



## The Interpretation of Minimum Mastery Criteria by Students in Learning Planning in Higher Education

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### ABSTRACT

Learning planning is a fundamental component in the educational process that determines the direction, effectiveness, and success of teaching and learning activities. This research/writing aims to examine the concepts, principles, and implementation of systematic and structured learning planning. The method used is a descriptive-analytical study of the main components of planning, including the formulation of learning objectives, material selection, learning strategies, learning media, and evaluation techniques. The results of the study indicate that good learning planning must be student-oriented, based on the applicable curriculum, and consider student characteristics and the learning context. In addition, the integration of appropriate methods and media can increase student engagement and achieve optimal learning outcomes. Thus, thorough learning planning is key to creating an effective, efficient, and meaningful learning process.

*Keywords: minimum mastery criteria, students, learning planning, higher education*

### INTRODUCTION

Education is a crucial factor in human development, where the entire learning process is directed toward achieving curriculum objectives. Samodra (2023) explains that a key element of Indonesia's education system is the Minimum Mastery Criterion (MMC)—a threshold score used to measure student learning success and serve as a reference for teachers in designing and assessing the learning process. Although the MMC is officially implemented at the primary and secondary levels, the principle of minimum achievement standards remains applicable in higher education through course passing grades, the Grade Point Average (GPA), and graduate learning outcomes. Students often interpret these minimum standards

as a "campus version of the MMC," using them as guidelines to plan study strategies, set priorities, and manage their time to achieve desired academic results.

In the field of education, assessment theory asserts that minimum achievement standards are vital tools for evaluating learning success. These standards serve not only as a measure of competency attainment but also influence how students devise study strategies and establish academic priorities. According to Nitko and Brookhart (2014), educational assessment serves to guide the learning process and provide meaningful feedback to students. In a similar vein, Deci & Ryan (2000) proposed Self-Determination Theory, suggesting

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that the existence of minimum standards can foster either intrinsic or extrinsic motivation, depending on how students interpret those standards. If viewed as a challenge, intrinsic motivation emerges; conversely, if perceived as a burden, extrinsic motivation becomes more prominent. Recent research by Kusumawardani (2022) reveals that students who view achievement standards as a challenge tend to be more disciplined in planning study schedules and more consistent in achieving academic goals. Furthermore, constructivist theory emphasizes that students develop an understanding of the MMC concept based on their school learning experiences and relate this to university-level achievement standards. According to Vygotsky (1978), the learning process results from social interaction and experiences that are subsequently transformed into new knowledge. This aligns with research by Amroni et al. (2021), which indicates that students familiar with achievement standards since their school years adapt more easily to the academic demands of higher education. Therefore, a student's understanding of the MMC extends beyond a mere minimum mastery score; it also reflects how they internalize the concept of achievement standards to plan their study strategies at the university level.

Several national-level studies underscore the importance of the MMC and achievement standards in shaping students' study strategies. Amroni et al. (2021) found that student participation in field-based learning programs with specific achievement standards motivated them to devise study strategies using a more planned approach. Irwanto (2021) similarly revealed that students perceive achievement standards as an impetus to apply theory in practice. Sari and Prasetyo (2022) added that minimum grade requirements influence how students manage their study time and set priorities. Hidayat (2023) emphasized that students familiar with the MMC concept from their school days adapt more easily to grading standards in higher education. Lestari (2022) revealed that minimum standards encourage students to adopt collaborative study strategies, while Putra & Dewi

(2021) stated that grading standards can boost extrinsic motivation, albeit potentially causing psychological stress. Wulandari (2023) found that students who view minimum standards as a challenge demonstrate greater consistency in long-term study habits. Nugroho (2024) affirmed that achievement standards play a role in fostering critical reflection among students regarding their study strategies. Rahmawati (2022) showed that students accustomed to the MMC tend to be more disciplined in planning their study schedules, whereas Santoso (2025) highlighted the influence of minimum standards on students' collective motivation during group learning.

