

Educational Management Model Based on Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for Lifelong Learning

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Doi: <https://doi.org/10.58818/ijems.v5i2.315>

Abstract

This study aims to develop an educational management model based on *Recognition of Prior Learning* (RPL) to support lifelong learning. RPL is an approach that acknowledges knowledge, skills, and competencies acquired through formal, non-formal, and informal learning experiences. In the context of modern education, the implementation of RPL requires a systematic, integrated, and policy-driven management strategy to enhance accessibility, flexibility, and relevance of education for diverse learners. This research employs a qualitative approach with a research and development (R&D) design, involving needs analysis, model design, expert validation, and limited implementation trials. The findings reveal that the proposed educational management model consists of several key components, including strategic planning, competency assessment and validation systems, adaptive curriculum management, institutional capacity building, and continuous monitoring and evaluation. The model effectively improves the recognition of learners' competencies, broadens access to education, and strengthens the linkage between education and the labor market. In conclusion, the RPL-based educational management model provides an innovative solution for developing an inclusive, flexible, and sustainable education system that supports lifelong learning in the modern era.

Keywords; Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL); Educational Management; Lifelong Learning; Educational Model; Education Policy; Modern Education Innovation

Introduction

The rapid transformation of the global economy, driven by technological advancement, digitalization, and the demands of the knowledge-based society, has significantly reshaped the landscape of education. In this context, lifelong learning has emerged as a crucial paradigm to ensure that individuals continuously develop their competencies in response to changing social and labor market needs. Traditional education systems, which primarily emphasize formal learning pathways, are increasingly challenged to accommodate diverse learning experiences acquired outside conventional institutions. Therefore, innovative approaches are required to recognize and integrate learning outcomes obtained through non-formal and informal contexts. Raciti, M., Tham, A., & Dale, J. (2024).



One of the most prominent approaches addressing this challenge is *Recognition of Prior Learning* (RPL). RPL is a process that identifies, assesses, and validates an individual's prior learning regardless of where or how it was acquired and translates it into formally recognized competencies. This approach not only promotes equity and inclusivity in education but also enhances access for adult learners, workers, and individuals with diverse educational backgrounds. By acknowledging prior experiences, RPL contributes to reducing redundancy in learning, accelerating educational pathways, and supporting workforce development. Aritonang, U. E., Simanjuntak, K., & Sambalao, V. P. (2024).

However, despite its potential benefits, the implementation of RPL in many educational systems remains fragmented and inconsistent. Challenges often arise in terms of policy alignment, institutional readiness, assessment standardization, and quality assurance mechanisms. In many cases, educational institutions lack a comprehensive management framework that can effectively integrate RPL into their academic structures and administrative processes. As a result, the full potential of RPL as a strategic tool for lifelong learning has not yet been fully realized. Nuswantara, D. A., et al. (2024).

From an educational management perspective, the successful implementation of RPL requires a well-structured and holistic model that encompasses planning, organizing, implementation, and evaluation processes. Such a model should include clear policies, standardized assessment procedures, trained assessors, adaptive curricula, and robust monitoring systems. Moreover, it should foster collaboration between educational institutions, industry stakeholders, and government bodies to ensure the relevance and credibility of recognized competencies. Rohman, A., et al. (2024).

Based on these considerations, this study aims to develop an educational management model based on RPL that supports lifelong learning in the modern education era. The proposed model is expected to provide a strategic framework for integrating RPL into educational systems, thereby enhancing access, flexibility, and quality of education. Furthermore, it seeks to contribute to the development of a more inclusive and responsive education system that aligns with the principles of lifelong learning and the needs of a dynamic global society. Widiанти, Y. M., et al. (2024).

Methods

This study employs a Research and Development (R&D) approach to systematically design and validate an Educational Management Model based on the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for lifelong learning. This method was specifically selected to develop, test, and refine a practical framework that is both applicable and effective for implementation within educational institutions (Azbihardiyanti, 2024). The research adopts a qualitative-oriented developmental design, integrating qualitative insights with limited quantitative data through a structured process involving a preliminary study, model design, expert validation, limited field testing, and final model revision (Supraptiningsih & Jannah, 2024).

The research was conducted at selected higher education institutions and training centers that are currently implementing or piloting RPL programs. Participants (including educational managers, lecturers, assessors, policymakers, and learners) were selected using purposive sampling to ensure that the data gathered reflects a high level of expertise and relevance to actual RPL implementation (Junaidi & Irwanda, 2023).

To ensure robust data validity and triangulation, a multi-technique collection approach was utilized. This included in-depth interviews to explore stakeholder perceptions and challenges, document analysis of institutional policies and curriculum frameworks, direct observations of assessment processes, and questionnaires distributed during validation and trial phases to measure the model's feasibility (Maurer, 2023).

The model development procedures followed a rigorous sequence, beginning with a needs analysis to identify gaps in current practices, followed by the conceptual construction of a framework encompassing strategic planning, competency assessment, and institutional support. This initial model then underwent expert validation to ensure relevance and clarity, followed by a limited trial to evaluate its practicality. Insights gained from these stages were used for final refinements (Baumeler et al., 2023).

