

Outcome-Based Education in Primary Islamic School Teacher Education: Curriculum Practices and Influencing Factors

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Abstract

Outcome-Based Education (OBE) requires higher education programs to align intended graduate competencies, teaching, and assessment, yet evidence from Islamic higher education remains limited on how established curricula are optimized after initial adoption. This study investigated OBE-based curriculum optimization in the Elementary Madrasah Teacher Education Study Program at Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang and identified the factors enabling and constraining this process. A qualitative single-case design involved five purposively selected informants: the head of the study program, the program secretary, and three lecturers. Data were generated over one month through in-depth interviews, observation, and analysis of Semester Learning Plans, syllabi, and related curriculum documents. The data were examined through iterative reduction, interpretation, and conclusion drawing, while source and technique triangulation supported credibility. The findings identified four optimization practices: aligning Graduate Learning Outcomes (CPL), Course Learning Outcomes (CPMK), and Sub-CPMK; incorporating alumni, graduate-user, and tracer-study input; strengthening lecturer commitment and integrity; and using authentic assessment. Supporting conditions included curriculum documentation, lecturer training and mentoring, stakeholder engagement, and national regulatory support. The principal constraints were the absence of a standardized instrument for measuring CPL attainment and uneven lecturer commitment. The study shows that optimization has progressed at the level of curriculum architecture and reported implementation, but its effects on graduate competence cannot yet be verified without validated attainment data. It therefore highlights the need to connect documentary OBE compliance with measurable classroom enactment and learning outcomes.

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Introduction

Educational transformation in the era of globalization demands a paradigm shift in curriculum development, from a process-oriented approach to an achievement-focused, learning-outcomes approach. One current approach adopted globally is Outcome-Based Education (OBE), a system that emphasizes measurable, relevant, and aligned graduate competencies with the needs of the world of work and societal development (Ali & Jamin, 2025). Yet the adoption of OBE in Islamic Religious Colleges (PTKI) raises a specific governance problem that remains underexamined: how a program reconciles externally mandated, outcome-based accreditation metrics (CPL) with locally defined competencies rooted in Islamic values, particularly at the point where curriculum documents must be translated into classroom practice. This is the problem this study addresses.

Various studies have shown that implementing OBE improves the quality of learning and strengthens the competence of college graduates, including gains in student-centered learning, critical thinking, and collaboration (Asbari & Nurhayati, 2024). Gea and Koto's meta-analysis similarly reports positive effects on practical skills, conceptual understanding, and motivation (Gea & Koto, 2024), and Ximeng et al. (2026) link OBE to improved learning effectiveness through motivation and emotional regulation. However, this body of evidence is predominantly confirmatory: it documents OBE's intended benefits more often than it examines where and why implementation fails to produce them. A smaller set of studies is more critical of practice. In the Indonesian context specifically, Mufanti et al. (2024) surveyed 632 English lecturers nationwide and found that OBE implementation is frequently constrained by heavy workload, uneven lecturer understanding, and a persistent tendency for institutions to treat curriculum documentation as evidence of implementation, even where classroom practice has not substantially changed. Similar patterns have been reported outside Indonesia: Katawazai (2021), studying Afghan public universities, found that lecturer workload and infrastructural gaps limited OBE adoption despite generally positive lecturer attitudes toward the approach. Silfiani et al. (2025) further report a mismatch between formulated learning outcomes and classroom practice, and Rodin et al. (2024) highlight institutional readiness as a persistent constraint. Taken together, this literature suggests that the risk in OBE implementation is not only insufficient documentation, but the reverse: curriculum documents that satisfy accreditation requirements without a corresponding shift in enacted teaching and assessment practice.

The successful implementation of the Outcome-Based Education (OBE) curriculum depends on several interrelated supporting factors. One main factor is lecturers' competence in understanding and applying OBE principles, from formulating learning achievement goals for graduates to preparing semester learning plans and developing assessment instruments aligned with the set targets (Mansyur et al., 2025). In addition, institutional support through academic policy, sustainable training, and adequate learning facilities and infrastructure is important for effective OBE implementation (Muzakir & Susanto, 2023).

