

A Quantitative Comparative of the Implementation of the MBKM and OBE Curricula in Improving the Quality of Learning for Islamic Education Students at Islamic Universities

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the study: This study aims to conduct a comparative analysis of the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) Curriculum and Outcome-Based Education (OBE) in improving the quality of learning for Islamic Religious Education students at Islamic Higher Education Institutions.

Methodology: This study used a descriptive quantitative design with a comparative approach. Twenty Islamic Religious Education students from five Islamic higher education institutions in the Special Region of Yogyakarta were selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using a five point Likert scale questionnaire validated through expert judgment and analyzed using descriptive statistics, a paired-samples t-test, one-way ANOVA, and Pearson correlation.

Main Findings: MBKM ($M = 4.07$) and OBE ($M = 4.10$) were both rated high, with no significant difference ($p = 0.575$), and both correlated significantly with PAI learning quality ($M = 4.17$; $r = 0.840$ and 0.667). MBKM scored highest on multidisciplinary competence and student autonomy (4.18) and on the integration of Islamic values (4.11). OBE scored highest on constructive alignment (4.24) and on technology use in learning (4.55). Graduate preparedness reached 4.25, with Islamic character formation at 4.40.

Novelty/Originality of this study: The novelty of this study lies in placing MBKM and OBE within a single comparative frame in Islamic Religious Education, a field that earlier comparative work has largely passed over in favor of engineering, medicine, and vocational education. Both curricula are measured against the same learning quality indicators across five Islamic universities.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Currently, higher education in Indonesia is undergoing significant changes, driven by the need to adapt to structural shifts today's job market and the demand for graduates who can adapt to a changing environment [1], [2], [3]. To address these challenges, the government has adopted two strategic curriculum approaches that now serve as the primary frameworks: the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) curriculum and Outcome-Based Education (OBE). This issue becomes even more complex when both approaches are applied in Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTKI), particularly in Islamic Religious Education programs, which have

the dual responsibility of producing graduates who are both academically competent and possess Islamic character [4], [5]. This makes the study of the alignment of the two curricula within Islamic higher education institutions an urgent issue that needs to be addressed both empirically and theoretically. This article addresses that need by comparing the two curricula empirically within Islamic Religious Education programs, using questionnaire data from students at five PTKI in the Special Region of Yogyakarta who have gone through both.

The MBKM curriculum was launched by the Ministry of Education and Culture through Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation No. 3 of 2020 as a policy that gives students the freedom to choose learning pathways outside their degree programs through eight stages, ranging from internships to social activities [6]. Conceptually, MBKM is based on the principle of social constructivism, in which learning is viewed as an active process that can be influenced by social context and real-world experiences [7], [8]. In practice at PTKI, MBKM aims to produce graduates who possess multidisciplinary competencies, are self-reliant, and are ready for the workforce through cross-context learning experiences [1], [9].

Unlike MBKM, the OBE curriculum places the measurability of learning outcomes at the core of curriculum design and evaluation. Spady, as the father of the initial conceptualization of OBE, defined this approach as an educational system that focuses and organizes all components of learning around the final outcomes that students must be able to demonstrate at the end of their learning experience, as referenced and expanded upon by Rao, who also explains that OBE prioritizes goals, outcomes, and achievements, where all decisions regarding curriculum, assessment, and instruction are driven by graduate learning outcomes [10]. The implementation of OBE requires a constructive alignment between Program Learning Outcomes (PLO), Course Learning Outcomes (CLO), teaching methods, and assessment tools [11], [12], [13]. In the context of Islamic higher education institutions (PTKI), Erihadiana and Syaripudin have even developed a Faith-Based Outcome-Based Education (FB-OBE) model that incorporates a dimension of spiritual alignment into the general OBE framework an innovation also supported by Romlah et al. through the concept of institutionalizing OBE based on transformational leadership [4], [14].

Meanwhile, the quality of education for Islamic Education students in higher education institutions has distinct characteristics and cannot be equated with other fields. Muhaimin emphasized that the development of the Islamic Education curriculum in higher education institutions must be able to integrate Islamic norms with academic competency requirements, thereby producing graduates who not only master religious theory but are also able to apply it in their daily lives [4] [5]. Ensuring comprehensive quality in Islamic Education (PAI) instruction is no simple matter, as a study by Wisassakwichai et al. on PLO-based curriculum mapping revealed that the dimensions of ethics and character tend to be underrepresented compared to those of knowledge and skills, indicating a serious challenge in ensuring all dimensions of instructional quality [11].

Empirical studies on the implementation of MBKM over the past decade have grown rapidly, with a wide range of research focuses [8], [15]. Specifically in the context of Islamic higher education institutions (PTKI), Rokhimawan et al. found that 86.9% of Islamic Education students at fifteen PTKIs were able to understand the MBKM concept well [16]. Meanwhile, Arifin et al. found two distinct models for implementing MBKM internships between the Islamic Education Management program at Raden Intan State Islamic University Lampung and the Educational Administration program at UPI Bandung [17]. A study by Fauzi et al. also introduced the Jabalul Hikmah curriculum as a transdisciplinary model at four major Raden Intan State Islamic University Lampung, and Suyadi et al. demonstrated the contribution of MBKM to strengthening anti-corruption education integrated with Islamic concepts such as bribery, embezzlement, and extortion. [5], [18].

