

## NEGOTIATING OUTCOME-BASED EDUCATION IN INDONESIAN ISLAMIC HIGHER EDUCATION: ALIGNING COMPETENCY AND FAITH

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Received: July 2025. Accepted: December 2025. Online First: June 2026. Published: December 2026.

### ABSTRACT

Outcome-Based Education (OBE) has been widely adopted to strengthen curriculum alignment, accountability, and graduate competencies. In the context of Islamic higher education (IHE), however, its implementation raises critical challenges in harmonizing competency-based learning outcomes with Islamic ethical and spiritual values. This study aims to explore how Indonesian IHE institutions interpret, negotiate, and implement OBE within their institutional contexts. This research employs a qualitative case study design. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and document analysis involving 11 academic leaders and lecturers from eight IHE institutions. The findings reveal diverse interpretations of learning outcomes, tensions between national accreditation standards and Islamic educational principles, varying levels of lecturer readiness for student-centered learning, and unequal access to digital infrastructure. To address these challenges, institutions adopted strategies such as backward curriculum design, continuous quality assurance, integration of Islamic values into learning outcomes, enhancement of digital competencies, and partnerships with industry and community stakeholders. The study concludes that effective OBE implementation in IHE requires a contextualized and integrative approach. The implications highlight the need for curriculum models that embed Islamic values, strengthen lecturer professionalism, and supportive policy frameworks to advance the quality of Islamic education.

**Keywords:** Curriculum Development, Educational Reform, Graduate Competencies, Islamic Higher Education, Islamic Pedagogy, Outcome-Based Education

### INTRODUCTION

Indonesian higher education is currently undergoing a significant transformation toward competency-oriented learning to respond to global demands and workforce expectations. This shift emphasizes not only disciplinary knowledge but also higher-order skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving. National frameworks, including the Indonesian Qualification Framework (IQF), have institutionalized competency standards within curriculum design, while policy initiatives such as *Merdeka Belajar–Kampus Merdeka* promote flexible and experiential learning pathways (Nasir et al., 2024; Solikhah, 2022; Trisnaningsih & Permatasari, 2018). In parallel, emerging paradigms such as Education 5.0 further encourage the integration of technology, interdisciplinary approaches, and local cultural values to support adaptive and student-centered learning environments (Hutahaean et al., 2024; Paramma et al., 2023). These developments collectively indicate a systemic transition from content-based education toward competency-driven curriculum models in Indonesian universities.

Within this transformation, Competence-Based Education (CBE) has gained prominence as a forward-thinking framework that emphasizes the mastery of clearly defined competencies rather than traditional time-based progression. CBE underscores the importance

of aligning learning outcomes, instructional strategies, and assessment practices to ensure that graduates are equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions required to succeed in real-world contexts (Daugherty et al., 2024; Ford, 2025). It further promotes the development of flexible learning pathways, allowing students to progress at their own pace and focus on achieving mastery before moving forward. Additionally, CBE advocates for authentic assessment methods that evaluate students' ability to apply their knowledge in practical, real-world situations, fostering deeper understanding and practical competence (Garay-Rondero et al., 2024; McDonald, 2018). Overall, CBE reflects a broader shift toward student-centered and mastery-oriented learning paradigms, emphasizing personalized education models that prioritize competency development over rote memorization or seat time (Day, 2017).