Implementation of the OBE curriculum is important because learning achievements are set first, then the learning method is designed to align with the desired outcomes. Compared with a traditional curriculum, which emphasizes mastery of knowledge and completion of material according to the syllabus, OBE focuses on the results to be achieved. In addition, traditional assessments generally measure only knowledge gained. By contrast, an Outcome-Based Education (OBE) curriculum is designed around the needs of graduates in the world of work. The learning process in OBE helps students achieve the set outcomes. The assessment system also focuses on the level of achievement of outcomes. Thus, students are assessed based on demonstrated achievements, not on comparisons with other students. If students do not yet reach the expected level of outcomes, they require assistance to achieve it. Therefore, OBE is an achievement-oriented educational approach, not just a settlement of material learning (Rahmawati & Wahyuni, 2024).

Conceptually, OBE places students at the center of learning and emphasizes demonstrable competencies such as critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, and collaboration (Asbari & Nurhayati, 2024). Its implementation requires constructive alignment among intended learning outcomes, learning activities, and assessment (Nguyen et al., 2024). Recent studies further suggest that OBE can strengthen accountability, transparency, workplace relevance, and character-oriented

learning when curriculum design is accompanied by institutional readiness and consistent classroom enactment (Keo et al., 2025; Silfiani et al., 2025).

In the context of PGMI, the challenges are more complex because the curriculum must integrate sociological, professional, social, and personality competence alongside academic outcomes (Widiarti et al., 2024). At UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, efforts have been made to implement an OBE-based curriculum, but field conditions still pose challenges to meeting emerging competency standards. A preliminary, informal consultation with the Head of FITK UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim regarding the 2026 Curriculum review indicated that although the curriculum has adopted the OBE scheme, further evaluation is needed given the rapidly changing demands of the labor market. This consultation is reported here only as background motivation for the study and is not treated as a formal data source; the study's formal evidence base is described in the Method section.

The main problem identified through this preliminary consultation concerns three specific gaps: graduates' preparedness to operate technology-based media given that elementary pupils increasingly begin IT learning early; the need to strengthen guidance and counseling (BK) and inclusive-education competence so graduates can address diverse learners individually, not only deliver subject content; and the absence of a pathway toward an "International Certificate" for graduates as a marker of global competitiveness.

Prior research on PGMI and PTKI curricula has addressed related but distinct questions. Ananda et al. (2022) examined the development of the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) curriculum in PTKI settings but did not focus on OBE-specific alignment mechanisms. Silfiani et al. (2025) documented OBE implementation in a PGMI program at a different institution (UIN Sunan Kalijaga), focusing on multicultural curriculum content rather than optimization practice. Solissa et al. (2025) examined OBE-based Indonesian-language curriculum design at the higher-education level generally, without a PGMI or PTKI focus. None of these studies examines how an established OBE curriculum is subsequently refined that is, what optimization looks like once initial OBE compliance has already been achieved. This is the specific gap the present study addresses.

This study is bounded as a single-case study of the PGMI Study Program at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, following the program's initial OBE implementation. Within this case, the study examines four embedded units of analysis: (1) the alignment process among CPL, CPMK, and Sub-CPMK; (2) stakeholder-informed curriculum revision through tracer studies and alumni/user surveys; (3) lecturer commitment and integrity in enacting the curriculum; and (4) the authentic assessment system used to evaluate learning outcomes.

Therefore, this research aims to investigate: (1) how the PGMI study program at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang optimizes its OBE-based curriculum through these four practices, and (2) the factors that support and hinder this optimization process. This research is expected to contribute theoretically to OBE-based curriculum studies and practically to study program managers seeking to refine curriculum planning, implementation, and evaluation.

Method

This study employed a qualitative case study design to examine the optimization of the Outcome-Based Education (OBE) curriculum in the PGMI Study Program at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows contextual, in-depth understanding of curriculum practices, lecturers' perceptions, and policy implementation dynamics within a higher

education setting (Sidiq & Choiri, 2019). The case study design was selected to obtain a comprehensive account of the phenomenon in its natural, specific context within a single institution (Ananda et al., 2022).

The case is bounded to the PGMI Study Program at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, covering curriculum optimization activity during the 2025/2026 academic year. The site was purposively selected because the program has implemented an OBE-based curriculum for several years, making it well-positioned to illustrate optimization practice rather than initial adoption. Within this case, the study examines four embedded units of analysis, corresponding to the four practices reported in the Results: (1) alignment of CPL, CPMK, and Sub-CPMK; (2) stakeholder-informed curriculum revision; (3) lecturer commitment and integrity in curriculum enactment; and (4) the authentic assessment system. The implementation of OBE within the PTKIN environment is treated as analytically significant because it requires integrating an outcome-based accreditation framework with Islamic educational values—a tension not present in secular OBE contexts.

