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AN ANALYSIS OF THE CONTENT OF KURIKULUM PERSEKOLAHAN 2027 (KP2027) IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Despite the increasing emphasis on curriculum reform in Malaysia, empirical and systematic analyses of *Kurikulum Persekolahan 2027 (KP2027)*, particularly in the context of early childhood education, remain limited. Existing studies have largely focused on general policy descriptions or implementation challenges without providing an in-depth examination of curriculum content, pedagogical orientation, and assessment alignment with global early childhood education frameworks. This study addresses this gap by conducting a qualitative content analysis of KP2027, focusing on its learning domains, pedagogical approaches, and assessment strategies. By situating KP2027 within contemporary educational theories and international best practices, this study contributes to a clearer understanding of the curriculum's strengths, limitations, and implementation implications for early childhood education in Malaysia. *Keywords: KP2027, Early Childhood Education, Content Analysis, Holistic Development, STEM, Multilingual Education*

INTRODUCTION

The Kurikulum Persekolahan 2027 (KP2027), introduced by the Malaysian Ministry of Education, represents a significant reform in the national education system. Designed to modernize teaching and learning practices, KP2027 emphasizes 21st-century skills, digital literacy, and holistic child development. Early childhood education (ECE) is a critical stage in a

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child's development, laying the foundation for cognitive, emotional, and social growth. As such, it is essential to analyze how KP2027 addresses the needs of young learners and aligns with contemporary educational theories and global best practices.

This study conducts a content analysis of KP2027, focusing on its structure, learning domains, pedagogical approaches, and assessment methods. The analysis aims to evaluate the curriculum's alignment with global trends in ECE, identify its strengths and weaknesses, and provide recommendations for enhancing its implementation and effectiveness. .

LITERATURE REVIEW

Early Childhood Education in Malaysia

Malaysia's ECE system has evolved significantly over the years, with a growing emphasis on holistic development, play-based learning, and inclusivity (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2023). However, challenges such as unequal access to quality education and resource limitations persist, particularly in rural areas (UNESCO, 2021).

Global Trends in Early Childhood Education

Globally, ECE frameworks emphasize play-based learning, social-emotional development, and STEM integration (OECD, 2019). Countries such as Finland, Singapore, and Japan have successfully implemented ECE curricula that prioritize child-centered approaches and holistic development, serving as models for other nations (Sahlberg, 2021; Tan, 2020).

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in constructivist theories, which emphasize the importance of active learning, exploration, and social interaction in early childhood development (Vygotsky, 1978). These theories align with KP2027's focus on play-based learning and inquiry-based methods.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative content analysis approach to examine the Kurikulum Persekolahan 2027 (KP2027) for early childhood education. The primary data sources consisted of official curriculum documents published by the Ministry of Education Malaysia, supplemented by international policy reports and academic literature on early childhood education frameworks.

The analysis followed a thematic, framework-based coding process. Curriculum content was analysed using predefined analytical categories derived from global early childhood education literature, namely: (i) curriculum structure and learning domains, (ii) pedagogical approaches, and (iii) assessment methods. These categories served as the units of analysis.

To enhance analytical consistency, data were reviewed iteratively and compared across documents to identify recurring themes and patterns. Triangulation with international frameworks such as those proposed by OECD and UNESCO was employed to strengthen the validity of the analysis. This systematic approach enabled a comprehensive evaluation of the alignment between KP2027 and contemporary educational theories and global best practices.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