In OBE, there has also been significant growth in the literature, with objectives that differ from those of MBKM. Phung et al. developed a framework for an AI-based integrated OBE program in Vietnam that successfully increased the graduation rate from 60% to 80% [19]. Meanwhile, Zakwan et al. documented an improvement in long-term Course Outcomes and Programme Outcomes in the Civil Engineering program at Universiti Teknologi MARA in Malaysia [20]. In the context of Islam, Salim et al. also conducted a quasi-experimental study at the Faculty of Tarbiyah at UAA Indonesia and the Islamic College at PSU Thailand, which demonstrated that OBE-blended learning has an impact on student learning satisfaction [21]. A study by Romlah et al. also examined the implementation of OBE at Raden Intan State Islamic University Lampung and concluded that transformational leadership is a key factor in the sustainability of OBE-based change [15].

Although references to MBKM, OBE, and the quality of learning among Islamic Education students are growing rapidly, studies that specifically place all three within a comparative and open framework remain very limited. First, most studies treat MBKM and OBE separately, which can lead to inconsistencies, as the flexibility of MBKM is considered incompatible with the strict demands of OBE [12], [22].

Second, existing studies tend to focus on the fields of engineering, medicine, and vocational education [13], [23], [24], [25]. Meanwhile, in the context of Islamic Education (PAI), which has unique characteristics involving the integration of Islamic values, this area has received relatively little academic attention. Third, Mufanti et al. emphasize that understanding of and support for the implementation of OBE among lecturers in Indonesia remain highly varied and uneven [10]. This finding is also consistent with the current state of Islamic higher education institutions (PTKI), as indicated by studies by Salabi and Muharramah, Sobri et al., and

Muslim, which highlight the diversity of MBKM and OBE integration models within State Islamic University [3], [26], [27]. This is a gap in the literature that needs to be addressed immediately through appropriate comparative studies at the Islamic Education program level.

Based on this gap, this study places MBKM and OBE side by side under one set of learning quality indicators at the Islamic Education program level, which is what earlier studies have not done. It aims to conduct a comparative analysis of the implementation of the MBKM and OBE curricula in improving the quality of learning for Islamic Education students at Islamic universities, focusing on five undergraduate Islamic Education programs in the Special Region of Yogyakarta as the sample for analysis. The three main questions to be answered are: how do the implementations of the MBKM and OBE curricula differ in improving the quality of learning for PAI students at Islamic universities, what are the strengths and weaknesses of the implementation of the MBKM and OBE curricula in improving the quality of learning for PAI students at Islamic universities, and how can the results of the comparison of the implementation of the MBKM and OBE curricula in improving the quality of learning for PAI students at Islamic universities be used to improve the quality of learning in higher education in Indonesia.

To systematically address these questions, this article is organized into four main sections. Following the introduction, the second section outlines the research methodology, which includes a descriptive quantitative comparative design, the study location, the subjects, the research instruments, and the data analysis techniques. The third section presents the research findings, which cover the characteristics of the implementation of MBKM and OBE in the Islamic Education (PAI) study program at the study site. The fourth section presents a comparative discussion that analyzes the similarities, differences, strengths, and weaknesses of both curricula in improving the quality of learning for PAI students, while also offering an integrative model as a practical recommendation for PTKI administrators. The concluding section summarizes the key findings and offers appropriate policy implications for the development of a PTKI curriculum that is adaptive to current changes without losing its academic and Islamic authenticity.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

The research method employed was a descriptive quantitative study with a comparative design. Two comparisons were carried out: a within-subject comparison, in which the same respondents assessed the implementation of the MBKM and the OBE curricula, and a between-group comparison of the three variables across the five PTKI. According to Creswell, the comparative approach was chosen because it allows for a systematic analysis of the characteristics of two or more groups that share contextual similarities but differ in their implementation approaches [28]. The main instrument in this study was a closed questionnaire, and the researcher acted as the designer and administrator of that instrument rather than as the instrument itself.

MBKM	OBE
Comparison Curriculum	Curriculum Learning process
Assessment	
Learning	outcomes

Figure 1. Comparative Framework of MBKM and OBE

The study was conducted in five Islamic Education (PAI) undergraduate (S1) programs at several public and private universities in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, Indonesia, which have actively implemented the MBKM and OBE curricula. The selection of locations was based on the consideration that these five Islamic universities have a strong academic track record and actively implement MBKM policies; these five Islamic universities include Alma Ata University, Ahmad Dahlan University, the Islamic University of Indonesia, Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University Yogyakarta, and IIQ An Nur Yogyakarta. The research subjects were selected using purposive sampling, which allows the researcher to select respondents based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives, namely having direct experience in the implementation of MBKM and OBE in the respective study programs. The respondents were selected using the following criteria: (a) active undergraduate students in the PAI study programs at the five institutions; (b) students who had participated in or were participating in at least one MBKM activity; and (c) students whose study programs had implemented the OBE curriculum, so that they had direct experience of both curricula. A total of 20 students met these criteria and

completed the questionnaire: 7 from Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University Yogyakarta, 4 from Institut Ilmu Al-Qur'an An-Nur, 4 from Universitas Alma Ata, 3 from Universitas Islam Indonesia, and 2 from Universitas Ahmad Dahlan.