Data sources comprised primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained from five informants, purposively selected based on their direct involvement in curriculum design and implementation: the Head of the PGMI Study Program, the study program secretary, and three lecturers, including academic advisor lecturers (*dosen wali*). Secondary data consisted of supporting documents, namely the Semester Learning Plan (RPS), syllabus, and other curriculum documents, alongside relevant journal articles and books used for contextual comparison.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and document analysis. The data were analyzed iteratively through data reduction, interpretation, and conclusion drawing. Source triangulation across informants and technique triangulation across interviews, observations, and documents were used to strengthen the credibility of the findings.

Result and Discussion

OBE-Based Curriculum Optimization Practices

The findings indicate that the PGMI Study Program has moved beyond the initial adoption of OBE documents and is attempting to optimize the curriculum through four interrelated practices. These practices concern the alignment of learning outcomes, the use of external stakeholder input, lecturer commitment to curriculum enactment, and authentic assessment. Table 1 summarizes the reported practices, their evidence base, and the limits of the available evidence.

Table 1. OBE-based curriculum optimization practices reported in the PGMI Study Program

Practice	Reported implementation	Evidence and analytical qualification
Alignment of CPL, CPMK, and Sub-CPMK	Curriculum documents and Semester Learning Plans specify hierarchical relationships among graduate, course, and sub-course learning outcomes.	Reported by Informants 1 and 2 and supported by document review. The evidence demonstrates documentary alignment, but not whether the alignment is consistently enacted in classrooms.
Stakeholder-informed curriculum development	Alumni, graduate-user surveys, and tracer-study information are reportedly used to identify competencies required by schools, society, and technological change.	Reported by Informant 1. The underlying tracer-study dataset, survey instrument, response rate, and examples of resulting curriculum decisions were not available in the manuscript.

Practice	Reported implementation	Evidence and analytical qualification
Lecturer commitment and integrity	Program leaders emphasize shared lecturer commitment, academic integrity, and active student participation as conditions for implementing the curriculum as designed.	Derived mainly from leadership accounts. The study did not independently observe a broad range of lecturers, so the finding represents a program-level expectation rather than verified enactment.
Authentic assessment	Assignments, projects, presentations, practical work, portfolios, and performance observations are reportedly used to assess both learning processes and outcomes.	Reported by Informant 2. Rubrics, moderation procedures, samples of student work, and validated CPL-attainment data were not presented, limiting evaluation of assessment quality.

Alignment of CPL, CPMK, and Sub-CPMK

Informants 1 and 2 stated that CPL, CPMK, and Sub-CPMK have been formulated for each course and incorporated into the Semester Learning Plan. Document review likewise indicated that the three levels of learning outcomes were explicitly listed. This arrangement reflects the constructive-alignment principle because course-level and meeting-level outcomes are expected to contribute systematically to graduate outcomes (Nguyen et al., 2024). It is also consistent with evidence that clear relationships among graduate profiles, learning outcomes, learning activities, and assessment constitute a necessary foundation for OBE implementation (Allo et al., 2024; Ulkhaq et al., 2024). Nevertheless, the present evidence establishes the existence of an outcome architecture; it does not demonstrate that each learning activity and assessment task has been empirically mapped to CPL attainment or that the mapping produces measurable competence gains.

Stakeholder-Informed Curriculum Development

According to Informant 1, the study program involves alumni and graduate users through surveys and uses tracer-study information to review graduate profiles and emerging competency needs. Such engagement is compatible with the OBE expectation that curricula should remain responsive to employment, technological, and societal change (Pahrudin et al., 2024). Alumni feedback may also help programs identify competencies that are insufficiently represented in the existing curriculum (Kusstianti et al., 2022). However, the study did not include the tracer-study dataset, survey instrument, stakeholder composition, response rate, or a documented example showing how particular feedback changed a course or assessment. The finding should therefore be interpreted as a reported curriculum-development mechanism rather than evidence that stakeholder input has already improved curriculum relevance.