Research on the MMC emphasizes its vital role as a primary guide for evaluating student competency achievement. Rahinosiwi (2018) stated that teachers establish indicators for competency achievement and utilize the MMC to assess learning outcomes, even while facing varying challenges regarding student capabilities and learning facilities. Haryanto & Ngadiman (2018) identified ten teaching methods employed by English teachers—including material review, scaffolding, and self-evaluation—to assist students in meeting the MMC. Perdana et al. (2024) highlighted the success of remedial programs in physics instruction, demonstrating that collaboration among teachers, parents, and schools effectively supports students in comprehending the material and meeting standards. Regarding the validity and reliability of MMC-related assessments, Azizi (2024) emphasized the importance of valid and reliable assessment tools in establishing the MMC and recommended the Delphi method to create objective standards. Indritani (2025) explained that innovations in learning media and models—such as Discovery Learning and "Rekap Siswa" (Student Recap)—can significantly improve mastery of Indonesian language learning. Overall, the implementation of the MMC—supported by instructional strategies, remedial programs, reliable assessment, and pedagogical innovation—has proven to contribute positively to student learning outcomes,



although certain practical challenges remain to be addressed.

Research conducted by Putri et al. (2025) and Ridha et al. (2025) indicates that the effective implementation of the MMC can boost enthusiasm and the quality of learning, despite obstacles such as differing perspectives between teachers and students and mental pressure. Employing qualitative methods—including interviews, observations, and literature analysis—they recommend teacher training and school support to ensure more consistent MMC implementation. Meanwhile, Melfin and her team (2024) demonstrated a quantitative approach to determining MMC scores using the Angoff and Ebel methods; this yielded a score of approximately 72, deemed suitable for evaluation in physics instruction.

Other studies, such as those by Mardapi et al. (2015) and Hidayat (2018), examine the dynamics of setting student-centered MMC scores and the complexities of implementing these standards in schools. Mardapi's team found that MMC scores for mathematics in Yogyakarta junior high schools declined annually, reflecting changes in student proficiency. Hidayat noted that MMC scores for physics at SMAN 17 Makassar were high, despite discrepancies between analysis results and the standards established by the school. Overall, these studies demonstrate that the MMC is more than just a numerical standard; it is a vital tool for enhancing motivation, competence, and the quality of learning, with various determination methods adaptable to each school's specific context.

These findings are also supported by international research. Through Self-Determination Theory, Deci and Ryan (2000) explain that minimum standards can trigger both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, depending on how students perceive them. Ciraso-Calí et al. (2022) found that research competency standards implemented in Spain influenced students' learning reflections. Murtonen and Salmento (2019) in Finland highlighted the challenges students face in understanding research standards, noting the impact on their learning motivation. Wessels et al. (2021) demon-

strated that raising academic standards can diminish motivation if those standards are perceived as a burden. Conversely, Visser-Wijnveen et al. (2015) emphasized the importance of integrating research competencies into the curriculum to better prepare students for established academic standards.

Based on the relevant research cited above, it is evident that many studies—both national and international—have focused primarily on the direct relationship between minimum achievement standards and student motivation or learning strategies (whether intrinsic or extrinsic). However, there is limited research specifically exploring how students interpret the MMC as part of the learning experience they carry from secondary to higher education, or how such interpretations impact psychological aspects such as self-confidence, self-reflection, and social interactions with lecturers and peers. This study is unique in its attempt to synthesize perspectives from assessment theory, self-determination theory, social cognitive theory, and self-regulated learning theory. It approaches the MMC not merely as a numerical figure or benchmark, but as a process of meaning internalization that shapes students' learning strategies in higher education. Consequently, this study offers a fresh perspective that is more comprehensive and contextual than previous research.

Furthermore, previous studies have focused primarily on the direct relationship between standards and factors such as motivation, strategy, discipline, reflection, or collaboration. In contrast, the present study places greater emphasis on the meaningful and psychological dimensions of the MMC. Consequently, this research offers a fresh, more comprehensive, and contextual perspective, illustrating how students internalize the MMC as an integral part of their academic identities in higher education.

