Accelerating Japanese Language Proficiency for Migrant Workers Through a Blended Learning Model: A Case Study at LPK K-Japan

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Abstract

Meeting the JFT-Basic A2 proficiency standard for Indonesian migrant worker candidates under the Specified Skilled Worker (SSW) scheme is frequently constrained by limited preparation time. This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of implementing a blended learning model to optimize a highly accelerated four-month intensive training program. Utilizing a descriptive quantitative case study approach, this research observed 9 students from the first batch at LPK K-Japan who completed a total curriculum of ±450 hours. The instructional design strictly separated effective face-to-face classroom hours (09:00-16:00), which focused on fundamental input, communication practice (kaiwa), and reading comprehension (dokai), from post-class activities that utilized a digital Learning Management System (LMS) asynchronously for rote memorization of kanji and vocabulary. Preliminary results from the first wave of the JFT-Basic A2 competency test (May 2026) demonstrated a 50% pass rate (2 out of 4 students), with high-score achievements of 240 and 220 out of 250 points, respectively. The findings indicate that students with a higher education background (Bachelor's degree) exhibited superior adaptability in managing independent digital learning outside the classroom compared to vocational high school graduates. The blended learning model proved effective in proportionally distributing students' cognitive load to meet a dense curriculum schedule, although additional scaffolding strategies are required for students with varying independent learning profiles.

Keywords: *Blended Learning, Cognitive Maturity, JFT-Basic A2, LMS, Migrant Workers*

1. Introduction

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The program for fulfilling the need for foreign workers in Japan through the Specified Skilled Worker (SSW) or *Tokutei Ginou* scheme opens up great opportunities for Indonesia's human resources (HR) commodities. However, this golden opportunity is faced with strict regulations regarding language competence. Prospective migrant workers are required to master Japanese language skills at least equivalent to the basic-intermediate level, which is validated through passing the Japan Foundation Test for Basic Japanese (JFT-Basic A2) or the Japanese-Language Proficiency Test (JLPT N4).

The biggest challenge faced by Vocational Training Institutions (*Lembaga Pelatihan Kerja* / LPK) as HR preparation institutions is the limited duration of training. Intensive training is generally limited to a period of four months for reasons of operational efficiency and deadlines for fulfilling quotas from users in Japan. Compressing language material covering hundreds of kanji, thousands of vocabulary words, the grammar system (*bunpou*), as well as listening (*choukai*) and reading (*dokai*) skills equivalent to the N4/A2 level into four

months is a very high cognitive load for students.

Conventional learning methods that rely entirely on face-to-face interaction in the classroom are considered less effective for dealing with this acceleration challenge. Effective class time is often consumed by repetitive mechanical exercise activities, so that the portion of interactive communication practice is reduced. Therefore, an instructional design breakthrough is needed that is able to map students' cognitive loads proportionally. LPK K-Japan applies the Blended Learning model as a strategic solution. This approach explicitly separates the portion of synchronous learning in the classroom for strengthening concepts and communication applications, from the portion of asynchronous independent learning outside the classroom through the utilization of a digital Learning Management System (LMS).

In addition to the curriculum design factor, the effectiveness of the blended learning model is strongly influenced by the characteristics of the students. LPK K-Japan strategically prioritizes student profiles with mature cognitive and academic maturity, especially university graduates (Bachelor's/S1). The self-regulated learning ability that has been formed while pursuing higher education is projected to be the main capital for the success of the digital independent learning phase. This study aims to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of implementing an intensive four-month blended learning model at LPK K-Japan, as well as the influence of students' cognitive backgrounds on their passing results in standardized competency tests.

2. Method

This research uses a quantitative descriptive approach with an empirical case study method at LPK K-Japan. The research was conducted in 2026 by observing the dynamics of the learning process and the outcomes of the first batch's intensive training program.

2.1 Research Subjects The research subjects consisted of 9 batch 1 training students who were being prepared for an international job placement scheme. The demographic characteristics of the subjects included 8 male students and 1 female student. From the perspective of educational background, there was a dominance of cognitive profiles where 8 students were graduates of the Bachelor's degree level (S1) and 1 student was a graduate of a Vocational High School (SMK).

2.2 Instructional Design and Time Allocation The training program is designed to run for 4 months with an accumulated target duration of ±450 lesson hours. The blended learning ecosystem at LPK K-Japan divides daily instructional activities into four strictly structured time blocks, combining full face-to-face sessions and the use of a post-class digital learning management system.