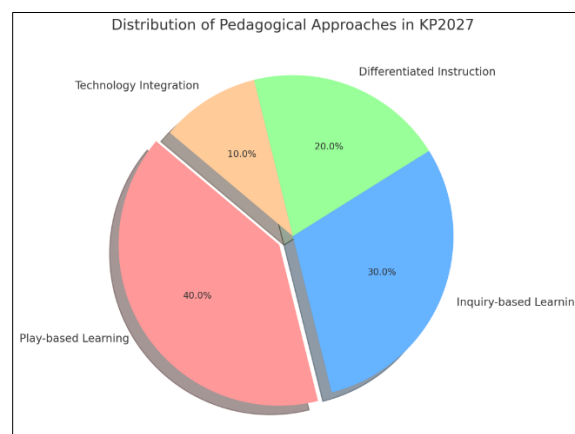
[The content analysis of KP2027 reveals a well-structured curriculum that emphasizes holistic development through six primary learning domains: cognitive development, language and literacy, social-emotional development, physical and motor skills, creativity and aesthetics, and moral values. These domains are designed to provide a balanced and comprehensive educational experience for preschoolers, aligning with global trends in ECE that prioritize the integration of cognitive, emotional, and social growth (OECD, 2019). For instance, the focus on multilingual education reflects Malaysia's diverse linguistic landscape, encouraging proficiency in Malay, English, and additional languages such as Mandarin or Tamil. This approach not only prepares children for a globalized world but also preserves Malaysia's cultural heritage (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2023). Additionally, the integration of STEM concepts and digital literacy at an early age fosters curiosity and problem-solving skills, which are essential for future educational demands (UNESCO, 2021). However, the curriculum's success depends on effective implementation, which faces challenges such as teacher preparedness and resource limitations, particularly in rural areas (Sahlberg, 2021).

Table 1
Learning Domains in KP2027

Learning Domain	Competencies
Cognitive Development	Critical thinking, problem-solving, early numeracy.
Language and Literacy	Proficiency in Malay, English, and additional languages.
Social-Emotional Development	Empathy, resilience, interpersonal skills.
Physical and Motor Skills	Gross and fine motor skill development.
Creativity and Aesthetics	Artistic expression, creative thinking.
Moral Values	Ethical behaviour, cultural appreciation.

In terms of pedagogical approaches, KP2027 incorporates play-based learning, inquiry-based methods, and differentiated instruction, which align with constructivist theories that emphasize active learning and exploration (Vygotsky, 1978). For example, play-based learning allows children to explore concepts through hands-on activities, storytelling, and role-playing, while inquiry-based methods encourage critical thinking and problem-solving. The curriculum also leverages technology integration, using age-appropriate digital tools to enhance engagement and concept reinforcement. However, the effectiveness of these approaches depends on the availability of resources and the readiness of educators to adopt new teaching strategies (Tan, 2020). Furthermore, KP2027 emphasizes parental and community engagement, recognizing the importance of a supportive learning environment beyond the classroom. This aligns with global best practices that highlight the role of parents and communities in reinforcing early learning (OECD, 2019).

Figure 1
Pedagogical Approaches in KP2027



Assessment methods in KP2027 are designed to be holistic and child-centered, incorporating formative assessments, such as observational checklists, and portfolio-based evaluations that document children's progress over time. These methods provide a comprehensive view of each child's development, addressing not only cognitive skills but also social-emotional growth and interpersonal abilities. However, the reliance on standardized assessments in some areas may limit the curriculum's ability to fully capture the diverse needs and abilities of young learners (UNESCO, 2021). Overall, while KP2027 introduces several innovative elements, its successful implementation requires addressing challenges such as teacher training, resource allocation, and equitable access across different socio-economic backgrounds.

Table 2:
Assessment Methods in KP2027

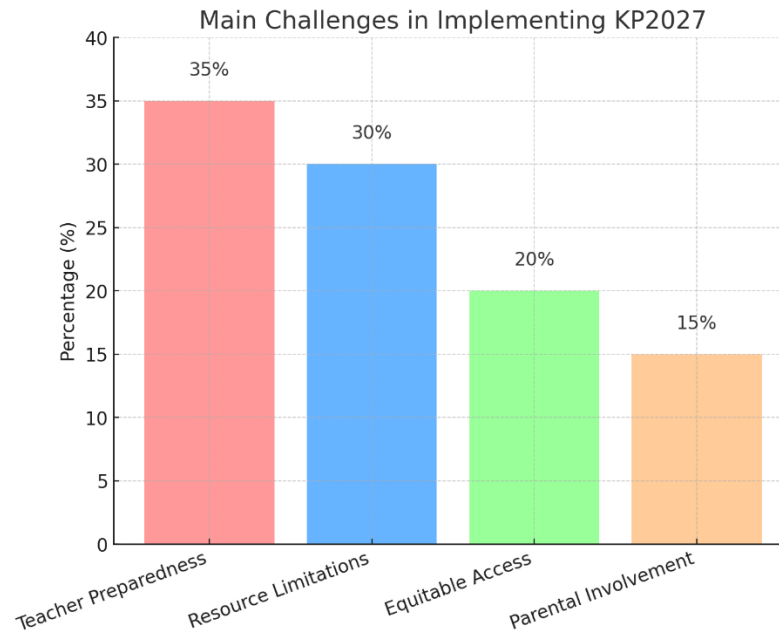
Assessment Method	Description
Formative Assessments	Observational checklists, developmental milestones.
Portfolio-Based Assessments	Documentation of children's work, observations, and reflections.
Social-Emotional Assessments	Tools to evaluate empathy, resilience, and interpersonal skills.