Outcome-Based Education (OBE), as an operationalization of Competency-Based Education (CBE) principles, has gained widespread adoption in Indonesian higher education institutions. The goal is to enhance academic accountability and improve graduate quality by aligning curricula, teaching methods, and assessments with specific, measurable learning outcomes. OBE emphasizes several core principles, such as maintaining a clear focus on desired competencies, employing backward design to structure learning experiences, and pursuing continuous improvement through regular evaluation and feedback (Aminah et al., 2025; Joseph et al., 2024; Yang, 2020). Empirical research suggests that when implemented effectively, OBE can significantly boost student engagement, academic performance, and the development of self-directed learning skills (Cabrera, 2017; Mohanta & Das Mandal, 2019). Nonetheless, challenges persist, as the implementation of OBE remains inconsistent across institutions. Many lecturers exhibit limited understanding of outcome alignment and tend to rely heavily on teacher-centered approaches rather than fostering student-centered learning environments, which hampers the full potential of OBE (Mufanti et al., 2024; Trisha et al., 2025). Enhancing faculty training and promoting a culture of continuous pedagogical reform are essential to realizing the benefits of OBE more broadly and effectively.

In the context of Islamic higher education (IHE), the adoption of OBE presents additional complexities. IHE institutions are characterized by a dual mission: achieving academic excellence while fostering students' ethical and spiritual development. Consequently, curriculum and pedagogy must integrate competency-based outcomes with Islamic values such as sincerity (*ikhlas*), cooperation (*ta'awun*), and moral responsibility (Baharun et al., 2025; Ferdinan et al., 2025). Previous studies indicate that the integration of Islamic values can positively influence students' academic discipline and character formation (Abubakar & Maishanu, 2020; Nasir & Rijal, 2021; Subiyantoro et al., 2025). Nevertheless, institutions often face tensions in balancing value-based education with national and global quality assurance demands (Fathana et al., 2025).

Despite the increasing emphasis on OBE, its implementation in Indonesian IHE institutions remains challenged by limited lecturer readiness, misalignment between curriculum and assessment, and unequal institutional and technological capacities (Aminah et al., 2025; Er et al., 2019; Khan et al., 2023; Katawazai, 2021). Additionally, learning outcomes are often poorly defined, and the integration of Islamic values into competency frameworks tends to remain conceptual rather than systematically applied (Sukirman & Linse, 2024; Zainuddin, 2016), revealing a gap between policy and practice. In response, this study examines how Indonesian IHE institutions interpret and implement OBE within their contexts, focusing on the challenges faced and strategies used to align competency-based education with Islamic ethical and spiritual values, thereby contributing practical insights for developing contextually grounded and value-integrated OBE models.

## METHOD

This study adopts an integrative analytical framework that combines Outcome-Based Education (OBE), competency-based education (CBE), and value-integrative Islamic pedagogy, supported by perspectives on institutional readiness and implementation. OBE provides the primary lens for examining curriculum alignment and outcome orientation (Spady, 1988; Aminah et al., 2025), while CBE emphasizes the mastery of competencies as the basis for learning design and assessment (Daugherty et al., 2024). These are further contextualized within Islamic pedagogical principles that integrate ethical and spiritual values into educational practices (Zainuddin, 2016; Baharun et al., 2025). Additionally, insights from implementation studies help explain variations in institutional readiness and practice (Mufanti et al., 2024). Methodologically, this research employs a qualitative case study design to explore how OBE is interpreted and enacted in Islamic higher education. Such an approach enables an in-depth and contextual understanding of curriculum transformation, learning practices, and assessment systems within real institutional settings (Creswell & Guetterman, 2021; Cohen et al., 2017).

The study was conducted across eight IHE institutions in Indonesia, selected to represent diverse geographical and institutional contexts. A total of eleven participants were purposively recruited, including deans, vice-deans, heads of departments, program coordinators, and quality assurance personnel. This sampling strategy prioritizes depth of insight and relevance of experience in curriculum reform processes (Creswell & Guetterman, 2021). The composition of participants is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Participants' Characteristics

Variable	Subcategory	N
Age	Under 35	2
	35–50 years	5
	51–60 years	3
	Above 60 years	1
Academic rank	Professor	2
	Associate Professor	5
	Assistant Professor	4
Position	Dean	1
	Vice-Dean	1
	Quality Assurance Center	4
	Head of Department	3
	Program Head	2