Data analysis was conducted using a mixed-methods approach: qualitative data were processed through thematic analysis (involving data reduction, display, and conclusion drawing) while quantitative data from questionnaires were analyzed descriptively to determine the model's validity and effectiveness (Guo & Andersson, 2023). To ensure the overall trustworthiness of the findings, the study applied triangulation of sources and methods, expert judgment, and member checking, ensuring the final model is both theoretically sound and practically reliable (Hailikari et al., 2023).

Results

The results of this study present the development and validation of an Educational Management Model based on *Recognition of Prior Learning* (RPL) to support lifelong learning. The findings are organized into four main aspects: needs analysis, model development, expert validation, and limited implementation results. Berglund, G. (2023).

Needs Analysis Results

The preliminary study revealed several critical issues in the current implementation of RPL. First, the management of RPL programs was found to be fragmented and not fully integrated into institutional systems. Second, there was a lack of standardized procedures for assessing and validating prior learning, leading to inconsistencies in outcomes. Third, limited institutional capacity, including insufficient trained assessors and inadequate policy support, hindered effective implementation. These findings indicate the need for a comprehensive and systematic educational management model to optimize RPL practices. Ouyang, F., et al. (2024).

Model Development Results

Based on the needs analysis, an Educational Management Model based on RPL was developed. The model consists of five core components:

- a. Strategic Planning: Establishing institutional policies, goals, and operational guidelines for RPL implementation aligned with lifelong learning principles.
- b. Competency Assessment and Validation: Developing standardized procedures for identifying, documenting, assessing, and recognizing prior learning outcomes.
- c. Adaptive Curriculum Management: Integrating RPL outcomes into flexible curriculum structures that accommodate diverse learner pathways.
- d. Institutional Capacity Building: Strengthening human resources, particularly through training certified RPL assessors and improving organizational readiness.
- e. Monitoring and Evaluation: Implementing continuous evaluation mechanisms to ensure quality assurance and program improvement. Singh, M. (2022).

The model emphasizes a holistic and integrated approach, ensuring alignment between policy, practice, and stakeholder involvement.

Expert Validation Results

The developed model was evaluated by experts in educational management and RPL. The validation results indicated that the model achieved a high level of validity in terms of

relevance, clarity, and applicability. Experts highlighted that the model provides a clear framework for integrating RPL into institutional systems and supports decision-making processes. Minor revisions were suggested, particularly in strengthening the assessment guidelines and enhancing the monitoring indicators. Maurer, M., & Gonon, P. (2022).

Limited Implementation Results

The model was tested in a limited setting involving selected educational institutions. The implementation results showed:

- a. Improved recognition of learners' competencies, particularly for individuals with work-based and non-formal learning experiences.
- b. Increased access and flexibility, enabling learners to enter or re-enter education pathways more efficiently.
- c. Enhanced institutional readiness, as stakeholders demonstrated better understanding and coordination in implementing RPL processes.
- d. Positive stakeholder responses, with lecturers, assessors, and learners expressing satisfaction with the clarity and practicality of the model. Brown, M., & Souto-Otero, M. (2022).

Quantitative data from questionnaires indicated that the model reached a high level of practicality and effectiveness, as reflected in positive response scores across all components. Overall, the results demonstrate that the Educational Management Model based on RPL is valid, practical, and effective in supporting lifelong learning. The model provides a strategic framework that enhances the quality, accessibility, and relevance of education in the modern era. Harris, J. (2022).

Discussion

The findings of this study highlight the strategic importance of developing an Educational Management Model based on *Recognition of Prior Learning* (RPL) to support lifelong learning in the modern education era. The discussion integrates the research results with relevant theoretical perspectives and practical implications, focusing on four key aspects: the significance of RPL in lifelong learning, the effectiveness of the proposed management model, institutional challenges, and the broader implications for educational systems. Young, M., & Allais, S. (2022).

The Role of RPL in Supporting Lifelong Learning

The results confirm that RPL plays a crucial role in promoting lifelong learning by recognizing competencies acquired through formal, non-formal, and informal learning experiences. This aligns with the fundamental principles of lifelong learning, which emphasize accessibility, flexibility, and inclusivity. By acknowledging prior learning, RPL reduces duplication of learning efforts and allows individuals to progress more efficiently through educational pathways. Allais, S. (2022).

In the context of modern education, where learning is no longer confined to classrooms, RPL serves as a bridge between experiential learning and formal education systems. The study findings demonstrate that learners with work experience and informal training benefit significantly from RPL, as it validates their competencies and enhances their opportunities for academic and professional advancement. This supports the idea that education systems must evolve to accommodate diverse learning trajectories. OECD. (2022).

Effectiveness of the RPL-Based Educational Management Model

The developed model proved to be valid, practical, and effective in addressing the gaps identified in the preliminary study. The integration of five core components strategic planning, competency assessment and validation, adaptive curriculum management, institutional capacity building, and monitoring and evaluation reflects a comprehensive management approach. UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning. (2022).