To explore how students interpret minimum standards—or the MMC—in a higher education setting, this study integrates several complementary theoretical frameworks. Educational Assessment Theory (Nitko & Brookhart, 2014) posits that

achievement benchmarks serve as guides for learning objectives, leading students to view minimum standards not merely as numerical figures but as academic guideposts. Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) delineates the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation; students who perceive standards as challenges tend to be driven by internal motivation, whereas those who view them as burdens are more influenced by external pressures. As part of the motivational framework, this theory highlights the significance of autonomy, competence, and social relatedness, suggesting that minimum standards can impact students' self-confidence as well as their interactions with lecturers and peers. Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986) emphasizes an individual's capacity to manage learning behaviors through self-regulation; thus, students who engage in planning, summarizing, and employing supplementary strategies demonstrate a high level of self-control. Finally, Self-Regulated Learning Theory (Zimmerman, 1989; 2002) provides a systematic framework for understanding how students formulate plans (forethought), execute actions (performance), and evaluate their learning strategies (self-reflection). By integrating these five theories, this study views minimum standards not merely as administrative metrics but as a process of internalizing meaning that shapes students' motivation, strategies, reflection, and psychological dynamics in higher education. Although the MMC are officially implemented at the primary and secondary education levels, the concept of minimum achievement standards remains relevant for study within the higher education context. On campus, students also face specific standards—such as minimum course grades, the Grade Point Average (GPA), and Graduate Learning Outcomes (GLO). However, few studies have examined how students perceive the MMC concept—with which they have been familiar since their earlier schooling—and how this understanding influences their planning of study activities in higher education. Key issues include whether students still use the MMC as a guide for their study

strategies, how they compare the MMC with campus grading standards, and the extent to which this understanding impacts their motivation and approach to learning. Therefore, this study aims to determine how students' understanding of the MMC reflects their interpretation of achievement standards and how this influences their learning methods and planning.

Studying students' understanding of the MMC is crucial, as it offers fresh perspectives on how concepts originating in school-level education are applied within a university setting. Furthermore, this research aims to contribute to the development of instructional planning theory, particularly by elucidating the relationship between achievement standards and students' motivation, learning methods, and self-reflection at the higher education level.

## METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative method to explore students' understanding of minimum achievement standards in higher education. This approach was selected for its capacity to investigate students' subjective experiences and in-depth reflections within the academic environment (Creswell, 2014). A descriptive qualitative approach was adopted to gain insight into the profound meanings students attach to minimum academic achievement standards. The participants consisted of five sixth-semester students from the same major, selected purposively based on their ability to provide information relevant to the research focus. The limited number of participants aligns with the nature of qualitative research, which prioritizes the depth of information over broad generalizability (Creswell, 2014). Data collection involved in-depth interviews and open-ended questionnaires administered to five sixth-semester students from the Indonesian Language and Literature study program at Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University Jakarta. Respondents' identities remain anonymous; instead, initials are used to distinguish between individual participants. The



study was conducted on Monday, June 8, 2026, at Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University Jakarta. The research instrument comprised a set of questions designed to delve into students' views regarding minimum standards, learning motivation, academic strategies, and the psychological effects they experienced. Data analysis was conducted using thematic coding techniques—involving the identification of patterns, themes, and categories from respondent feedback—and interpreted within the theoretical frameworks of educational assessment (Nitko & Brookhart, 2014) and Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000). To ensure data validity, source triangulation and member checking were employed, thereby ensuring the research findings are academically robust and provide a comprehensive understanding of students' perspectives on minimum achievement standards.

## RESULTS

### 1. Interpretation of Minimum Standards

In this section, respondents were asked the following questions: (a) How do you interpret the minimum grade standard at the university?; (b) What is your understanding of the MMC (Minimum Mastery Criteria) from your school days, and how do you view its relevance at the university?; (c) Have you ever compared the MMC used in school with the grading standards at the university? The respondents' answers are as follows:

First, respondent 1's data comes from ZNR (female), who had a 5th-semester GPA of 4.00; her answers are as follows:

- (a) In my opinion, the minimum grade standard is a benchmark set by the university to ensure students have understood the course material at a level deemed adequate. This standard also serves as a reference for maintaining the quality of learning.
- (b) In my view, the MMC from school days represents the minimum standard students must reach to demonstrate their understanding of the subject matter. At the university, this

concept remains relevant as it serves as a benchmark for measuring the level of student understanding regarding the material being studied.