Data collection was conducted using a questionnaire designed to obtain comprehensive and credible data. The questionnaire was distributed to students to ascertain their perceptions and experiences regarding curriculum implementation, with questions formulated using a five-point Likert scale. The questionnaire was validated through expert judgment before it was distributed, and the responses were then scored and tabulated for descriptive quantitative analysis. The expert judgment was carried out by a validator in the field of educational evaluation who met the following criteria: holding a doctoral degree in a relevant field; having ten years of experience teaching educational evaluation; having expertise in educational evaluation; having experience in research and scientific publication; having developed research instruments; understanding validity, reliability, item analysis, and construct development; and having academic experience as an expert lecturer in a relevant field. The initial draft of the questionnaire contained 10 items for each variable. Based on the validator's review, the items were developed into 17 items for the MBKM variable, 19 items for the OBE variable, and 22 items for the PAI learning quality variable, which formed the final instrument used in this study.

This study involves three core variables, and the indicators used in this study via a questionnaire are: the MBKM Curriculum Variable, with sub-variables including the structure of the MBKM curriculum, the development of student competencies through MBKM, and the integration of Islamic values into MBKM. The OBE Curriculum variable, with sub-variables including the formulation of learning outcomes, constructive alignment, OBE-based learning methods, learning outcome-based assessment, and quality assurance. The PAI learning quality variable, with sub-variables including holistic learning outcomes of PAI students, student satisfaction and engagement, the quality of PAI graduates, and the effectiveness of PAI learning methods.

The data were analyzed in several stages. Instrument reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha, with a coefficient of at least 0.70 taken as acceptable. Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were used to describe the level of each variable, and mean scores were interpreted using five categories based on an interval width of 0.80: very low (1.00–1.80), low (1.81–2.60), moderate (2.61–3.40), high (3.41–4.20), and very high (4.21–5.00). Normality was tested using the Shapiro-Wilk test, which is generally more powerful than alternative tests of normality and performs well with samples as small as the one used in this study, and homogeneity of variance across institutions was tested using Levene's test. Because the MBKM and OBE scores were obtained from the same respondents, the difference between the two curricula was tested using a paired-samples t-test. Differences among the five PTKI were tested using one-way ANOVA, with Welch's test used where variances were not homogeneous and the Kruskal-Wallis test reported as a nonparametric comparison. The relationship between each curriculum and the quality of PAI learning was tested using Pearson correlation. All tests used a significance level of 0.05.

The hypotheses tested in this study were as follows: (H1) there is a significant difference between students' assessments of MBKM and OBE implementation; (H2) MBKM implementation has a significant relationship with the quality of PAI learning; (H3) OBE implementation has a significant relationship with the quality of PAI learning; and (H4) there are significant differences in MBKM implementation, OBE implementation, and PAI learning quality among students from the five PTKI.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Result

This study presents findings from a questionnaire distributed to 20 students in the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) program at five Islamic religious universities in the Special Region of Yogyakarta who had participated in the MBKM program. Data were collected using Google Forms from May 20–26, 2026. Before analysis, the questionnaire's reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha, yielding an overall coefficient of 0.960 with coefficients of 0.871 for the MBKM variable, 0.898 for the OBE variable, and 0.932 for the PAI learning quality variable. All values exceed the minimum threshold of 0.70, indicating that the instrument has acceptable internal consistency.

3.1.1. Research Respondents

The respondents in this study consisted of 20 students representing five Islamic higher education institutions in Yogyakarta. Respondents were selected using purposive sampling, with the criterion being students who had participated in the MBKM program. The respondents' profiles are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Research Respondents

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Women	11	55.0
	Men	9	45.0
Origin of PTKI	Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University Yogyakarta	7	35.0
	Institut Ilmu Al-Qur'an An-Nur	4	20.0
	Universitas Alma Ata	4	20.0
	Universitas Islam Indonesia	3	15.0
	Universitas Ahmad Dahlan	2	10.0
Semester	Semester 2	1	5.0
	Semester 4	13	65.0
	Semester 6	6	30.0

Table 1 shows that the majority of respondents are female, with Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University Yogyakarta being the dominant Islamic higher education institution. Most of the respondents are in their fourth semester, which is the peak period for the implementation of the MBKM program for Islamic Education students in Yogyakarta. This distribution aligns with the general pattern of MBKM participation reported by Darmawan and Aliyyah, who found that peak student participation in MBKM typically occurs during the fourth through sixth semesters [29].

3.1.2. Results of the Analysis of the Implementation of the MBKM Curriculum

The variables related to the implementation of the MBKM curriculum are measured using 17 indicators divided into four subvariables: MBKM philosophy and structure, constructivism and cross-contextual experiences, development of multidisciplinary competencies, and integration of Islamic values. The results of the analysis of the MBKM curriculum implementation are presented in Figure 2.