Table 1 summarizes the demographic and professional characteristics of the 11 purposively selected participants. The majority were aged 35–50 years ( $n=5$ ) and held the academic rank of Associate Professor ( $n=5$ ). In terms of position, participants were primarily from Quality Assurance Centers ( $n=4$ ), followed by Heads of Department ( $n=3$ ) and Program Heads ( $n=2$ ), with representation from Dean and Vice-Dean roles. This composition ensures a range of experienced academic leaders and administrators who are directly involved in curriculum-related decision-making across the eight participating Indonesian higher education institutions.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and document analysis to ensure a comprehensive understanding of OBE implementation. Interviews focused on participants' experiences, challenges, and strategies in aligning learning outcomes, pedagogy, and assessment, while document analysis examined curriculum maps, learning outcome matrices, assessment rubrics, and institutional policies to compare formal designs with actual practices

(Baxter & Jack, 2015). The instruments were validated by experts to ensure clarity and construct validity (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles et al. (2018), involving data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. Through iterative coding, findings were categorized into shared patterns, institutional variations, and context-specific adaptations (Sutama, 2019). The use of thematic matrices facilitated cross-case comparison, while continuous verification ensured the credibility and consistency of interpretations.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Institutional Interpretations of OBE

Findings indicate substantial variation in how Outcome-Based Education (OBE) is understood across Islamic higher education institutions. Across cases, three dominant interpretations emerged: (1) OBE as academic achievement, (2) OBE as applied competence, and (3) OBE as holistic development integrating Islamic values. Several participants equated learning outcomes with students' ability to meet academic standards and pass examinations, reflecting a continuation of content-based perspectives. As one participant noted, *"We look at whether students pass their exams and graduate with the knowledge that is expected"* (Participant 1, personal communication, July 2023). This interpretation was also evident in institutional documents, where some course syllabi emphasized coverage of subject matter and summative testing as primary indicators of success.

In contrast, other participants conceptualized OBE as the development of applied competencies, emphasizing students' ability to transfer knowledge into real-world contexts. This perspective highlights employability, problem-solving, and practical engagement as key indicators of learning outcomes. A participant explained, *"It is about students' ability to apply what they have learned in the real world"* (Participant 2, personal communication, July 2023). Document analysis supports this view, as several curriculum maps and learning outcome matrices explicitly included competencies related to critical thinking, communication, and professional skills. However, cross-case comparison shows that while these competencies are formally articulated, their translation into teaching practices and assessment strategies remains inconsistent across institutions.

A third perspective extends beyond academic and applied dimensions to include moral and spiritual development, particularly the cultivation of *akhlak* as an integral component of graduate identity. As expressed by another participant, *"It should also encompass personal development, including spiritual values in line with Islamic teachings"* (Participant 3, personal communication, August 2023). This orientation is reflected in institutional vision statements and program objectives that emphasize character formation and ethical responsibility. Nevertheless, document analysis reveals that such value-oriented outcomes are often expressed in broad and non-measurable terms, lacking clear indicators for implementation and assessment. Across institutions, this divergence in interpretations contributes to inconsistencies in curriculum design and evaluation practices. As summarized by one academic leader, *"This lack of clarity creates confusion when designing curriculum and assessing students"* (Participant 4, personal communication, August 2023).

### Curriculum Alignment and Design Practices

The findings reveal uneven implementation of curriculum alignment principles across IHE institutions. In several cases, institutions have begun adopting backward design approaches, where clearly defined learning outcomes serve as the foundation for curriculum planning, instructional strategies, and assessment design. As one participant explained, *"We start by defining the learning outcomes, then design the curriculum and assessment accordingly"* (Participant 2, personal communication, September 2023). This approach is supported by document analysis,

particularly in curriculum maps and outcome matrices that demonstrate structured alignment between Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) and Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs). These documents indicate that some institutions have developed systematic mechanisms to ensure coherence across curriculum components.

