Outcome-Based Education (OBE) Curriculum: Implementation in the Arabic Language and Literature Study Program

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Abstract: As higher education institutions transition toward competency-based frameworks, Outcome-Based Education (OBE) has emerged as a pivotal model for aligning curriculum with measurable learning outcomes. In the context of Islamic higher education, the integration of OBE remains a growing area of interest. This study explores the implementation of the Outcome-Based Education (OBE) curriculum in the Arabic Language and Literature Study Program at the Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. It focuses on insights from the program coordinators and examines the challenges encountered during the implementation process. Employing a phenomenological approach, data were collected from primary sources, including the head and secretary of the study program, through direct observation and in-depth interviews. The data were analyzed using interpretative phenomenological analysis. The findings reveal that the implementation process involves several stages: curriculum review, dissemination of OBE policy to faculty and students, and ongoing monitoring and evaluation. Key challenges include faculty and student readiness to adopt new approaches, resistance to change, difficulties in accurately measuring learning outcomes, limited resources and facilities, and time constraints. To enhance the effectiveness of OBE implementation, it is recommended that institutions provide targeted professional development, improve infrastructure support, and promote a collaborative academic culture. Future research could explore cross-institutional comparisons and long-term impact assessments of OBE-based curriculum reforms.

INTRODUCTION

Outcome-Based Education (OBE) has emerged as a pivotal paradigm in modern higher education, driven by the demands of international recognition and institutional reputation. Beyond its role in enhancing institutional prestige, OBE seeks to improve educational quality by ensuring that learning outcomes are systematic, measurable, and competency-oriented. Through the adoption of an OBE-based curriculum, students are empowered to explore and develop their competencies within structured academic experiences (Shukla & Arora, 2023). However, the implementation of OBE is not without challenges, particularly in reconciling international accreditation standards with national educational policies (Mufanti et al., 2024). Although various studies have explored OBE implementation across different contexts, research specifically addressing its application in state Islamic universities in Indonesia remains limited (Mufanti et al., 2024; Venkatesh & King, 2021). This

study seeks to address this gap by examining the implementation of the OBE curriculum in the Arabic Language and Literature Study Program at Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, identifying the challenges faced, and exploring strategies to overcome them.

The Arabic Language and Literature Study Program at Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang has actively pursued internationalization efforts, as reflected in its achievement of ASEAN University Network-Quality Assurance (AUN-QA) certification in 2020 and its current pursuit of accreditation from the Foundation for International Business Administration Accreditation (FIBAA). Aligning its curriculum with OBE principles presents numerous challenges—both internal, such as faculty preparedness and institutional support, and external, including policy alignment and limited resources. Understanding these challenges is essential for refining OBE implementation practices in similar educational environments (Yang, 2020).

Several recent studies have investigated OBE implementation in higher education settings. Syeed et al. (2022) and Er et al. (2021) analyzed curriculum design and implementation, emphasizing how OBE curricula integrate diverse skill sets essential for solving real-world problems, particularly in professional fields such as engineering and healthcare. Meanwhile, Jin (2021), Liu (2023), and Huang (2024) focused on teaching and learning strategies within the OBE framework, highlighting how personalized learning paths enable students to engage with content according to their individual learning preferences. These studies also advocate the use of information technology to enrich the learning experience. Furthermore, Jia (2024) examined institutional and policy support in OBE implementation, revealing that successful adoption of OBE frameworks requires institutional commitment, policy alignment, faculty training, and motivation to embrace new pedagogical approaches.

Despite these scholarly contributions, no research has comprehensively examined the implementation of OBE in Indonesian state Islamic universities, particularly within the Arabic Language and Literature context. This study addresses this research gap using a phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences and perspectives of program coordinators. Grounded in the social phenomenology framework of Alfred Schutz and Peter Berger, this study investigates how institutional leaders interpret and navigate the complexities of OBE implementation (Cuthbertson et al., 2020). Schutz's theory emphasizes the intersubjective construction of social reality, whereby leaders' experiences inform strategic decision-making in educational management (Ma & Zhang, 2021). This perspective aligns with Weber's Verstehen concept, which underscores the importance of deeply understanding human actions within their sociocultural contexts (Hanemaayer, 2021; P. Zhang, 2022). By applying these theoretical perspectives, the study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of OBE practices and contribute to the broader discourse on global OBE implementation.