- (c) Yes. I have compared the MMC in school with the grading standards at the university. I feel that university grading standards tend to be more demanding because students are required to be more independent in understanding the material and managing their own learning processes.

Second, respondent 2's data comes from ANS (female), who had a 5th-semester GPA of 3.00; her answers are as follows:

- (a) In my opinion, the minimum standard at the university isn't the MMC, but perhaps the GPA.
- (b) The MMC in school was too high.
- (c) Of course; I think assessment at the university differs from that in school. In school, there was a certain kind of emphasis, whereas at the university, it is different.

Third, respondent 3's data comes from FNB (female), who had a 5th-semester GPA of 3.60; her answers are as follows:

- (a) Honestly, to me, it's just a minimum target—kind of like the MMC you know? (That's really all I know about it).
- (b) As I understand it, it's just a benchmark so that grades don't end up being too poor. I don't see the relevance at all.
- (c) Never (it never crossed my mind to compare, because I know comparing isn't a good thing) *hehehe* (I honestly never even thought about comparing).

Fourth, respondent 4's data consists of the answers from AR (female), who had a GPA of 3.00 in her fifth semester; her responses are as follows:

- (a) A benchmark.
- (b) No.
- (c) Never; I don't really understand it either.

Fifty, data for respondent 5 comes from DSM (female), who held a GPA of 3.86 in her fifth semester; her responses were as follows:

- (a) The lowest grade a student must strive to achieve.

- (b) The minimum grade threshold students must reach; the university does not explicitly use the term MMC but employs a different term instead.

(c) No.

Based on the five data sets collected, it is evident that all respondents understood the existence of a university minimum standard serving as a grading guideline during their coursework. However, their ways of relating this standard to their experiences with the MMC in school varied. One respondent felt that the school MMC was closely linked to the university's minimum standard, viewing it as a logical progression from the previous grading system. Conversely, another respondent argued that the school MMC was excessively high and disproportionate to university standards, while a third respondent saw no connection between the two. Interestingly, three of the five students admitted they had never compared the school MMC with university standards, instead simply accepting the university standard as a new regulation to be followed.

This diversity of views demonstrates that the meaning of a minimum standard is subjective and influenced by each student's academic background. Some perceived continuity between school and university, others felt there was a stark contrast, and some saw no need to make a comparison at all. This indicates that the minimum standard in higher education is understood more as an independent internal regulation rather than merely a continuation of the school MMC.

## 2. Learning Motivation

In this section, respondents were asked the following questions: (a) Is the minimum standard viewed as a challenge or a burden?; (b) How does the minimum grade standard affect your learning motivation? The following are the respondents' answers:

First, respondent 1 is ZNR (female), who had a GPA of 4.00 in the fifth semester; her answers are as follows:

- (a) I view the minimum standard as a reasonable challenge within the educational process. As long as I study consistently, that standard can serve as motivation to keep improving.

- (b) Yes. The existence of a minimum grade standard encourages me to study more systematically and prepare better in order to meet the established academic targets.

Second, respondent 2 is ANS (female), who had a GPA of 3.00 in the fifth semester; her answers are as follows:

- (a) I feel neutral about it, as it could be viewed either way depending on the situation or an individual's circumstances. For me, it depends on my own personal situation.

- (b) It is highly motivating, yet it also creates pressure.

Third, respondent 3 is FNB (female), who had a GPA of 3.60 in the fifth semester; her answers are as follows:

- (a) In my opinion, a minimum grade standard becomes a source of pressure—and can even cause stress—if the standard is set high.

- (b) It causes stress because you really have to make an effort to avoid falling below the standard; however, that was back in my school days.

Fourth, respondent 4's data consists of the responses from AR (female), who had a GPA of 3.00 in the fifth semester; her answers were as follows:

- (a) Strongly agree that it is a challenge.

- (b) The minimum grade standard influences my learning motivation because it provides a clear target to achieve. The existence of this standard encourages me to be more disciplined in attending classes, completing assignments, and preparing for exams. I become more motivated to understand the material in order to meet or exceed the established grade.

Fifth, respondent 5's data consists of the responses from DSM (female), who had a GPA of 3.86 in the fifth semester; her answers were as follows:



(a) I am neutral; I do not view it as either a burden or a challenge.