However, such alignment is not consistently implemented across all cases. Document analysis reveals notable discrepancies between formally stated learning outcomes and their operationalization in course syllabi and assessment practices. In several instances, while learning outcomes emphasize higher-order skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, and practical application, course content and assessment methods remain focused on knowledge transmission and written examinations. This inconsistency suggests that alignment often exists at the documentation level but is not fully translated into teaching and evaluation practices. Participants also recognized this gap, with one noting, *“There is still a mismatch between what is written in the outcomes and how teaching and assessment are conducted”* (Participant 5, personal communication, September 2023).

Cross-case comparison further highlights variations in the extent of curriculum alignment. Institutions with more established quality assurance systems and prior experience in curriculum reform tend to demonstrate stronger alignment between outcomes, teaching, and assessment. In contrast, other institutions are still in transitional stages, where elements of outcome-based design coexist with traditional content-based approaches. This variation is evident in both interview data and institutional documents, indicating differing levels of institutional readiness and capacity. Overall, the findings suggest that while the principles of alignment are increasingly recognized, their implementation remains partial and uneven across Islamic higher education institutions.

### **Pedagogical Transformation and Lecturer Readiness**

Findings consistently indicate that lecturer readiness is a critical factor shaping the implementation of OBE across IHE institutions. Participants reported persistent challenges in transitioning from teacher-centered to student-centered pedagogies, with many lecturers continuing to rely on lecture-based instruction rooted in long-established practices. As one participant stated, *“Many colleagues still find it difficult to move away from traditional teaching methods”* (Participant 1, personal communication, July 2023). This tendency is also reflected in course documents, where teaching plans frequently emphasize content delivery rather than interactive or student-centered learning activities. In several cases, lesson plans and syllabi show limited incorporation of active learning strategies, suggesting that pedagogical transformation remains partial.

Concerns about shifting classroom dynamics further influence lecturer readiness. Some participants expressed apprehension that student-centered approaches may reduce their authority or disrupt established teaching roles. As noted by one participant, *“Some feel that student-centered learning reduces their authority in the classroom”* (Participant 5, personal communication, September 2023). These perceptions are reinforced by classroom practices observed in teaching documentation, where instructor-led sessions dominate and opportunities for student engagement, such as discussions, projects, or collaborative tasks, are not systematically embedded. This indicates a gap between the pedagogical expectations of OBE and actual instructional practices across institutions.

These challenges are compounded by structural constraints, including limited professional development opportunities and heavy academic workloads. Participants reported that training related to OBE is often sporadic and unevenly distributed across departments. At the same time, student readiness presents an additional barrier, as learners are generally accustomed to passive learning environments. As one participant explained, *“Students are still used*

*to being passive, so active learning becomes a challenge*" (Participant 6, personal communication, September 2023). However, cross-case comparison shows that institutions with more structured training programs, mentoring systems, and peer collaboration initiatives demonstrate relatively stronger adoption of student-centered pedagogies. This pattern, supported by both interview data and institutional documents, highlights the importance of sustained capacity-building efforts in facilitating pedagogical transformation.

### **Assessment Practices and Outcome Measurement**

Assessment practices emerge as one of the most critical yet underdeveloped dimensions of OBE implementation across IHE institutions. Interview data indicate that many lecturers continue to rely on traditional assessment methods, particularly written examinations, even when outcome-based frameworks have been formally adopted. This pattern is corroborated by document analysis of course syllabi and assessment rubrics, which frequently prioritize content recall and summative testing. Although some courses include performance-based components such as projects or presentations, these are not consistently aligned with clearly defined learning outcomes, suggesting that assessment practices remain only partially integrated with OBE principles.