METHOD

This study adopts a phenomenological approach, grounded in Husserl's foundational philosophy of phenomenology and further developed through Alfred Schutz's theory of intersubjective understanding (J. Zhang, 2021). This theoretical framework facilitates an in-depth exploration of the subjective experiences of study program coordinators in implementing the Outcome-Based Education (OBE) curriculum. Through this lens, the study seeks to elaborate on the coordinators'

lived experiences in managing the OBE-based Arabic curriculum—specifically examining policy and procedural implementation, the challenges encountered in achieving intended learning outcomes, and the strategies employed to address these challenges.
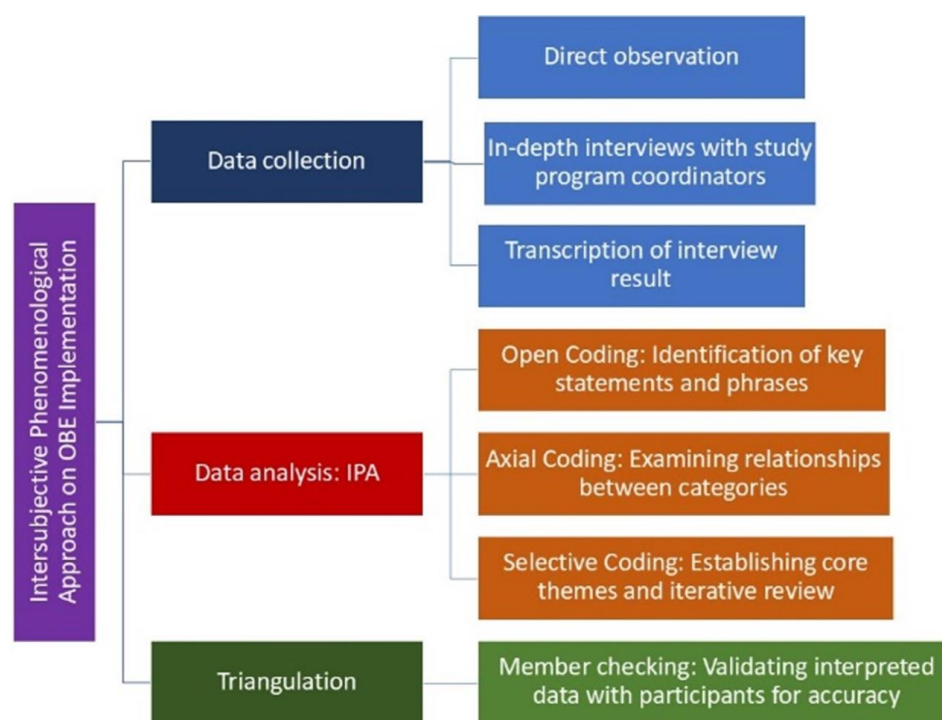

Figure 1. The Research Flow Diagram

The study utilizes a purposive sampling technique, selecting participants based on their expertise and direct involvement in implementing the OBE-based curriculum. The primary data sources are the coordinators of the Arabic Language and Literature Study Program at Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, namely Dr. Abdul Basid, S.S., M.Pd., and Mohammad Zawawi, M.Pd. These individuals were selected due to their comprehensive knowledge and leadership roles in executing the curriculum. Secondary data sources include institutional documents related to OBE implementation, such as policy decrees, lesson plans (RPS), and other supporting materials.

Data collection involved direct observation of relevant documents and in-depth interviews with the study program coordinators to obtain primary information from key actors in curriculum implementation. The interviews were conducted individually and subsequently transcribed for analysis.