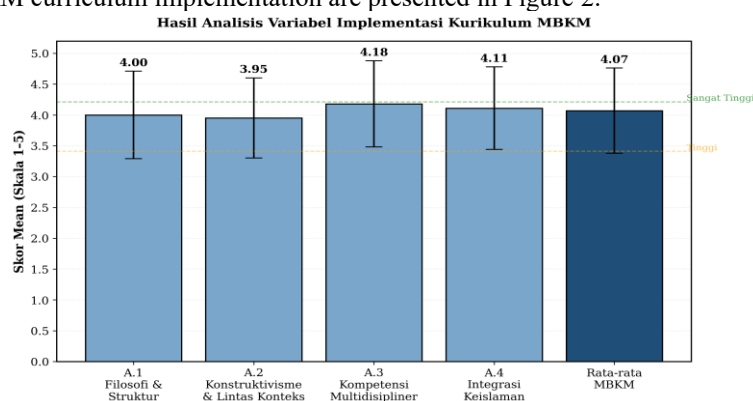


Figure 2. Results of the Analysis of the MBKM Curriculum Implementation

Figure 2 shows that the implementation of the MBKM Curriculum at the five PTKIs in Yogyakarta falls overall into the high category, with an average score of 4.07. Subvariable A.3, Multidisciplinary Competence and Autonomy, received the highest score, with a mean of 4.18, indicating that students feel the MBKM Curriculum contributes significantly to the development of their soft skills, problem-solving abilities, and independent learning. Meanwhile, subvariable A.2, Constructivism and Cross-Contextuality, received the lowest score, with a mean of 3.95, particularly in the indicator of participation in thematic Community Service Programs (KKN), which had a mean of 3.75.

3.1.3. Results of the Analysis of the Implementation of the OBE Curriculum

The variables related to the implementation of the OBE curriculum are measured using 19 indicators divided into five subvariables: the formulation of learning outcomes, constructive alignment, the implementation of technology-based OBE and FB-OBE, multidimensional assessment, and perceptions of quality assurance. The results of the analysis of the OBE curriculum implementation are shown in Figure 3.

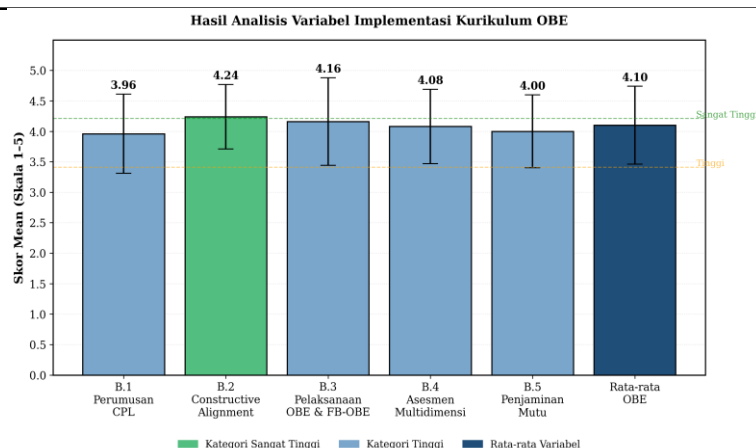


Figure 3. Results of the Analysis of Variables Related to the Implementation of the OBE Curriculum

Figure 3 shows that the overall implementation of the OBE Curriculum falls into the high category, with an average score of 4.10. Subvariable B.2, Constructive Alignment, received the highest score in the very high category with Mean = 4.24, indicated by the green color in the diagram. This suggests that students perceive a very strong alignment between learning outcomes, teaching methods, and assessment in the PAI course. Another interesting finding is the highest score across all instruments for the indicator of technology utilization in learning B.3.3, with a mean of 4.55, indicating that technology use among PAI students is very high.

3.1.4. Results of the Analysis of the Quality of Learning Among PAI Students

The variables of PAI learning quality were measured using 22 indicators divided into four subvariables: holistic learning outcomes, the learning process and climate, graduate readiness, and the effectiveness of teaching methods. Figure 4 presents the results of the analysis of PAI students' learning quality.