Participants explicitly acknowledged the challenges associated with designing and implementing outcome-based assessments. One participant stated, *"It is challenging to measure skills like critical thinking or attitudes using our current assessment methods"* (Participant 3, personal communication, July 2023), while another explained, *"We have learning outcomes, but translating them into measurable assessment tools is still a work in progress"* (Participant 8, personal communication, September 2023). These concerns are reflected in assessment documents, where criteria for evaluating higher-order thinking skills and affective dimensions are often absent or insufficiently specified. In several cases, rubrics lack detailed performance indicators, making it difficult to systematically assess whether intended outcomes have been achieved.

Moreover, efforts to strengthen assessment practices are evident in a limited number of institutions that have introduced digital systems to monitor learning outcome attainment. However, both interview data and institutional documents indicate that the use of such systems remains constrained by technical limitations, uneven infrastructure, and insufficient training. Cross-case comparison further reveals that institutions with more established quality assurance mechanisms tend to demonstrate stronger alignment between learning outcomes and assessment practices, including more structured use of rubrics and evaluation frameworks. In contrast, other institutions exhibit fragmented or inconsistent approaches, where assessment practices do not fully reflect intended competencies. Overall, the findings indicate that achieving alignment between outcomes and assessment remains a significant challenge in operationalizing OBE.

### **Integration of Islamic Values in OBE Implementation**

A defining feature across all cases is the integration of Islamic values into the implementation of OBE. Participants consistently emphasized that learning outcomes should encompass not only academic competencies but also moral and spiritual development. This orientation is reflected in institutional documents, including program learning outcomes, vision statements, and curriculum frameworks, where values such as responsibility, integrity, and social contribution are explicitly articulated. In several cases, curriculum maps demonstrate the inclusion of affective and ethical dimensions alongside cognitive and skill-based competencies, indicating an institutional commitment to holistic education grounded in Islamic principles.

In practice, lecturers integrate Islamic values through a range of pedagogical approaches, including classroom interactions, contextual examples, and reflective learning activities.

Interview data suggest that lecturers perceive their role not only as knowledge facilitators but also as moral guides. As one participant explained, “OBE must align with Islamic values, guiding students to apply knowledge ethically in their professional lives” (Participant 7, personal communication, September 2023). Similarly, another participant noted, “It is not just about mastering content, but applying it in ways consistent with Islamic principles” (Participant 3, personal communication, July 2023). This integration is also visible in teaching documents, where some lesson plans include value-oriented objectives and activities designed to connect disciplinary knowledge with ethical considerations.

However, the findings reveal variation in the extent to which Islamic values are explicitly operationalized within OBE frameworks. In some institutions, value integration is systematically embedded in learning outcomes, teaching strategies, and assessment criteria, supported by structured documentation such as rubrics that include attitudinal indicators. In contrast, other institutions rely more on implicit approaches, where values are conveyed informally through lecturer practices without clear alignment to measurable outcomes. Cross-case comparison indicates that this variation reflects differing institutional priorities and capacities in balancing competency-based requirements with value-based education. Overall, while the integration of Islamic values is widely acknowledged, its implementation remains uneven across institutions.

### **Institutional Readiness and Implementation Challenges**

Institutional readiness emerges as a key factor shaping the implementation of OBE across IHE institutions. Participants consistently identified challenges related to policy clarity, leadership support, and resource allocation. A recurring issue is the need to reconcile national accreditation requirements with institutional commitments to Islamic values. As one participant explained, “We must balance national standards with our Islamic identity, which is not always straightforward” (Participant 8, personal communication, September 2023). This tension is also evident in institutional documents, where curriculum guidelines and quality assurance frameworks reflect overlapping and sometimes ambiguous policy directives. In several cases, the absence of clear operational guidelines for integrating OBE within Islamic educational contexts contributes to uncertainty in curriculum planning and implementation.

Technological capacity represents another critical dimension of institutional readiness, with significant variation observed across cases. Participants reported disparities in access to digital tools, learning management systems, and reliable internet connectivity, which directly affect the implementation of OBE practices, particularly in assessment and feedback processes. As noted by one participant, “There is a clear digital divide between departments, and not all lecturers are prepared to use technology” (Participant 7, personal communication, August 2023). Document analysis supports this observation, showing uneven adoption of digital platforms across institutions, with some universities utilizing integrated learning management systems while others rely on limited or outdated technological infrastructure. These disparities highlight structural inequalities that influence the effectiveness of OBE implementation.