The data analysis followed an interpretative phenomenological approach, consisting of several structured stages. Initially, the transcribed interviews underwent open coding, in which key phrases and significant statements were identified (Sadjim & Jusuf, 2021). These statements were then categorized into preliminary codes that reflected various aspects of OBE implementation. Through axial coding, relationships among these codes were examined to develop broader thematic categories. Finally, selective coding was used to refine and establish core themes that encapsulated the coordinators' lived experiences. These emergent themes were iteratively reviewed to ensure coherence and alignment with the research objectives.

To enhance the credibility of the findings, triangulation was conducted by cross-referencing interview data with

secondary sources. Additionally, member checking was employed by allowing participants to review the interpreted data to verify its accuracy. This validation process ensured that the findings genuinely represented the coordinators' perspectives and contributed to the overall reliability of the study.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION
Implementation of the Outcome-Based Education (OBE) Curriculum

The implementation of the Outcome-Based Education (OBE) curriculum in the Arabic Language and Literature Study Program at Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, represents a significant shift towards aligning educational methodologies with contemporary pedagogical standards and industry demands. OBE emphasizes measurable learning outcomes as the foundation of effective education, ensuring that students acquire specific competencies by the end of their academic programs. This transformation reflects a growing recognition of the need for educational systems to adapt to evolving market needs and societal expectations (Cardoso, 2024).

The OBE-based curriculum implementation is carried out through three main stages: (1) reviewing the previous curriculum, (2) socializing the OBE-based curriculum policies to lecturers and students, and (3) monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the OBE-based curriculum.

"We have begun to seriously formulate this specific learning achievement since 2022, when reviewing the learning plan (RPS)," (Interview with the Head of the Arabic Language and Literature Study Program).

The review of the previous curriculum was conducted to align it with the graduate profile of the study program, reassess the relevance and novelty of learning materials, and evaluate curriculum implementation to identify areas requiring improvement for quality enhancement. The socialization phase involved presenting the rationale and recommendations for implementing the OBE-based curriculum, followed by guidance on practical implementation strategies. Monitoring and evaluation activities were conducted to assess the strengths and challenges encountered during implementation, serving as a reference for continuous improvement.
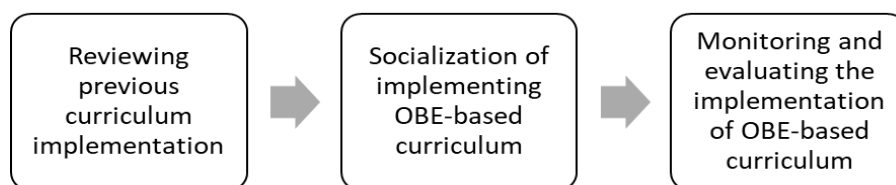

Figure 2. Stages of Implementing the OBE-based Curriculum of the Arabic Language and Literature Study Program

Reviewing Previous Curriculum Implementation

The initial step in implementing OBE involved a thorough review of the existing curriculum. The Arabic Language and Literature Study Program structured its curriculum into seven distinct categories: Language Skills, Linguistics, Literature, Culture, Research Methodology, and Professional Courses.

"In this Study Program, we conduct a structured review of the RPS. There are seven main categories, ranging from language skills, general courses, linguistics, literature, culture, research methodology, to professional courses. Each group has specific courses designed to support particular learning outcomes. For example, in the language skills group, we offer courses such as Qowaid al-Imla, al-Nahwu Science, and al-Istima', which aim to enhance students' Arabic language proficiency, both theoretical and practical. Meanwhile, in the literature group,

courses like Tarikh al-Adab al-'Araby and Nadzariyah al-Adab help students understand the history and theory of Arabic literature." (Interview with the Head of the Arabic Language and Literature Study Program).