(b) If the grade falls below the minimum, it indicates a decline in academic performance.

The data reveals a variety of perspectives among the student respondents regarding the minimum grade standard—specifically, whether it is perceived as a challenge or a burden. Two respondents view the minimum standard as a challenge that drives them to put in more effort, while two others remain neutral, noting that their perspective depends on their current academic situation. One respondent explicitly states that they perceive the minimum standard as a burden that adds pressure to the learning process.

This diversity of views is also evident in responses concerning the impact of the minimum standard on learning motivation. Three respondents acknowledge that the minimum standard acts as a driver of learning motivation, as they feel compelled to achieve grades that align with the standards set by the university. One respondent mentions that while the minimum standard triggers their motivation to study, it simultaneously creates a sense of pressure. Meanwhile, another respondent views the minimum standard more as a measure of study discipline than as a source of motivation.

These results indicate that the minimum standard serves a dual function: for some students, it acts as a driver of intrinsic motivation, whereas for others, it creates pressure that is more external in nature. In other words, the minimum standard serves not only as an academic guideline but also as a psychological factor influencing how students manage their motivation and discipline in their studies.

### 3. Academic Strategies

In this section, respondents were asked the following questions: (a) How do you plan your study strategies to meet the minimum standard? (b) How does the MMC influence the way you organize your study schedule? The respondents' answers are as follows:

First, respondent 1 is ZNR (female), who achieved a GPA of 4.00 in her fifth semester; her responses are as follows:

(a) I usually review course materials, seek additional references online for any topics I do not fully understand, complete assignments thoroughly, and study more intensively as exams or quizzes approach.

(b) I do not follow a strictly structured study schedule; however, the existence of the minimum standard motivates me to set aside time for studying whenever there are assignments, quizzes, or exams, so that I can achieve my target grades.

Second, data for respondent 2 comes from ANS (female), who had a GPA of 3.00 in the fifth semester; her responses are as follows:

(a) Creating summaries of the material before studying.

(b) Feeling more pressured.

Third, data for respondent 3 comes from FNB (female), who had a GPA of 3.60 in the fifth semester; her responses are as follows:

(a) No planning. I'm a super flexible person—just go with the flow.

(b) No particular approach; I just let things flow naturally, like water in an estuary.

Fourth, data for respondent 4 comes from AR (female), who had a GPA of 3.00 in the fifth semester; her responses are as follows:

(a) I plan my study strategy by creating an organized study schedule and adjusting it based on the difficulty level of each course. I strive to participate actively in lectures, take notes on key points, and review the material regularly to ensure better understanding. Additionally, I allocate time to complete assignments, read supplementary materials, and practice solving problems before exams.

(b) The minimum passing standard influences how I organize my study schedule because it represents a target I must achieve for every course. Because of the MMC, I try to manage my study time more systematically and devote extra attention to the courses I find difficult.

Fifth, data for respondent 5 comes from DSM (female), who had a GPA of 3.86 in the fifth semester; her responses are as follows:

- (a) No plan.
- (b) None; I just study—the main thing is avoiding bad grades.

The data reveal various methods students employ to devise strategies for meeting the established minimum standard. Three out of five respondents indicated that they formulate organized study plans—such as reviewing previously learned material, summarizing content prior to study sessions, scheduling tasks based on material difficulty, and seeking supplementary references beyond the course lectures. This approach reflects an understanding that meeting minimum standards requires more focused academic planning.

Conversely, two respondents stated that they do not have specific plans or strategies for meeting the minimum standard. This highlights a disparity in the level of seriousness with which students approach academic demands, as some opt for a spontaneous approach devoid of clear planning. Variations are also evident in perspectives regarding the impact of the minimum standard on study scheduling. Two respondents believe the requirement motivates them to create more structured study schedules, whereas two others feel the minimum standard has no influence on their scheduling habits. One respondent even admitted to not creating a study schedule at all, yet still felt the pressure imposed by the existence of the minimum standard.

The findings in this section suggest that the minimum standard plays a dual role: for some students, it serves as a guide for more disciplined academic planning, while for others, it is not a strong enough influence to alter their study habits. Thus, the minimum standard functions not merely as an academic norm but also as a factor influencing how students plan and execute their study strategies in diverse ways.