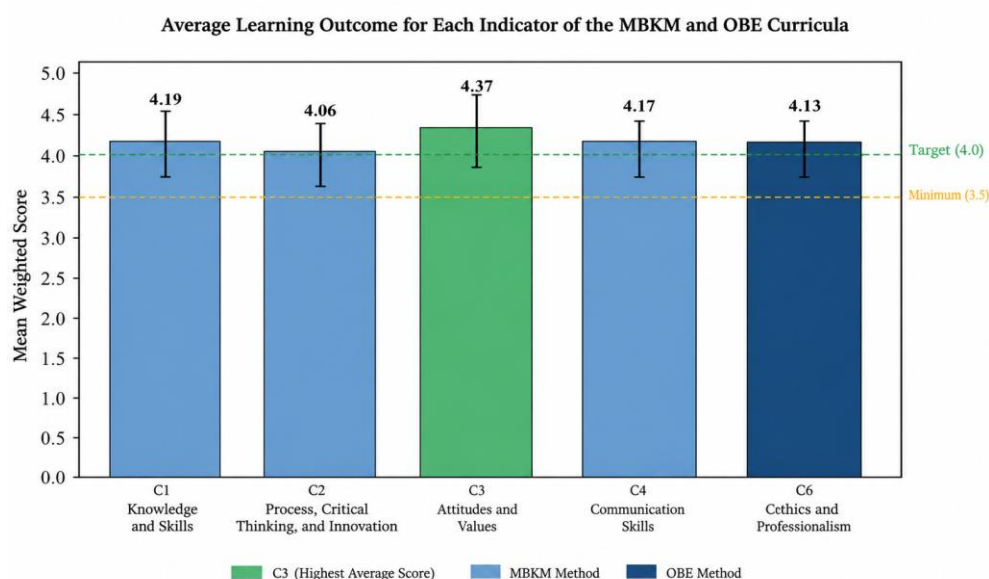


Figure 4. Results of the Analysis of the Quality of Learning Among PAI Students

Figure 4 shows that the quality of learning for PAI students at five PTKIs in Yogyakarta falls into the high category, with an average score of 4.17. Subvariable C.3, "Preparation of Prospective PAI Graduates," received the highest score in the "very high" category with Mean = 4.25, as indicated by the green line in the diagram. Students feel very well prepared to become PAI graduates with Islamic character with Mean = 4.40, to communicate professionally with Mean = 4.30, and to collaborate across diverse backgrounds with Mean = 4.30. Subvariable C.4, Effectiveness of PAI Teaching Methods, also showed good results with a mean score of 4.17, indicating that PAI instruction successfully enhances students' religious understanding and helps them apply Islamic values in daily life.

3.1.5. Normality and Homogeneity Tests

The Shapiro-Wilk test showed that the scores for MBKM ($W = 0.946$, $p = 0.314$), OBE ($W = 0.954$, $p = 0.437$), and PAI learning quality ($W = 0.968$, $p = 0.718$), as well as the difference scores between MBKM and OBE ($W = 0.942$, $p = 0.262$), were normally distributed. Parametric tests were therefore used for the paired comparison and the correlation analysis. Levene's test across the five PTKI showed homogeneous variances for MBKM ($p = 0.233$) and PAI learning quality ($p = 0.111$), but not for OBE ($p = 0.019$). For this reason, the between-institution comparison for OBE was read from Welch's test, and the Kruskal-Wallis test was also reported for all three variables because several institutions were represented by only two to four respondents.

3.1.6. Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing was conducted to examine the proposed relationships and differences among MBKM, OBE, and the quality of PAI learning. The analysis involved a paired-samples t-test to compare students' assessments of MBKM and OBE, Pearson correlation analysis to examine the relationships between each curriculum framework and PAI learning quality, and one-way ANOVA, Welch's ANOVA, and Kruskal-Wallis tests to determine whether significant differences existed across the five participating PTKI. The decision to support or reject each hypothesis was based on the statistical significance level of 0.05. A summary of the hypothesis testing results is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Test	Result	Decision
H1: MBKM vs OBE	Paired-samples t-test	$t(19) = -0.57$; $p = 0.575$; $d = -0.13$	Not supported
H2: MBKM – learning quality	Pearson correlation	$r = 0.840$; $p < 0.001$	Supported
H3: OBE – learning quality	Pearson correlation	$r = 0.667$; $p = 0.001$	Supported
H4: MBKM across PTKI	One-way ANOVA; Kruskal-Wallis	$F(4, 15) = 2.05$; $p = 0.139$ / $H(4) = 7.44$; $p = 0.114$	Not supported
H4: OBE across PTKI	Welch's ANOVA; Kruskal-Wallis	$F(4, 4.74) = 0.51$; $p = 0.734$ / $H(4) = 2.54$; $p = 0.638$	Not supported
H4: Learning quality across PTKI	One-way ANOVA; Kruskal-Wallis	$F(4, 15) = 0.38$; $p = 0.819$ / $H(4) = 1.32$; $p = 0.858$	Not supported