This segmented curriculum structure facilitates a comprehensive understanding of content while maintaining a balance between theoretical knowledge and practical skills. Scholars such as Grosemans et al. (2021) argue that such alignment enhances graduate employability and fosters meaningful engagement with course content. Similarly, McPhail (2020) emphasized that a well-structured curriculum supports knowledge transfer and promotes deeper learning. These principles resonate with Deng (2022), who highlights that selecting and organizing content to unlock its educational potential is critical for facilitating meaningful learning.

However, transitioning to an OBE framework presents considerable challenges. Faculty readiness to adopt new pedagogical strategies is essential, as a limited understanding of OBE principles can hinder effective implementation (Cardoso, 2024). Moreover, resistance to change may arise due to the perceived difficulty in shifting from traditional, teacher-centered models to more interactive, student-centered approaches (Owens et al., 2020). As the Arabic Language and Literature Program adopts the OBE framework, it is crucial for the institution to provide continuous professional development opportunities to ensure faculty are equipped to implement these approaches effectively.

Socialization of OBE Curriculum Implementation Policy to Lecturers and Students

The socialization of the OBE framework is another critical component of the implementation process. This phase involves ensuring that both educators and students clearly understand the new curriculum structure and its intended outcomes.

"We socialize the OBE curriculum implementation policy to lecturers and students through lecture evaluations and coordination meetings to ensure that learning focuses on achievements relevant to the needs of the job market." (Interview with the Secretary of the Arabic Language and Literature Study Program).

The socialization process includes lecture evaluation activities with students at the end of each semester and academic coordination meetings with lecturers at the beginning of the semester. These efforts aim to ensure that the learning process goes beyond content delivery and focuses on the achievement of outcomes aligned with labor market and societal demands.

The integration of active learning strategies—such as project-based learning (PBL) and flipped classrooms—is consistent with research that emphasizes the positive impact of student engagement on retention and motivation (Widiana et al., 2021). Gomez and Suarez (2020) assert that such active involvement not only deepens comprehension but also enhances critical thinking skills, which are vital in today's workforce. Nevertheless, the successful application of these methodologies requires significant investment from educators in developing new teaching materials and assessment strategies that prioritize student competencies over mere content coverage (Mahbubul Syeed et al., 2022).

Looking at broader implications, the implementation of OBE reflects a global educational shift that emphasizes competencies aligned with societal and industry needs. The specific articulation of learning outcomes within the Arabic Language and Literature Study Program illustrates a conscious effort to produce graduates who can meet the complexities of today's job market (Nagai et al., 2024). As such, the program adheres not only to national educational standards but also to international frameworks that advocate the development of relevant, market-oriented skills (Yang et al., 2022).

In summary, the adoption of the OBE framework in the Arabic Language and Literature Study Program at Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, represents a significant advancement in higher education practice. It reflects a strong institutional commitment to equipping students with the competencies necessary to address contemporary societal and professional challenges. While challenges remain—particularly related to faculty preparedness and the need to foster student engagement—ongoing institutional support and strategic resource allocation can ensure that OBE achieves its full transformative potential.

Monitoring and Evaluation of the Implementation of the OBE Curriculum

The monitoring and evaluation of the Outcome-Based Education (OBE) curriculum in the Arabic Language and Literature Study Program at Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, is essential for ensuring the effectiveness and sustainability of the educational approach.

"Through lecture reports compiled by lecturers, we can monitor the extent to which student learning outcomes are achieved in accordance with the OBE curriculum. These reports serve as vital instruments in the evaluation process to ensure the continuous improvement of instructional quality." (Interview with the Head of the Arabic Language and Literature Study Program).

Monitoring and evaluation (monev) activities help program coordinators identify both strengths and challenges in the teaching process. Consolidated data from lecturers enable curriculum refinement and the development of more effective learning strategies. These reports thus serve as valuable resources in the continuous quality improvement cycle that underpins the OBE approach.

The use of both formative and summative assessments to evaluate curriculum effectiveness is supported by Rich et al. (2022), who advocate for a dual-strategy framework to improve outcomes in competency-based education. Incorporating student feedback mechanisms, such as satisfaction surveys, also enhances responsiveness to learner needs and labor market expectations, as emphasized by Yilmaz et al. (2021).