#### 4. Reflection and Psychological Impact

In this section, respondents were asked the following questions: (a) How do you feel when your grades fall below the minimum standard?; (b) How does the minimum standard affect your confidence regarding coursework and examinations?; (c) What reflections do you make after receiving grades that either meet or fail to meet the minimum standard? The following are the respondents' answers:

First, the data for Respondent 1 comes from ZNR (female), who achieved a GPA of 4.00 in her fifth semester; her response is as follows:

- (a) I feel disappointed and dissatisfied with the results obtained. However, I view this as an opportunity to evaluate my shortcomings and improve my study methods for the future.
- (b) When I feel capable of meeting the minimum standard, I become more confident in attending classes and taking exams. Conversely, if I feel I do not yet understand the material well, I tend to worry more and strive to study harder.
- (c) If the grade I receive meets the standard, I view it as the result of the effort I put in and try to maintain that level. If the grade falls below the standard, I use it as a basis for evaluation to identify areas that need improvement in future studies.

Second, respondent 2's data consists of answers from ANS (female), who had a 5th-semester GPA of 3.00; her responses are as follows:

- (a) Disappointed in myself.
- (b) It has a slight influence.
- (c) Accepting what has already happened.

Third, respondent 3's data consists of answers from FNB (female), who had a 5th-semester GPA of 3.60; her responses are as follows:

- (a) I haven't actually experienced it yet, but I think I would definitely feel disappointed and feel like I wasn't capable enough.
- (b) It doesn't have much of an influence.
- (c) Reflecting on the mistakes I made and noting down the things I need to change to do better.

Fourth, respondent 4's data consists of answers from AR (female), who had a 5th-semester GPA of 3.00; her responses are as follows:



- (a) Sad, disappointed.
- (b) The minimum standard helps me understand the learning targets I need to achieve. This can boost my confidence because I have a clear goal in my studies. However, if the standard feels too difficult to reach, I might feel anxious during classes and exams. Therefore, minimum standards need to be applied realistically and accompanied by support from lecturers so that they serve as motivation for students.
- (c) After receiving my grade, I evaluate the learning process I have gone through. If my grades meet or exceed the minimum standard, I will maintain my effective study strategies and continue striving to improve my understanding of the material.

Fifth, respondent 5's data consists of the responses from DSM (female), who had a GPA of 3.86 in the fifth semester; her answers were as follows:

- (a) A little disappointed.
- (b) None; regardless of whether the grade is good or bad, I still have to attend class and study.
- (c) Yes, study again to get better results.  
...did not meet the minimum standard. Four out of five surveyed individuals reported feeling disappointed, while one did not, indicating varying levels of sensitivity regarding academic standards. This underscores that minimum standards serve not merely as grading benchmarks but also impact students' psychological states.

Regarding self-confidence, four respondents indicated that meeting the minimum standard was highly influential. Their confidence rose when their grades met or exceeded the standard, whereas it declined when grades fell below it. One respondent did not emphasize self-confidence, preferring instead to simply accept the results as they were. Diversity was also evident in the reflections made after receiving grades. Two respondents conducted a comprehensive assessment of their academic performance, aiming to maintain their performance

level if the outcome was positive and increase their effort if it was negative. Two other respondents focused more on negative experiences, reflecting on the causes of failure and improving their study concentration to achieve better results in the future. Meanwhile, one respondent chose an attitude of resignation, accepting the outcome—whether satisfactory or not—without further evaluation. These findings demonstrate that minimum standards have varied psychological effects: for some students, they trigger reflection and self-evaluation; for others, they induce emotional pressure; and for a small minority, the impact is not particularly significant. Thus, minimum standards function not only as academic regulations but also as factors influencing the emotional dynamics and reflective processes of students during their studies.

## DISCUSSION

### Interpretation of Findings in Light of Theory

The research results indicate that students hold diverse views regarding the concept of minimum standards in higher education. Some perceive them as a continuation of the MMC used in schools, while others hold different perspectives, and some make no comparison at all. This diversity suggests that minimum standards are viewed not merely as administrative data but also as distinct, campus-specific internal regulations. According to Nitko & Brookhart (2014), achievement standards serve as guidelines for the learning outcomes students are expected to attain. These findings support that view, as students treat minimum standards as academic benchmarks that influence how they plan and navigate their coursework. However, the fact that some students do not compare the MMC from their schools with university standards suggests that higher education minimum standards are perceived as a new system—accepted on their own terms without being linked to prior experiences.