2.3 Teaching Materials and Digital Instruments The learning materials integrate standard Japanese language industry textbooks with innovative interactive media:

a) **Main Book:** *Minna no Nihongo* (Chapters 1 to 50) for strengthening standard grammar structures, and a special Kanji book.
b) **Supporting Book:** *Irodori* Module for contextual practical language competence in the work environment.
c) **Interactive Dokai PPT Media:** Independent presentation media that apply active recall methods and gradual scaffolding. (Include Figure 2 here: Screenshot of Dokkai PPT slides 1 and 2). In this presentation, the first slide presents full kanji text without reading assistance to stimulate students' independent visual recognition. The second slide presents the same text accompanied by Furigana (Hiragana) for reading confirmation as well as the acquisition of new vocabulary.

d) **LMS Digital Infrastructure:** A learning management platform (LMS) built independently (in-house development) by LPK K-Japan's internal IT division. (Include Figure 1 here: Screenshot of the student dashboard). This system facilitates precise tracking (learning analytics) of students' total attendance hours based on login schedule records, module completion times, and material download history. The dashboard also functions as a repository for material enrichment and a flexible recorder of grade evaluations.

3. Result

The first stage empirical evaluation was carried out based on the results of the JFT-Basic A2 standard competency test taken by the first wave of students in May 2026. Data on physical attendance participation, academic background, and final score acquisition are presented comprehensively in Table 1.

Table 1. Data on Participation and JFT-Basic A2 Exam Results (May 2026)

Student Name	Last Education	Total Attendance	Total Accumulated Hours	JFT-Basic A2 Score	Pass Status
Bastion Jader Rana/ student 1	Bachelor's (S1)	197 Meetings	399 Hours	240/250	Passed
Maulana Malik Ibrahim/ student 2	Bachelor's (S1)	211 Meetings	444 Hours	220/250	Passed
Ahmad Mukhlis/ student 3	Vocational High School (SMK)	203 Meetings	428 Hours		Did Not Pass
Ramanda Surya Aditama/ student 4	Bachelor's (S1)	123 Meetings	268 Hours		Did Not Pass

Based on the data in Table 1, the blended learning model successfully led 50% of the first test group (2 out of 4 students) to achieve international standardized graduation within a period of four months. The score achievements by Bastion Jader Rana (240 out of a maximum 250) and Maulana Malik Ibrahim (220 out of a maximum 250) are categorized as very high (excellent) score achievements. These results prove that the strategy of distributing mechanical rote material via a post-class digital platform effectively provides space for students' working memory to consolidate language knowledge in depth.

4. Discussion

The research findings show interesting sociopedagogical phenomena related to the subjects' formal educational backgrounds. The two students who successfully passed with high scores have a Bachelor's degree (S1) educational background. The characteristics of university graduates who are adaptive to an independent academic climate, possess digital literacy skills that are accustomed to being structured, and have self-regulation maturity (andragogy) enable them to maximize LMS functionality outside face-to-face class hours. Qualitative observations by instructors during the asynchronous phase confirmed this; S1 students were observed proactively seeking translations and alternative sentence patterns independently when encountering difficult reading texts.

Conversely, the student named Ahmad Mukhlis, who is a graduate of a vocational secondary education (SMK), showed very high physical class attendance dedication, namely 428 lesson hours out of 203 meetings. However, this high level of physical attendance had not been able to be converted into passing the first wave exam. Qualitative observation of the SMK student showed a passive tendency where the student tended to wait for repetitive instructions from the instructor during face-to-face classes instead of exploring modules independently. This indicates that for secondary education graduate students, intensive conventional face-to-face interaction alone is not enough without being supported by the quality of effective digital independent learning after class. SMK graduate students need additional pedagogical intervention in the form of more intensive structured mentoring (scaffolding) in the independent asynchronous phase in order to be able to keep up with the rhythm speed of the accelerated curriculum.

The next data anomaly was shown by a student named Ramanda Surya Aditama. Although he has the prerequisite cognitive maturity as a Bachelor's degree (S1) graduate, he was declared not to have passed the first wave exam. The analytic record on the LMS system showed that Ramanda's accumulated learning participation level only reached 268 lesson hours (123 meetings). This quantitative figure is far below the average of his peers who managed to break through numbers above 390 hours.

These findings make an important scientific contribution that the superiority of innate cognitive capacity (the andragogy intelligence aspect of S1 graduates) will not be able to replace the mandatory fulfillment of the minimum threshold of instructional hours in an extremely accelerated language training program. The dedication of learning time quantity remains an absolute prerequisite that cannot be negotiated in the foreign language acquisition process.

Meanwhile, the remaining 5 students from a total of 9 batch 1 students (including Muhammad Dimas F. who collected the highest accumulated attendance of 452 learning hours) are currently continuing to be optimized through an LMS-based post-class blended learning consolidation system to prepare for participation in the next standard competency test this coming July.

5. Conclusion

The implementation of the blended learning model by utilizing an independent digital LMS infrastructure (in-house development) has proven effective in facilitating an intensive Japanese language curriculum acceleration program equivalent to the A2 level within a limited duration of four months. The separation of the synchronous portion of physical classes for communicative applications and the asynchronous post-class portion for independent enrichment has proven to give birth to high cognitive efficiency, demonstrated by highly satisfactory JFT-Basic A2 passing score achievements in the group of students who met the

attendance criteria. Cognitive maturity with a higher education background (S1) is proven to be linear with the success rate of adapting to digital independent learning systems, but the quantity of fulfilling minimum instructional hours remains the main irreplaceable determinant factor.

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