Cross-case analysis further indicates that institutional leadership and governance play a crucial role in shaping readiness and capacity. Institutions with stronger leadership commitment and more established quality assurance systems tend to demonstrate clearer policy alignment, better resource allocation, and more consistent implementation practices. In contrast, institutions with limited support structures exhibit fragmented and partial adoption of OBE. Both interview data and institutional documents reveal that implementation is not solely determined by pedagogical factors but is deeply influenced by broader organizational conditions, including infrastructure, institutional priorities, and policy environments.

### **Strategies for Contextualizing OBE in IHE Institutions**

In response to the challenges identified, IHE institutions have developed a range of strategies to contextualize the implementation of OBE. A prominent approach across cases is the adoption of backward curriculum design, where learning outcomes serve as the starting point for structuring teaching and assessment. Participants emphasized that this approach helps improve coherence and clarity in curriculum planning. As one participant explained, *“We regularly review curriculum and teaching practices to ensure alignment with outcomes”* (Participant 1, personal communication, July 2023). This strategy is also reflected in institutional documents, including revised curriculum maps and outcome matrices that demonstrate more explicit alignment between PLOs, CLOs, and assessment components. In several institutions, these processes are supported by structured quality assurance mechanisms that facilitate continuous curriculum evaluation and improvement.

To address issues of lecturer readiness, institutions have implemented various capacity-building initiatives. These include workshops, mentoring programs, and peer collaboration activities aimed at strengthening understanding of OBE principles and pedagogical practices. Interview data indicate that such initiatives contribute to gradual shifts toward student-centered learning, particularly in institutions with more systematic training programs. Document analysis further shows evidence of formal training schedules and internal guidelines designed to support OBE implementation. In addition, institutions are increasingly integrating digital technologies to support teaching, assessment, and monitoring of learning outcomes. The adoption of learning management systems and digital tools is accompanied by training efforts, although the extent of implementation varies across cases depending on institutional resources and infrastructure. Another key strategy involves expanding collaboration with industry and community partners to ensure that learning outcomes remain relevant to real-world contexts. Participants highlighted that such partnerships contribute to aligning graduate competencies with professional expectations while also reinforcing the social mission of Islamic education. As one participant noted, *“Collaboration with industry helps ensure our graduates meet professional expectations”* (Participant 6, personal communication, September 2023). This is supported by institutional documents that outline internship programs, community engagement activities, and stakeholder feedback mechanisms integrated into curriculum design. Across cases, these strategies reflect ongoing efforts to develop contextually grounded models of OBE that align competency development with Islamic values, institutional capacities, and societal needs.

### **Cross-Case Patterns and Variations**

Synthesizing the findings across institutions reveals three overarching patterns that characterize the implementation of OBE in IHE institutions. First, several shared patterns are evident across cases, including variation in how OBE is understood, persistent challenges in aligning assessment with learning outcomes, and the consistent emphasis on integrating Islamic values into educational practices. These commonalities are supported by both interview data and institutional documents, which collectively show that while OBE has been formally adopted, its conceptualization and operationalization remain uneven. Second, institutional variations are apparent in the degree of curriculum alignment, levels of lecturer readiness, and access to technological resources. Cross-case comparisons indicate that some institutions demonstrate more systematic implementation supported by structured quality assurance mechanisms, while others are still in transitional stages.

Third, context-specific adaptations reflect differences in institutional conditions, including resource availability, leadership commitment, and local priorities. These adaptations are visible in both policy documents and reported practices, where institutions tailor OBE

implementation to their unique contexts while attempting to maintain alignment with national standards and Islamic educational values. Overall, these patterns demonstrate that although OBE is widely adopted at the policy level, its implementation is shaped by a complex interplay of structural and contextual factors. As a result, the realization of OBE in IHE is not uniform but varies significantly across institutions depending on their capacity and strategic orientation.