As shown in Table 2, the hypothesis testing results indicate that H1 was not supported because there was no statistically significant difference between students' assessments of MBKM and OBE, as demonstrated by the paired-samples t-test, $t(19) = -0.57$, $p = 0.575$, with a small effect size ($d = -0.13$). This finding suggests that students evaluated the implementation of the two curriculum frameworks at a relatively similar level. In contrast, H2 and H3 were supported. MBKM showed a very strong and statistically significant positive relationship with the quality of PAI learning ($r = 0.840$, $p < 0.001$), while OBE also demonstrated a strong and statistically significant positive relationship with PAI learning quality ($r = 0.667$, $p = 0.001$). These findings indicate that higher assessments of MBKM and OBE were associated with higher assessments of PAI learning quality. Furthermore, MBKM and OBE were themselves strongly and positively correlated ($r = 0.782$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that the two curriculum frameworks were closely related in students' assessments. H4 was not supported for all three variables examined across the five PTKI. No statistically significant differences were found in MBKM scores, based on both one-way ANOVA ($F(4, 15) = 2.05$, $p = 0.139$) and the Kruskal-Wallis test ($H(4) = 7.44$, $p = 0.114$). Similarly, OBE scores did not differ significantly across the five PTKI according to Welch's ANOVA ($F(4, 4.74) = 0.51$, $p = 0.734$) and the Kruskal-Wallis test ($H(4) = 2.54$, $p = 0.638$). The quality of PAI learning also showed no significant differences across the institutions, as indicated by one-way ANOVA ($F(4, 15) = 0.38$, $p = 0.819$) and the Kruskal-Wallis test ($H(4) = 1.32$, $p = 0.858$). Overall, the findings suggest that the relationships between the curriculum frameworks and PAI learning quality were more prominent than differences attributable to the participating PTKI.

3.2. Discussion

3.2.1. Differences in the Implementation of the MBKM and OBE Curricula in Islamic Education

The results of the study show that the average implementation score for OBE with Mean = 4.10 is slightly higher than that for MBKM with Mean = 4.07, although the difference between these results is not significant ($t(19) = -0.57$, $p = 0.575$). This difference is also worth discussing because MBKM and OBE have different learning focuses. The MBKM curriculum places greater emphasis on flexibility and learning experiences outside the classroom, whereas OBE itself places greater emphasis on the learning outcomes that students must achieve. This finding is also consistent with the study by Manggali, Hayati, and Mundofi, which states that OBE provides significant opportunities to enhance the relevance of the Islamic Education curriculum

through the development of clear and measurable learning outcomes [30]. Meanwhile, Khotimah and Susanti also found that OBE provides a more systematic framework for managing learning in Indonesian universities [6].

The absence of a significant difference between the two curricula, and among the five institutions, suggests that students at these PTKI experience MBKM and OBE at a comparably high level rather than one curriculum dominating the other. This supports reading the two as complementary rather than competing frameworks. Both curricula were also significantly related to the quality of PAI learning, with a very strong correlation for MBKM ($r = 0.840$) and a strong correlation for OBE ($r = 0.667$). Because the MBKM and OBE scores were themselves strongly correlated ($r = 0.782$), these relationships should be read as associations within a shared learning environment rather than as separate causal effects of each curriculum.

In the MBKM curriculum subvariable, the highest score was obtained in subvariable A.3, Multidisciplinary Competence and Autonomy, with a mean score of 4.18. This indicates that MBKM has successfully fostered independence and interdisciplinary competence among PAI students. This finding is supported by research by Darmawan and Aliyyah, who examined students' views on the MBKM student exchange program and found that MBKM has a positive impact on the development of students' multidisciplinary competencies [29]. A study by Savitri, Santoso, and Nastiti involving 16,824 Indonesian college students also found that participation in the MBKM program can significantly increase students' engagement and job readiness [7]. Furthermore, research by Triana, Selfilia, and Praptiningsih also demonstrates that MBKM enhances both the hard skills and soft skills of students at the Faculty of Economics and Business at UPN Veteran Jakarta [31].

In the OBE subvariable, the highest score was obtained in subvariable B.2 Constructive Alignment, with a "very high" category with Mean = 4.24. This indicates that students perceive a strong alignment between learning objectives, teaching methods, and the assessments used by instructors. This finding aligns with the research by Romlah et al. at Raden Intan State Islamic University Lampung, which concluded that constructive alignment is the key to the successful implementation of OBE in Islamic higher education institutions. [14]. Research by Rahmawati and Wahyuni at Darul 'Ulum Islamic University also found that OBE provides a strong foundation for developing a high-quality Islamic Education curriculum, particularly in aligning graduate profiles with learning outcomes [32]. Research by Erihadiana and Syaripudin further expands on these findings through the Faith-Based Outcome-Based Education framework, which adds a spiritual dimension to the alignment of OBE [4].

In addition, a unique finding was the highest score among all instruments on the indicator of technology use in learning, namely B.3.3, with a mean score of 4.55. This indicates a very high level of technology use among PAI students in Yogyakarta. This finding is supported by Phung et al., who found that the integration of technology in OBE increased the graduation rate from 60% to 80% in Vietnam [19]. Rokhimawan's research underscores the importance of utilizing ICT in the Merdeka Curriculum for Islamic Education that is relevant to the digital age [33].

3.2.2. Advantages and Disadvantages of Implementing the MBKM and OBE Curricula

Based on the analysis, the main strengths of MBKM in improving the quality of learning for Islamic Education students lie in three aspects. First, MBKM successfully developed students' multidisciplinary competencies and independence, with a mean score of 4.18, particularly in the area of soft skills development, which had a mean score of 4.30. Second, MBKM is able to integrate Islamic values into the implementation of the program with a Mean score of 4.11, particularly in the indicator of integrating Islamic values into the MBKM design with Mean=4.35. Third, MBKM provides space for students to engage in contextual learning based on real-world experiences in the field with a Mean score of 4.10. These findings align with research by Suyadi et al., who found that MBKM at Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTKI) successfully integrates Islamic concepts such as riswah, ghulul, and mukabarah-ghasab into educational practices. Research by Adrevi and Safitri also found that MBKM can significantly enhance students' employability through direct field experiences [18].