]

DICUSSION

The findings of this study highlight the strengths of KP2027, particularly its emphasis on holistic development, multilingual education, and STEM integration, which align with global best practices in ECE. For instance, the focus on play-based learning and inquiry-based methods reflects contemporary educational theories that prioritize active learning and child-centered approaches (Vygotsky, 1978; OECD, 2019). However, the curriculum's success depends on addressing several challenges, including teacher preparedness, resource limitations, and equitable access to quality education. Research shows that effective implementation of ECE curricula requires ongoing professional development for educators, as well as adequate funding and infrastructure to support curriculum delivery (Sahlberg, 2021). In Malaysia, these challenges are particularly pronounced in rural areas, where access to resources and trained educators is often limited (UNESCO, 2021).

Figure 2
Challenges in Implementing KP2027



Another area for improvement is the alignment of KP2027 with global trends in assessment. While the curriculum incorporates formative assessments and portfolio-based evaluations, there is a need to further emphasize social-emotional learning and individualized assessment to better capture the diverse needs of young learners. For example, countries such as Finland and Japan have successfully implemented ECE frameworks that prioritize holistic assessment and inclusive education, serving as models for other nations (OECD, 2019; Tobin et al., 2019). By adopting similar practices, KP2027 can enhance its ability to support the cognitive, emotional, and social development of all children, regardless of their background or abilities.

Table 3
Comparison of KP2027 with Global ECE Frameworks

Aspect	KP2027	Finland	Japan
Pedagogical Approaches	Play-based learning, inquiry-based methods.	Play-based learning, teacher autonomy.	Experiential learning, group activities.
Assessment Methods	Formative assessments, portfolio-based evaluations.	Observational assessments, no formal testing.	Holistic assessments, peer feedback.
Focus on Social-Emotional Learning	Empathy, resilience, interpersonal skills.	Emotional intelligence, inclusivity.	Moral education, community values.

Finally, the study highlights the importance of parental and community involvement in early childhood education. Research shows that active participation from parents and communities can significantly enhance children's learning outcomes by creating a supportive environment that reinforces classroom learning (OECD, 2019). KP2027's emphasis on home-learning activities and community programs is a step in the right direction, but further efforts are needed to ensure that all parents, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, are equipped to support their children's education.

CONCLUSION

[Kurikulum Persekolahan 2027 (KP2027) represents a progressive step in Malaysian early childhood education, incorporating best practices such as holistic development, play-based learning, and STEM integration. The curriculum's focus on multilingual education and cultural appreciation reflects Malaysia's diverse linguistic and cultural landscape, while its emphasis on 21st-century skills prepares children for future educational challenges. However, the successful implementation of KP2027 requires addressing several challenges, including teacher preparedness, resource limitations, and equitable access to quality education. To maximize the curriculum's impact, policymakers should prioritize comprehensive teacher training, adequate resource allocation, and continuous curriculum evaluation to ensure its relevance and effectiveness. Additionally, fostering parental and community involvement can create a supportive learning environment that reinforces classroom learning and enhances children's overall development. Future research should explore longitudinal studies on the impact of KP2027 on children's academic and socio-emotional development, as well as its alignment with global best practices in early childhood education.]

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in the paper.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

Author 1 contributed to the conceptualization, research design, and writing of the original draft.

Author 2 was responsible for data collection, analysis, and validation of the results.

Author 3 provided supervision, critical review, and editing of the final manuscript.

All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

ETHICS STATEMENT

This research was conducted in accordance with the ethical standards of Universiti Poly-Tech Malaysia and adhered to the principles outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki. Ethical approval was obtained from the **Review Board** under reference number 2025-12-1. All participants were informed about the purpose of the study and provided written informed consent prior to participation. Participants' privacy and confidentiality were strictly maintained, and data collected were used solely for academic purposes.

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