The findings of this study demonstrate that the implementation of OBE in IHE institutions is not merely a technical curriculum reform but a complex process of negotiation between global competency-based paradigms and the Islamic educational mission. Drawing on the integrative framework adopted in this study, combining OBE principles (Spady, 1988; Aminah et al., 2025), competency-based education (Daugherty et al., 2024), and value-integrative Islamic pedagogy (Zainuddin, 2016; Baharun et al., 2025), the results highlight how structural alignment, pedagogical transformation, and value integration interact within specific institutional contexts. This confirms that OBE implementation is inherently contextual, shaped by institutional culture, policy environments, and educational philosophy (Mufanti et al., 2024).

From an OBE perspective, the principle of clarity of focus requires that learning outcomes be explicitly defined and consistently understood across stakeholders (Spady, 1988). However, the findings reveal substantial variation in how lecturers conceptualize learning outcomes, ranging from academic achievement to applied competence and holistic moral development. This aligns with Sukirman and Linse (2024), who note that ambiguity in defining outcomes leads to inconsistencies in curriculum implementation. Within the competency-based framework, such variation indicates a lack of shared competency standards, which undermines alignment between curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment (Daugherty et al., 2024). Consequently, OBE risks being reduced to a procedural requirement rather than functioning as a transformative pedagogical model (Pang et al., 2009).

The variation in defining learning outcomes also reflects the influence of Islamic pedagogical principles, which emphasize holistic human development. In this study, the inclusion of *akhlak* and spiritual values as part of learning outcomes illustrates an expanded interpretation of competence that integrates cognitive, affective, and ethical domains. This finding supports prior research showing that Islamic education prioritizes character formation alongside academic achievement (Budiyanti et al., 2024; Subiyantoro et al., 2025). From a value-integrative perspective, this suggests that OBE in Islamic contexts must be reconceptualized to accommodate moral and spiritual dimensions, rather than adopting purely secular competency frameworks (Muhibbuddin et al., 2026).

The findings indicate that curriculum alignment, central to the OBE principle of “design down, deliver up,” remains uneven across institutions. Although some IHE institutions have begun to adopt backward design approaches, inconsistencies persist between intended learning outcomes and the actual implementation of teaching and assessment practices. This misalignment reflects challenges identified in prior research, where effective alignment requires not only technical curriculum mapping but also a deep understanding of pedagogy (Aminah et al., 2025). Within a competency-based framework, such gaps indicate that the intended competencies are not being fully realized or integrated into actual teaching and assessment practices. This deficiency hampers the overall effectiveness of Outcome-Based Education (OBE) in ensuring that students achieve meaningful and measurable learning outcomes, ultimately limiting the potential impact of the educational approach (Garay-Rondero et al., 2024).

These challenges are closely associated with lecturer readiness, which emerges as a critical mediating factor in the implementation of OBE (Salim et al., 2026). The persistence of teacher-centered practices observed in this study supports Day’s (2017) argument that competency-based education necessitates a fundamental transformation in professional identity.

Lecturers are required to shift from being knowledge transmitters to facilitators of learning, adopting more student-centered pedagogies, innovative assessment strategies, and dynamic classroom interactions. However, without sufficient institutional support, such transformations are often met with resistance or implemented only superficially.

This resistance is further shaped by broader cultural and institutional dynamics. Some lecturers perceive student-centered learning approaches as undermining their traditional authority, indicating that the challenge of OBE implementation extends beyond technical competence to include cultural adaptation. This finding aligns with Trisha et al. (2025), who demonstrate that lecturers' beliefs and perceptions significantly influence their readiness to adopt OBE. Consequently, professional development initiatives must go beyond skill enhancement to address underlying attitudes, values, and assumptions about teaching and learning (Mareta et al., 2024).