Meanwhile, the main strengths of OBE also lie in three aspects. First, OBE demonstrates a very high level of constructive alignment, with a mean score of 4.24, and the indicator of alignment between instructional materials and CPL reaching a mean of 4.35. Second, OBE also successfully promotes the use of technology in PAI instruction, with a mean score of 4.55. Third, OBE also provides a robust multidimensional assessment framework with a Mean score of 4.08, covering the cognitive, affective, psychomotor, and spiritual domains. Research by Manggali et al. also found that OBE offers opportunities to enhance the relevance of the PAI curriculum and the quality of graduates through the development of clear learning outcomes [30]. These findings are also supported by research conducted by Zakwan et al. at Universiti Teknologi MARA in Malaysia, which shows an improvement in Course Outcomes and Programme Outcomes in OBE-based programs [20].

The shortcomings of MBKM identified in this study lie in two main areas. First, the implementation of the flexible learning right allowing students to spend three semesters outside their major remains suboptimal, with a mean score of 3.75. Second, participation in thematic community service programs or community

engagement remains very low, with a mean score of 3.75. These findings are also consistent with research by Arifin and Muslim as well as Heriyadi, which indicates that the main challenges in implementing MBKM at Indonesian Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTKI) are limited networks with external partners and the complexity of managing semester credits across study programs [6], [34]. Research by Susiyawati also highlights that limited administrative support is a major obstacle to the operational implementation of MBKM [35]. Research by Fajri, Ningsih, Raharja, and Legiani in their study on the effectiveness of the MBKM student exchange program also identified similar challenges, namely limited access to and awareness of the MBKM program [36].

The shortcomings of OBE identified by the researchers also lie in two areas. First, the clarity and measurability of PLO communication by instructors still need improvement, as indicated by a mean score of 3.85. Second, students have not yet fully experienced continuous improvement in teaching methods and materials, as indicated by a relatively low mean score of 3.85. These findings are consistent with the research by Manggali et al., which identified challenges in OBE in Islamic Education, such as difficulties in formulating measurable learning outcomes and a slow paradigm shift [30]. Research by Mufanti, Carter, and England also found that faculty understanding of and support for OBE in Indonesia remains uneven overall, which can hinder the effective communication of PLOs to students [10]. Research by Wisassakwichai et al. in their study in Thailand also found that developing faculty competencies in OBE requires ongoing training and strong institutional support [11].

3.2.3. Utilization of Research Findings to Improve the Quality of Higher Education in Islamic Education

Based on the comparative analysis discussed earlier, it can be concluded that MBKM and OBE have complementary strengths in improving the quality of Islamic Education (PAI) learning at Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTKI). The MBKM curriculum excels in the areas of field experience, flexibility, and the development of students' multidisciplinary competencies. Meanwhile, OBE excels in the areas of measurable learning outcomes, technology integration, and multidimensional assessment. Integration of these two curricula is highly feasible and, in fact, mutually reinforcing. This finding is also consistent with the integrative model developed by Rokhimawan, Ichsan, Aulia, and Rifai in their research, which states that the combination of a differentiation approach (MBKM) and an interdisciplinary approach (OBE) results in better educational quality at Islamic higher education institutions [16]. Previous research by Rokhimawan et al. also demonstrated that PAI students' understanding of MBKM at 15 PTKIs is positively correlated with the fulfillment of their right to education [16]. The results of this study indicate that the quality of learning for Islamic Education students at five Islamic higher education institutions in Yogyakarta is already in the high category, with a mean score of 4.17. The area showing the greatest improvement is the preparation of prospective Islamic Education graduates, which falls into the very high category with a mean score of 4.25. Students feel very well prepared to become PAI graduates with Islamic character and professional competence. This emphasis on Islamic character alongside professional competence is in line with the Jabalul Hikmah curriculum as a transdisciplinary model at four major state Islamic universities in Indonesia [5].

Several practical recommendations for improving the quality of Islamic Education higher education institutions can be derived from the results of this study. First, Islamic Education higher education institutions need to strengthen the promotion and implementation of the right to study for three semesters outside one's major by developing technical guidelines that are easily understood by students and faculty. Second, partnerships with industry, schools, Islamic boarding schools, and social institutions should be expanded to support thematic Community Service Programs (KKN) and MBKM internships. Research by Gusnita underscores the importance of a strong network of external partners for the success of MBKM programs at PAI institutions [1]. Third, training for faculty members on the formulation and communication of PLOs and CLOs needs to be intensified, as emphasized by Romlah et al., who note that faculty members' understanding of PLOs and CLOs is a critical factor in the success of OBE [14]. Fourth, mechanisms for Continuous Quality Improvement should be made more tangible for students, for example through open dialogue forums on curriculum revisions and the regular publication of tracer study results. Fifth, an academic environment that supports quality learning needs to be strengthened through comprehensive institutional policies. Research by Erihadiana and Syaripudin also notes that the FB-OBE framework can serve as an integrative model that ensures the preservation of the Islamic identity of Islamic higher education institutions amid current global demands [4].