Effective monitoring tools are crucial for accurately measuring learning outcomes, which can be particularly challenging in OBE contexts. Thakore (2024) underscores the importance of robust assessment rubrics as a foundation for evaluating students' attainment of learning objectives. However, developing such rubrics requires considerable preparation and training. Prasetyo et al. (2023) and Reynders et al. (2020) emphasize the need for institutional support in guiding faculty through rubric development to ensure these tools reflect both competencies and meaningful student learning experiences.

Obstacles and Challenges in the Implementation of the Outcome-Based Education (OBE) Curriculum

The adoption of the OBE curriculum has generally received positive responses. Lecturers welcome the change, recognizing its potential to enhance the quality of learning by focusing on real-world competencies. Students, although initially challenged by the transition, gradually begin to understand the importance of their active roles in achieving predetermined learning outcomes. Nonetheless, several challenges continue to hinder optimal implementation. These include the readiness of lecturers and students, resistance to pedagogical shifts, difficulties in measuring learning outcomes accurately, resource limitations, and time constraints.

Readiness of Lecturers and Students to Adopt New Methods

Despite the advantages of OBE, lecturer and student readiness remains a

critical barrier to its successful implementation.

"The main obstacle lies in the mindset and readiness of lecturers. Many are unfamiliar with alternative assessment methods such as portfolios or comprehensive rubrics, which actually align more closely with OBE learning outcomes." (Interview with the Secretary of the Arabic Language and Literature Study Program).

Although some lecturers have adopted methods like project-based learning (PBL), many still rely on traditional assessments, such as midterm and final exams. These approaches, which often emphasize memorization, are misaligned with OBE principles that stress authentic, applicable, and measurable learning outcomes. Ideally, assessments in PBL contexts should include portfolios or reports evaluated using detailed rubrics to demonstrate real competencies. Written tests alone fall short in capturing students' practical abilities.

OBE represents a significant paradigm shift—from lecture-based, teacher-centered instruction to student-centered, outcome-oriented education. McArthur (2023) notes that lecturers rooted in traditional assessment practices may struggle with this transition. Faculty development programs, including workshops and training aligned with OBE, are essential to support this shift (Bailey et al., 2021).

Students, too, often face difficulties adjusting to methodologies that demand sustained engagement and self-direction.

"Many students initially feel unprepared because they must remain active throughout the semester. Assessment is no longer limited to test scores, but also includes participation in projects, discussions, and complex tasks." (Interview with the Secretary of the Arabic Language and Literature Study Program).

Students accustomed to passive learning models may resist the increased demands of active, ongoing participation and diverse assessments. This shift can lead to stress, particularly for those unfamiliar with continuous, formative evaluation methods. Research by Entwistle and Ramsden (as cited in Owens et al., 2020) shows that learners from passive educational backgrounds often find active learning models difficult to navigate. Institutions must therefore prioritize comprehensive student orientation programs to introduce the OBE framework and expectations.

Resistance to Change

Resistance to change within academic institutions is a persistent issue. Institutional inertia, combined with entrenched teaching habits, often obstructs educational reform.

"Many lecturers already have an established teaching style developed over years, including how they deliver content, manage classrooms, and evaluate students." (Interview with the Head of the Arabic Language and Literature Study Program).

This resistance stems from discomfort with pedagogical change. Most lecturers have developed personal teaching styles tailored to their experiences and are hesitant to adjust. The shift to OBE requires not only new teaching strategies, such as PBL and case-based learning, but also a reorganization of how learning is structured, delivered, and evaluated. These changes can be perceived as burdensome, especially for educators unfamiliar with such approaches.

Resistance is further shaped by sociocultural and psychological factors. Kets and Sandroni (2021) note that cultural diversity and individual learning styles influence how uncertainty is perceived and managed. In diverse educational environments, strategic uncertainty may increase, affecting the adoption of new practices like OBE. Psychological barriers, such as intolerance of uncertainty, can intensify stress and hinder the willingness to embrace change. However, Liao and Wei (2023) suggest that cultivating a culture of gratitude and reflective learning can

mitigate these effects and foster openness to innovation.