The diversity of student perspectives regarding minimum standards—viewing them either as a challenge or a burden—can be

understood through Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Students who perceive minimum standards as a challenge demonstrate intrinsic motivation to achieve optimal results. Conversely, students who view these standards as a burden are more influenced by extrinsic motivation, specifically academic pressure. Interestingly, some students feel pressured even while acknowledging that minimum standards can boost their learning motivation. This reveals a psychological ambivalence: minimum standards can serve as both a motivator and a source of stress. These findings align with motivation theories asserting that external rules can inspire motivation but may also induce stress if unaccompanied by psychological support.

Differences in respondents' views also emerged regarding academic strategies. These differing perspectives indicate that minimum standards are not always interpreted as an impetus for self-regulation; for some students, they serve merely as administrative requirements. According to Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory, self-regulation refers to an individual's ability to control their thoughts, motivation, and actions to achieve their goals. Students who plan their strategies demonstrate effective self-control, consistent with Bandura's view that learning is influenced not only by environmental factors but also by an individual's capacity for self-regulation. Zimmerman (1989, 2002) further developed this concept through the Self-Regulated Learning framework, which comprises three stages: forethought (planning), performance (execution), and self-reflection. The study results indicate that students who create study schedules and summaries are engaged in the forethought and performance stages, whereas those who evaluate outcomes after receiving grades that meet or fall below the standard are in the self-reflection stage. Thus, minimum standards serve as an external guide that encourages students to activate self-regulatory processes in their learning. Furthermore, Howard and Miriam (1996) emphasize that self-regulation is a process involving goal setting, performance evaluation, and

self-rewarding. This aligns with findings that some students use minimum standards as a benchmark for discipline. They view these standards not merely as numerical figures but as targets to be met in order to maintain consistency in their studies. Consequently, students who develop systematic strategies demonstrate effective application of self-regulation theory, whereas those who do not devise specific strategies exhibit less effective self-regulation. Minimum standards serve a dual function: for some students, they act as a catalyst for more disciplined academic planning, while for others, they are not strong enough to alter study habits.

Furthermore, findings regarding disappointment, a drop in self-confidence, and various reflections following grades that fell below the minimum threshold indicate that minimum standards exert a significant psychological impact. Four out of five respondents expressed dissatisfaction when their grades failed to meet the standard, and the majority acknowledged that meeting the minimum standard influenced their self-confidence. Students who engaged in self-assessment and increased their study frequency demonstrated a process of positive reflection, aligning with Creswell's (2014) view that personal experience often reflects the emotional complexities involved in navigating academic regulations. However, a number of respondents who chose resignation over self-assessment demonstrated that minimum standards do not always foster reflection; instead, they can trigger an attitude of acceptance devoid of any effort to improve. This indicates that minimum standards function not merely as academic regulations but also as elements influencing the emotional and reflective dynamics of students throughout the learning process.

### Comparison with Previous Studies

The findings of this study reveal a diversity of student perspectives regarding minimum standards, encompassing understanding, motivation, study strategies, and psychological



reflection. When compared with previous research, several interesting similarities and differences emerge. A study by Susanti (2019) revealed that students often perceive academic standards as a continuation of the evaluation systems used in schools. This aligns with some respondents in the current study who noted that campus minimum standards felt relevant to the MMC found in schools. However, there were differing views, as some respondents in this study did not draw comparisons between the two, instead simply accepting the campus standard as a new norm. Such differences suggest that the understanding of minimum standards can be shaped by the institutional context and individual experiences.

A study by Susanti (2019) revealed that students often perceive academic standards as a continuation of the evaluation systems used in schools. This aligns with some respondents in this study who noted that campus minimum standards felt relevant to the MMC found in schools. However, there were differing views, as some respondents in this study did not compare the two but instead immediately accepted the campus standard as the new norm. These differences indicate that the understanding of minimum standards can be influenced by the institutional context and individual experiences.