Assessment practices represent another area where the gap between OBE principles and actual implementation is evident. Despite the adoption of outcome-based frameworks, many institutions continue to rely heavily on traditional examinations, indicating limited integration of authentic assessment methods. This observation is consistent with Sudheer et al. (2017), who argue that evaluating higher-order competencies requires more sophisticated and varied assessment tools. Furthermore, difficulties in measuring complex competencies, such as critical thinking and ethical behavior, highlight the challenges of translating abstract learning outcomes into measurable indicators. This issue is particularly pronounced in Islamic higher education, where moral and spiritual dimensions must also be assessed, reinforcing the importance of clearly defined criteria as emphasized by Selva et al. (2024).

In addition to pedagogical and assessment challenges, technological capacity plays a crucial role in shaping the implementation of OBE. The findings reveal that disparities in digital infrastructure and lecturers' digital literacy significantly affect the ability to conduct continuous assessment and provide timely feedback. This supports Tanti et al. (2025), who emphasize the importance of technology in enhancing learning experiences within Islamic higher education. From a competency-based perspective, digital tools are essential for monitoring learning progress and enabling flexible learning pathways, indicating that institutional resource capacity is a key determinant of successful OBE implementation (Ismail et al., 2024).

Finally, the implementation of OBE in Islamic higher education is further complicated by the need to balance national regulations, international standards, and Islamic identity. This tension reflects the dual mission of IHE institutions, which must simultaneously pursue global competitiveness and uphold religious values (Fathana et al., 2025). In this context, strategies such as backward design offer a practical approach to strengthening curriculum alignment, as supported by Spady's (1988) model and empirical evidence from Priya Vijayanthi and Raja Murugadoss (2019). Moreover, the intentional integration of Islamic values into OBE frameworks is essential for maintaining institutional identity and relevance, as highlighted by Zainuddin (2016) and Usman et al. (2025). Collaboration with industry and community partners further reinforces the alignment between education and real-world needs, enhancing graduate employability while supporting the broader social mission of Islamic education (Kay et al., 2024).

Overall, the findings demonstrate that successful OBE implementation in IHE institutions requires a holistic approach that integrates structural, pedagogical, and philosophical dimensions. The interplay between competency development and value integration underscores the need for contextually grounded models of OBE that reflect both global standards and Islamic educational principles. This study contributes to the literature by illustrating how these elements interact in practice and by identifying key factors that support or hinder implementation. OBE in IHE institutions should be understood as an evolving reform process rather than a fixed model. Its success depends on achieving alignment across curriculum,

pedagogy, assessment, and institutional systems, while simultaneously preserving the ethical and spiritual foundations of Islamic education. By highlighting both challenges and strategies, this study provides insights for policymakers, institutional leaders, and educators seeking to implement OBE in ways that are both contextually relevant and educationally meaningful.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the implementation of OBE in IHE institutions in Indonesia is a complex and context-dependent process shaped by the interaction of competency-based frameworks, institutional capacity, and the integration of Islamic ethical values. While OBE has been formally adopted, its practical realization remains uneven due to variations in conceptual understanding, curriculum alignment, lecturer readiness, assessment practices, and technological infrastructure. At the same time, the findings highlight that IHE institutions do not merely adopt OBE as a technical model but actively reinterpret it to incorporate moral and spiritual dimensions, positioning *akblaq* as a core component of graduate outcomes. The study underscores that effective OBE implementation requires not only structural alignment but also sustained professional development, institutional support, and contextually grounded strategies that integrate Islamic values with competency development. These findings contribute to the discourse on educational reform in faith-based institutions and offer practical implications for designing holistic, value-integrated OBE models in IHE institutions.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This research was funded by the Directorate of Islamic Higher Education, Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, through the 2023 LITAPDIMAS initiative.

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