Theoretically, this study contributes to enriching the literature on the integration of MBKM and OBE in Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTKI), which remains very limited. As emphasized in studies conducted by Salabi and Muharramah as well as Sobri et al., comparative analyses of these two curricula within the PTKI context are still very rare; thus, this study can fill an important gap in the literature. Practically, the results of this study can serve as a reference for PTKI administrators in formulating policies for curriculum development that are adaptive to global changes while maintaining their Islamic characteristics, as recommended in the research conducted by Salim et al. [21]. Ultimately, effective integration between MBKM and OBE will produce Islamic Education graduates who are not only academically intelligent but also possess Islamic character and are ready

to compete in society a goal that aligns with the findings of the research by Sari, Rosmiati, and Mayasari on higher education institutions that are adaptable to the era of disruption and Society 5.0 [37].

4. CONCLUSION

This study has successfully answered the three main questions posed in the introduction: how the implementation of the MBKM and OBE curricula differs in improving the quality of learning for Islamic Education students at Islamic universities, what the strengths and weaknesses of implementing both curricula are, and how the results of this comparison can be utilized to improve the quality of higher education in Indonesia. Based on the results of a study of 20 students in the PAI program at five Islamic Higher Education Institutions in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, the following key conclusions can be drawn.

First, regarding the differences in the implementation of MBKM and OBE in improving the quality of learning for Islamic Education students, it was found that the two curricula have different yet complementary approaches. The implementation of MBKM provides flexibility and hands-on learning experiences, with a primary focus on developing multidisciplinary competencies and student independence. Conversely, the implementation of OBE emphasizes the measurability of learning outcomes through constructive alignment and the use of technology in the learning process. This difference in focus positions MBKM as an approach that encourages exploration and independence, while OBE is an approach that can ensure the achievement of competencies that can be measured systematically.

Second, regarding the strengths and weaknesses of each curriculum, the research findings indicate that there are three main strengths of MBKM: the development of soft skills and independent learning, the integration of Islamic values into the program, and learning experiences relevant to the workplace. The three main strengths of OBE are high constructive alignment, extensive use of technology, and a multidimensional assessment framework that can cover the cognitive, affective, psychomotor, and spiritual domains. As for the shortcomings of MBKM, they were identified as the failure to optimally implement the right to flexible learning for 3 semesters in the community and participation in thematic community service programs (KKN), while the shortcomings of OBE lie in the uneven ability of lecturers to convey PLOs easily and clearly and the lack of a sense of continuous improvement mechanisms among students.

Third, regarding the utilization of research findings to improve the quality of Islamic Education (PAI) higher education institutions in Indonesia, it can be concluded that the integration of MBKM and OBE is an appropriate model to be implemented in Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTKI). The quality of learning in PAI at five PTKIs in Yogyakarta is already in the high category, with the preparation of prospective PAI graduates falling into the very high category. Students also feel prepared to become PAI graduates with Islamic character, professional competence, and readiness to compete in society. This suggests that combining the MBKM differentiation approach with the OBE interdisciplinary approach is associated with better educational quality in Islamic higher education institutions, as both curricula showed significant positive correlations with the quality of PAI learning.

Based on these findings, this study offers three practical implications for curriculum development at Islamic Religious Higher Education Institutions. First, these institutions need to strengthen the implementation of MBKM by developing clearer technical guidelines, particularly regarding the three-semester community-based learning requirement and thematic Community Service Programs (KKN). Second, training for lecturers on the formulation and delivery of Program Learning Outcomes and Course Learning Outcomes needs to be intensified to ensure more effective implementation of OBE. Third, partnerships with industry, schools, Islamic boarding schools, and social institutions should be expanded to support the successful implementation of MBKM and OBE within Islamic higher education institutions.

This study also has limitations that warrant attention. First, the sample size is limited to 20 students from five Islamic higher education institutions in the Special Region of Yogyakarta; therefore, the results must be interpreted with caution. Second, this study focuses solely on the students' perspectives and does not involve faculty members and program administrators in depth through questionnaires. Third, several institutions were represented by only two to four respondents, so the between-institution comparison is exploratory and has limited statistical power to detect differences.

Further research is expected to broaden the scope of this study in several ways. First, by increasing the number of student, faculty, and administrative respondents across all Islamic higher education institutions in Indonesia to obtain a more comprehensive picture. Second, by employing a quantitative approach using Structural Equation Modeling to test the causal relationship between the implementation of MBKM, OBE, and the quality of learning among Islamic Education students. Third, conducting a longitudinal study to observe the long-term impact of MBKM and OBE implementation on the quality of PAI graduates, including their integration into society and their social and religious contributions to the community. Fourth, developing an integrative model of MBKM and OBE that can serve as a policy reference for PTKI administrators in designing curricula that are adaptive to change without losing the authenticity of Islamic knowledge.

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