In summary, the implementation of the OBE curriculum within the Arabic Language and Literature Study Program at Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, marks a progressive step toward competency-based education. While the transition is met with challenges—particularly in areas of monitoring and evaluation, faculty and student preparedness, and resistance to change—these barriers can be addressed through structured institutional support. By investing in capacity building, robust assessment systems, and adaptive learning environments, the university can enhance its educational quality and better prepare graduates for the dynamic demands of today's global landscape.

Obstacles in Accurately Measuring Learning Outcomes

Measuring learning outcomes in Outcome-Based Education (OBE) is essential, yet it presents significant challenges that merit critical attention. The foundation of OBE lies in the clear definition, alignment, and evaluation of learning outcomes.

"In OBE, we can no longer assign grades based on general impressions or multiple-choice exams. We must use clear instruments to assess students' abilities objectively and in alignment with the targeted competencies." (Interview with the Head of the Arabic Language and Literature Study Program).

Assessment in the OBE framework demands the development of specific, detailed instruments—primarily assessment rubrics—tailored to each course or targeted competency. These rubrics guide lecturers in evaluating student performance objectively and comprehensively. For instance, a rubric for assessing critical thinking may include criteria such as the ability to analyze, evaluate, and formulate logical arguments. Similarly, a rubric for communication skills may consider clarity

of expression, appropriateness of tone, and active listening.

Creating such detailed rubrics requires significant time, in-depth understanding of the intended learning outcomes, and greater instructional effort compared to traditional assessments. Sharma (2023) underscores the need for structured rubrics to ensure consistent, transparent evaluation practices in OBE environments. Rubrics also help minimize subjectivity in grading, particularly in courses involving multiple instructors or teaching assistants (Reynders et al., 2020).

Furthermore, rubrics offer students actionable feedback, promoting self-assessment and encouraging a greater sense of responsibility for their learning (Khairallah & Adra, 2022). When properly aligned with course objectives, rubrics enable students to focus on essential skills and understand how their performance contributes to their overall academic development (Reynders et al., 2020).

Limited Resources and Facilities

The effectiveness of OBE implementation is significantly influenced by the availability of adequate resources and supporting infrastructure.

"The OBE curriculum is not just about designing learning outcomes, but also ensuring that students have access to the tools needed to achieve them. When resources are limited, learning becomes suboptimal. For example, students may struggle to create educational videos due to lack of suitable recording spaces or editing tools. Likewise, lecturers find it difficult to evaluate student work using the ideal rubric when resources are constrained." (Interview with the Head of the Arabic Language and Literature Study Program).

While the program has access to essential tools—such as laboratories, digital devices, and online learning platforms—these facilities remain insufficient to fully support OBE-oriented learning activities. In some cases, these limitations hamper the integration of real-world, project-based tasks into

coursework, undermining the authenticity of learning experiences.

Safiudin et al. (2020) noted that learning quality is closely tied to the accessibility of reliable technological and physical infrastructure. Furthermore, Ewell and Zhang et al. (2023) emphasize that successful technology integration requires institutional strategies that promote both knowledge creation and diffusion. Leadership and knowledge management play pivotal roles in sustaining innovation and ensuring that digital tools meaningfully enhance teaching and learning outcomes.

Time Constraints

Time constraints represent another substantial barrier to the effective implementation of OBE.

"The assessment rubric in OBE is detailed and cannot be standardized across all courses. It takes considerable time to formulate the right indicators to measure learning outcomes accurately. Unfortunately, due to workload and time pressure, many lecturers only manage to create simplified versions." (Interview with the Secretary of the Arabic Language and Literature Study Program).