Lecturer Commitment and Integrity

Program leaders identified lecturer commitment and integrity as central to translating curriculum documents into learning practice. Their accounts suggest that even a formally aligned curriculum may have limited value when lecturers do not consistently design activities, provide feedback, and assess students in accordance with the intended outcomes. This concern is consistent with studies showing that lecturer understanding, workload, and institutional support influence the quality of OBE enactment (Katawazai, 2021; Mufanti et al., 2024). The finding also implies that student participation is part of the implementation process because outcome attainment depends on sustained engagement with achievement-oriented tasks. Yet, because the evidence was dominated

by leadership perspectives and did not include systematic classroom observation across lecturers, the study cannot determine the extent or distribution of commitment within the program.

Authentic Assessment

Informant 2 reported that the program uses assignments, projects, presentations, practical exercises, portfolios, and performance observations to assess learning processes and outcomes. These forms of assessment are conceptually compatible with authentic assessment because they require students to demonstrate competence through tasks rather than rely exclusively on conventional written tests (Efendi, 2020). However, naming assessment formats is insufficient to establish validity. The manuscript did not provide analytic rubrics, procedures for scorer calibration or moderation, examples of assessed student work, or evidence that scores were aggregated into reliable indicators of CPL attainment. Consequently, authentic assessment is best understood as an intended approach whose measurement quality remains to be demonstrated.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

The optimization process is shaped by institutional, stakeholder, and regulatory conditions. Table 2 organizes the supporting and inhibiting factors identified by the informants and clarifies how each should be interpreted within the limits of the evidence.

Table 2. Supporting and inhibiting factors in OBE-based curriculum optimization

Category	Factor	Interpretation
Supporting	Complete curriculum documentation	Provides a shared formal reference for CPL, CPMK, Sub-CPMK, syllabi, and learning plans, but does not by itself verify classroom implementation.
Supporting	Lecturer training and mentoring	Workshops and mentoring are intended to strengthen OBE understanding, RPS preparation, authentic assessment, and curriculum evaluation; participation and impact data were not reported.
Supporting	Stakeholder engagement	Alumni, graduate users, and tracer-study information are reported to improve responsiveness to workplace needs, although the underlying data were not included.
Supporting	National regulatory support	Permendikbudristek No. 53/2023 creates a policy incentive to define and evaluate CPL, making OBE optimization institutionally necessary.
Inhibiting	No standardized CPL-attainment instrument	Prevents the program from aggregating and verifying whether graduate learning outcomes have been achieved consistently across courses.
Inhibiting	Uneven lecturer commitment	Creates a risk that curriculum compliance remains documentary rather than enacted through aligned teaching, feedback, and assessment.

Four supporting conditions were identified. First, complete curriculum documentation provides a common reference for academic staff. Second, lecturer training and mentoring are intended to strengthen understanding of OBE, CPL-based Semester Learning Plan preparation, authentic assessment, and curriculum evaluation. This emphasis accords with evidence that sustained professional development and clear institutional guidance are necessary for OBE to influence practice (Mansyur et al., 2025; Mufanti et al., 2024). Third, stakeholder engagement is reported to supply information about workplace competency needs (Saki et al., 2023). Fourth, Permendikbudristek No. 53/2023 provides an external policy framework that places CPL at the

center of higher-education quality assurance. These factors create an enabling environment, but the study does not provide implementation metrics showing their relative contribution.

The principal inhibiting factor is the absence of a standardized instrument for evaluating CPL attainment. Without an agreed measurement system, the program cannot determine with confidence whether aligned documents, learning activities, and authentic assessments produce the intended graduate outcomes. This problem parallels broader concerns about the availability of comprehensive indicators and reliable procedures for OBE evaluation (Tjandra et al., 2024). A second constraint is uneven lecturer commitment, which may produce a gap between the intended curriculum and classroom practice. This interpretation is consistent with evidence that limited understanding and inconsistent enactment remain recurring obstacles in higher-education OBE implementation (Silfiani et al., 2025).

Discussion

The findings answer the first research question by showing that OBE-based curriculum optimization in the PGMI Study Program is organized around four mutually dependent practices rather than a single technical revision. Alignment among CPL, CPMK, and Sub-CPMK establishes the formal curriculum architecture; stakeholder input is intended to maintain external relevance; lecturer commitment determines whether the intended curriculum becomes enacted practice; and authentic assessment is expected to generate evidence of competence. This configuration supports the principle of constructive alignment, but it also reveals that formal coherence is only the starting point of OBE. Similar studies have emphasized the importance of clear outcome formulation and curriculum-assessment coherence (Allo et al., 2024; Nguyen et al., 2024; Ulkhaq et al., 2024). The present case extends that literature by showing that post-adoption optimization depends on the interaction among documentation, people, external feedback, and measurement systems.