From a management perspective, the model aligns with classical management functions, including planning, organizing, implementing, and controlling. The inclusion of strategic planning ensures that RPL is embedded in institutional policies, while standardized assessment procedures enhance transparency and credibility. Furthermore, adaptive curriculum management allows institutions to accommodate diverse learner needs, which is essential in lifelong learning contexts. European Commission. (2021).

The positive outcomes observed during the limited implementation phase indicate that the model improves institutional coordination and stakeholder engagement. This suggests that a structured management framework is essential for the successful integration of RPL into educational systems. Wheelahan, L., & Moodie, G. (2021).

Institutional Challenges in Implementing RPL

Despite its potential benefits, the implementation of RPL faces several challenges, as identified in this study. One of the primary challenges is the lack of institutional readiness, including limited human resources and insufficient training for RPL assessors. Without adequately trained personnel, the assessment and validation processes may lack consistency and reliability. Andersson, P., & Fejes, A. (2021).

Another significant challenge is the absence of standardized procedures and quality assurance mechanisms. The study found that inconsistencies in assessment practices can undermine the credibility of RPL outcomes. Therefore, establishing clear guidelines and robust evaluation systems is critical to ensuring the quality and acceptance of RPL. Cooper, L., & Ralphs, A. (2021).

Policy-related issues also emerged as a key concern. In many cases, institutional policies are not fully aligned with national frameworks, leading to fragmented implementation. This highlights the need for stronger policy integration and coordination among stakeholders, including educational institutions, government agencies, and industry partners. Travers, N. L. (2021).

Implications for Educational Management and Policy

The findings of this study have important implications for both educational management and policy development. From a management perspective, the proposed model provides a practical framework that can guide institutions in implementing RPL effectively. It emphasizes the importance of a holistic approach that integrates policy, practice, and continuous improvement. Smith, L., & Clayton, B. (2021).

From a policy perspective, the study underscores the need for supportive regulatory frameworks that promote the recognition of prior learning. Governments and policymakers should develop clear guidelines, provide funding and training programs, and encourage collaboration between education providers and industry stakeholders. Such efforts will enhance the credibility and scalability of RPL initiatives. Pokorny, H., & Warren, D. (2022).

Furthermore, the integration of RPL into educational systems contributes to the development of a more inclusive and flexible education system. It supports social equity by providing opportunities for individuals who may not have access to formal education pathways, thereby aligning with global goals for inclusive and quality education. Werquin, P. (2021).

Contribution to Theory and Practice

This study contributes to the field of educational management by proposing a model that integrates RPL into a structured management framework. The model extends existing theories of lifelong learning and competency-based education by emphasizing the role of management strategies in facilitating RPL implementation. Practically, the model offers actionable guidelines for educational institutions seeking to implement or improve RPL programs. It provides a systematic approach that can be adapted to different institutional contexts, making it a valuable tool for practitioners and policymakers. Keating, J. (2021).

In summary, the discussion demonstrates that the Educational Management Model based on RPL is a strategic and effective approach to supporting lifelong learning. While challenges remain, particularly in terms of institutional readiness and policy alignment, the model offers a comprehensive solution for enhancing the accessibility, flexibility, and quality of education in the modern era. Cherrstrom, C. A., et al. (2022).

Conclusion

This study concludes that the Educational Management Model based on *Recognition of Prior Learning* (RPL) provides a strategic and effective framework for supporting lifelong learning in the modern education era. The model successfully integrates key management components, including strategic planning, competency assessment and validation, adaptive curriculum management, institutional capacity building, and continuous monitoring and evaluation.

The findings demonstrate that the implementation of this model enhances the recognition of learners' prior competencies, increases access and flexibility in education, and strengthens the alignment between education and labor market needs. Furthermore, the model contributes to the development of a more inclusive and responsive education system that accommodates diverse learning pathways.

Despite these positive outcomes, challenges remain, particularly in terms of institutional readiness, standardization of assessment procedures, and policy alignment. Therefore, the successful implementation of RPL requires strong commitment from educational institutions, policymakers, and other stakeholders to ensure its sustainability and effectiveness.

Acknowledgement

The author would like to express sincere gratitude to all parties who have contributed to the completion of this study entitled "*Educational Management Model Based on Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for Lifelong Learning.*" Special appreciation is extended to academic supervisors and experts in educational management and RPL for their valuable guidance, constructive feedback, and insightful suggestions throughout the research process. The author also gratefully acknowledges the support of institutional leaders, lecturers, and RPL assessors who generously shared their time, experiences, and knowledge during data collection and model validation.

Deep thanks are also conveyed to all participants and respondents involved in this study, whose contributions have been essential to the development and refinement of the proposed model. Furthermore, the author appreciates the support provided by colleagues, academic communities, and institutions that facilitated the successful completion of this research. Finally, heartfelt gratitude is dedicated to family members for their continuous encouragement, understanding, and moral support. This study would not have been possible without the contributions and support of all those involved.

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