Research conducted by Zimmerman (2002) indicates that students who employ self-regulation during the learning process typically achieve better academic outcomes. These findings align with the experiences of three respondents who devised deliberate strategies to meet minimum standards. However, two respondents did not formulate specific strategies, suggesting that minimum standards do not always succeed in fostering self-regulation. This discrepancy underscores that the use of academic strategies depends heavily on individual readiness—a point also highlighted by Pintrich (2004) in his research on self-regulation. Research by Santrock (2018) demonstrates that academic criteria can influence students' self-beliefs; meeting these criteria can boost self-efficacy, whereas failure to do so has the opposite

effect. These findings are consistent with the accounts of four respondents who acknowledged that minimum standards impacted their self-confidence. Conversely, one respondent's decision to simply accept the outcome without evaluation contrasts with Santrock's research, which emphasizes the importance of reflection in the learning process. Thus, this study offers a new perspective: not all students engage in reflection after failing to meet a standard; some choose an attitude of acceptance instead.

### Academic and Psychological Implications

The study's findings carry significant implications for both the academic and psychological realms. Notably, minimum standards have proven effective as guidelines that encourage some students to devise more organized study approaches—such as creating summaries, establishing study schedules, and seeking additional reference materials. This indicates that implementing minimum standards can enhance the quality of students' self-management during learning. Universities can leverage these results by offering training on effective study strategies, such as workshops on time management or structured learning techniques. In this way, minimum standards serve not merely as administrative regulations but as tools to improve students' academic capabilities. Furthermore, the varied ways students interpret minimum standards reveal that not all of them view these standards as a continuation of the MMC used in schools. Most of them immediately perceive the campus standards simply as new regulations. This highlights the importance of providing more detailed information regarding the purpose and function of these minimum standards, ensuring that students view them not merely as graduation benchmarks, but also as a guide for achieving more comprehensive academic success.

The findings of this study indicate that the existence of minimum standards has a significant psychological impact. Many students feel disappointed when their grades fall below the

threshold, whereas their self-confidence tends to rise when they successfully meet the target. This aligns with Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory, which asserts that positive achievements can bolster self-confidence, while failures can diminish it. Consequently, universities should provide psychological support—such as academic counseling services—to help students cope with the pressure generated by minimum standards. The varied student reactions upon receiving their grades demonstrate that while minimum standards can prompt constructive self-assessment, for some students, they may instead lead to a tendency to give up. These findings highlight the importance of interventions that encourage constructive reflection—such as mentoring or peer-learning programs—so that students do not merely accept their results but also learn from the experience to improve their academic performance.

In general, minimum standards present a dual nature: they can serve as a source of motivation, shape learning approaches, and foster personal development, yet they can also induce mental stress and a defeatist attitude. Therefore, the implementation of minimum standards must be accompanied by educational policies that support the enhancement of student self-regulation, alongside psychological services to assist them in managing pressure.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the preceding discussion, it can be concluded that lesson planning is a crucial initial stage in the overall educational process, serving as a guide for teachers to conduct learning activities that are systematic, purposeful, and effective. Effective lesson planning goes beyond mere administrative preparation; it reflects the teacher's readiness to manage a learning process oriented toward the achievement of student competencies. The instructional planning process encompasses various key components, including the establishment of clear and measurable learning

objectives; the selection and organization of curriculum-relevant materials; the use of teaching strategies and methods suited to the learners' characteristics; and the utilization of instructional media that optimally support the achievement of objectives. Furthermore, evaluation is an integral part of planning, allowing learning outcomes to be measured and serving as a basis for continuous improvement.

Moreover, effective instructional planning must be flexible and adaptable to classroom dynamics, technological advancements, and the diverse needs of learners. Teachers are expected to be creative and innovative in designing instruction, thereby not only facilitating the transfer of knowledge but also fostering the development of critical thinking, creative, collaborative, and communication skills.

Thus, it is evident that the quality of instructional planning significantly influences the success of the learning process and its outcomes. Consequently, efforts to enhance teacher competence in developing comprehensive, contextual, and learner-centered instructional plans must be sustained to improve the overall quality of education.

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