect their ability to answer questions well. (Hailikari et al., 2022) agrees that curriculum alignment is essential for improving student learning outcomes. Studies have shown if the curriculum is well structured and aligned, it ensures that students receive information directly related to the final material, which increase students' level of preparedness and confidence.

In addition, if the curriculum is closer to the expected learning outcomes and assessments, students are more likely to engage with the content of the course. (Moşteanu, 2021) argues that an organized curriculum helps students cultivate a stronger foundation in important areas. This is crucial for success on exams and for accelerating future academic progress. Overall, the data shows that students who follow the curriculum feel better prepared and more confident to face the final exam compared to students who do not follow the curriculum. This difference shows how important a structured and relevant curriculum is to prepare students for final exams.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study show significant difference in academic performance between students who follow the curriculum and those who do not. Class 11 IPA 1, which followed the curriculum, achieved an average final exam results of 68.4%, while Class 11 IPA 2, which did not follow the curriculum, only achieved an average of 31.2%. **According to** (Kumar & Rewari, 2022), a well-structured curriculum can help students achieve higher learning goals. This can be seen from the better exam results of students who follow the curriculum compared to those who do not, showing the importance of structure and alignment in learning.

The results of this study confirm that compliance with a structured curriculum has a significant positive impact on student academic performance. In line with the views of Biggs (1996) cited in (Hamdoun, 2023) in the theory of “constructive alignment.” alignment between learning objectives, teaching methods, and assessment is very important for educational effectiveness. This data shows that students who follow the curriculum are more prepared and confident in facing the final exam because the material taught is following the exam material. Hamdoun emphasizes that when all elements in the educational process are aligned, student will more easily achieve desired learning outcomes, which is evident in this research.

The implications of these results are very important for educational practice. (Aldrup et al., 2022) states that the biggest influence on student learning is the quality of teaching supported by an effective curriculum. The results of this research show that a structured and relevant curriculum not only increase students’ readiness for exams but also increase their confidence in facing academic challenges. Therefore, educational institutions need to continue to develop and refine the curriculum to align with assessment standards and student needs, as recommendation by aldrup.

However, this study has several limitations. According to (Quinio & Lam, 2021), research based on questionnaire data often faces challenges in the form of self-reporting bias and limitations in measuring the complexity of student experiences. Results from these studies, which are largely based on student self-reports, may not fully reflect all factors influencing exam performance. Therefore, these results need to be interpreted with caution, and further research is needed that can overcome these limitations to obtain a more comprehensive picture.

For future studies, (Johnson & Christensen, 2024), recommend using mixed methods to gain a deeper understanding of educational phenomena. In the context of this research, such an approach could include objective measurements, such as actual test scores, as well as further analysis of their variables that may influence student performance, such as teaching quality and external support. Thus, further research may provide more insight into how the curriculum can be optimized to support student academic success.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the final exam results between the two classes, it can be concluded that following a structured and relevant curriculum has a significant positive

impact on student's academic performance. Students who follow the curriculum show better abilities in answering final exam questions than those who do not. These differences underscore the importance of aligning curriculum with learning objectives and exam formats better prepare students for final exams. This conclusion strengthens the argument that an effective curriculum can improve student learning outcomes substantially.

The conclusion that can be drawn from the result of the questionnaires is that following a structured and relevant curriculum has a significant positive impact on students' readiness for the final exam. Students who follow the curriculum tend to feel more satisfied with the quality of the teaching received and believe that the teaching is very helpful in preparing for exams. They also felt that the material taught was appropriate to the exam material and the teaching methods used were appropriate to the exam format, thereby increasing their self-confidence. On the other hand, students who do not follow the curriculum feel less satisfied, less prepared, and less confident in facing the final exam. This conclusion emphasizes the importance of a curriculum that is structured and aligned with students' needs to increase their readiness and confidence in facing exams.

SUGGESTIONS

Based on the outcomes of this study, various recommendations can be made to improve future curricular alignment implementation efforts. First, educators should constantly assess and improve teaching techniques and curriculum content in order to better satisfy students' expectations and examination requirements. Second, curriculum developers can work more closely with stakeholder to verify that curriculum content is actually relevant and in line with desired learning goals. Third, instructors require more training and resources in order to enhance the effectiveness of curriculum alignment in enhancing students' knowledge and academic performance over time.

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