A central analytical issue is the difference between documentary compliance and enacted implementation. The program appears to have completed the formal documentation stage, yet the study could not verify how consistently lecturers use the stated outcomes to design learning activities, provide feedback, or assess student performance. This distinction is important because Indonesian and international studies have reported that positive attitudes toward OBE and complete curriculum documents may coexist with workload pressures, uneven understanding, and limited changes in classroom practice (Katawazai, 2021; Mufanti et al., 2024). The finding therefore cautions against treating the presence of CPL, CPMK, and Sub-CPMK as evidence that outcome-based learning has been achieved. Optimization should be evaluated through the traceability of outcomes across courses, assessment tasks, and student performance, not through documentation alone.

Stakeholder engagement represents the program's principal mechanism for maintaining curriculum relevance, particularly in response to technological change, inclusive-education needs, and employment expectations. This orientation is consistent with OBE scholarship that positions graduate-user and alumni feedback as a basis for curriculum renewal (Kusstianti et al., 2022; Pahrudin et al., 2024; Saki et al., 2023). However, the absence of underlying tracer-study evidence prevents assessment of whose views were represented and how feedback was converted into specific curriculum decisions. For stakeholder engagement to function as more than a consultative ritual, the program needs a transparent decision trail linking identified needs to revised graduate profiles, course outcomes, learning experiences, and assessment criteria.

The second research question concerns the factors that support and hinder optimization. Curriculum documentation, lecturer development, stakeholder participation, and regulatory pressure form an enabling infrastructure, but their effectiveness is constrained by human and measurement capacity. Lecturer training is especially important because OBE requires a shift from content coverage to evidence of outcome attainment; one-off workshops are unlikely to be sufficient when lecturers must redesign tasks, rubrics, and feedback practices. At the same time, the absence of a standardized CPL-attainment instrument leaves the program without a defensible basis for judging whether optimization has succeeded. This is the most consequential barrier because it prevents the program from closing the OBE quality cycle: defining outcomes, implementing aligned learning, measuring attainment, analyzing gaps, and revising the curriculum.

The study also has implications for Islamic teacher education. PGMI programs must satisfy national outcome and accreditation requirements while preserving competencies associated with Islamic values, character formation, and the professional responsibilities of elementary madrasah teachers. The case suggests that these priorities should not be treated as parallel lists of outcomes; they need to be translated into observable course-level performances and assessed through valid tasks. Character-oriented OBE research similarly emphasizes integration between competence and values rather than the addition of abstract value statements to curriculum documents (Rahmawati & Wahyuni, 2024; Widiarti et al., 2024). Accordingly, the program's next stage of optimization should focus on validated CPL mapping, common assessment rubrics, moderation procedures, and evidence-based curriculum review. These recommendations remain bounded by the single-case design, five-informant sample, leadership-dominated evidence, and lack of student or graduate-outcome data.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the PGMI Study Program at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang optimizes its OBE-based curriculum through four connected practices: aligning CPL, CPMK, and Sub-CPMK; using alumni, graduate-user, and tracer-study input to review curriculum relevance; strengthening lecturer commitment and integrity in curriculum enactment; and applying authentic forms of assessment. These findings answer the first research question by showing that optimization is understood not merely as document revision but as the coordination of curriculum architecture, stakeholder responsiveness, teaching practice, and assessment. In response to the second research question, the process is supported by complete curriculum documentation, lecturer training and mentoring, stakeholder engagement, and the regulatory direction of Permendikbudristek No. 53/2023, while it is constrained primarily by the absence of a standardized CPL-attainment instrument and uneven lecturer commitment. The study's main implication is that documentary alignment should be followed by a verifiable quality cycle that maps CPL across courses, applies shared rubrics and moderation procedures, aggregates attainment evidence, and uses the results for curriculum improvement. However, the case demonstrates reported institutional practices rather than measurable effects on student or graduate competence because the evidence was limited to one program, five informants, document review, and no validated outcome data. Future studies should therefore combine broader lecturer and student perspectives, systematic classroom observation, and longitudinal CPL-attainment evidence to determine whether the optimization practices identified here produce the outcomes intended by OBE.

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