Sharma (2023) acknowledges that the transition to OBE necessitates substantial time for faculty to adjust to new curricular structures, instructional methods, and evaluation strategies. The process is further complicated by lecturers' responsibilities in teaching, research, and administration, which may reduce their capacity to develop comprehensive assessment instruments.

Koster and McHenry (2023) highlight that increased workloads, coupled with the demand for new pedagogical practices, can lead to faculty stress and reduced engagement. This underscores the need for a phased implementation approach and sustained professional development to facilitate smoother adaptation. Institutions must provide structured time, support, and resources to ensure educators are

equipped to fully realize the principles of OBE.

Broader Implications for Global OBE Implementation

On a broader scale, the implications of the challenges and successes identified in OBE initiatives offer essential insights for educational institutions globally. The successful implementation of OBE requires institutional readiness, including adequate technical support and faculty training. Challenges such as lack of awareness, insufficient technical infrastructure, and limited digital competence can hinder the adoption of OBE, particularly in online learning environments (Ahmad et al., 2023). In the context of general education, aligning linguistics courses with core competencies such as critical thinking and information literacy can further enhance their relevance within the curriculum. This alignment enables linguistics courses to meet common student learning objectives, thereby integrating them more effectively into general education frameworks (Welch & Shappeck, 2020). Therefore, the global shift toward competency-based education calls for collaborative research initiatives aimed at refining OBE models across diverse academic disciplines.

Recommendations for Policymakers, Curriculum Designers, and Educators
Policymakers

For effective transformation within OBE systems, recommendations must be clearly articulated to policymakers, curriculum designers, and educators. Policymakers play a pivotal role in formulating national education policies that define clear frameworks for OBE implementation. As noted by Goldhamer et al. (2022), transitioning to a competency-based framework necessitates a cultural shift within institutions, requiring both faculty and students to adapt to new methods of

assessment and learning. This alignment is critical in ensuring the quality and effectiveness of educational programs. Funding remains a central concern, particularly regarding faculty development and infrastructural investments essential for effective OBE adoption.

Curriculum Designers

Curriculum designers are likewise urged to develop flexible curriculum models that incorporate interdisciplinary approaches—an essential component of OBE success. Syeed et al. (2022) emphasized that interdisciplinary strategies within OBE facilitate the development of comprehensive skill sets. For instance, engineering education under the OBE model requires students to master diverse competencies for solving complex problems, which can be achieved through integrating knowledge across disciplines. By incorporating such approaches, curricula can better align with expected learning outcomes, as exemplified in the Understanding by Design framework, which promotes deep understanding and the ability to transfer knowledge to novel contexts (Newell et al., 2024).

Educators

The role of educators is indispensable in the effective implementation of OBE. Ongoing professional development in pedagogical methods is crucial to ensuring that educators can successfully adapt to OBE practices. Shulman emphasized that pedagogical competence is the foundation upon which effective teaching is built. Educators should be encouraged to participate in such training, positioning themselves as instructional designers capable of delivering student-centered learning experiences (Sukackė et al., 2022).

CONCLUSION

Based on the data presentation and analysis, it can be concluded that the implementation of the OBE-based curriculum in the Arabic Language and Literature Study Program, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, follows three primary stages: curriculum review, socialization of OBE policies to lecturers and students, and the monitoring and evaluation of curriculum implementation. The key challenges encountered include the readiness of lecturers and students to adopt new instructional methods, resistance to pedagogical change, difficulties in accurately measuring learning outcomes, limited resources and supporting facilities, and time constraints. This study contributes to the discourse on OBE-based curriculum implementation by offering insights grounded in the lived experiences of the study program coordinators. The findings provide valuable practical knowledge, particularly for academic leaders and curriculum coordinators, serving as a best-practice reference for similar initiatives in other institutions and academic settings. Phenomenological research on OBE implementation remains highly relevant and should be further explored in diverse institutional contexts. Future studies are encouraged to expand the scope of perspectives beyond program coordinators to include lecturers, students, and stakeholders—each of whom plays a critical role in the development and implementation of curriculum in higher education.

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