

Transformative Education Management Model for Strengthening Academic Competence in Islamic Higher Education

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ABSTRACT. Despite growing attention to transformative education in higher education, there is limited empirical evidence on how to systematically integrate it into program design to strengthen students' academic competence in Islamic higher education institutions. This study develops and validates a transformative education-based program design for the Islamic Religious Education Study Program at Universitas Islam Negeri K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan. Employing a Research and Development approach based on the ADDIE model, the study collected data through interviews, questionnaires, observations, document analysis, and focus group discussions, and conducted expert validation with lecturers, students, curriculum specialists, and institutional stakeholders. The findings demonstrate that a systematic and transformative program design significantly enhances students' academic competence by improving curriculum coherence, learning quality, student engagement, and attainment of competencies. Among the examined components, integrative program design emerged as the most influential factor in fostering cognitive, affective, and psychomotor learning outcomes. The development process produced validated program design documents, learning modules, lesson plans, and evaluation guidelines that achieved high feasibility and usability ratings from experts and practitioners. Pilot implementation across selected courses further confirmed the effectiveness of the developed model in promoting meaningful learning experiences and strengthening academic competencies. This study contributes a validated transformative education framework that integrates Islamic values with outcome-based learning principles, extending the discourse on curriculum innovation and offering a scalable model for curriculum reform and sustainable academic development in Islamic higher education.

Keywords: *Academic Competence; Education Management Model, Islamic Higher Education; Transformative Education*

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INTRODUCTION

Rapid changes in the global workforce, digital transformation, and growing social complexity have increased pressure on higher education institutions to produce graduates who possess not only disciplinary knowledge but also critical thinking, adaptability, reflective awareness, and problem-solving skills (Kaputa et al., 2022; Shaznay, 2025; Oben & Hui, 2025). In response to these challenges, transformative education has emerged as an important paradigm in higher education, emphasizing critical reflection, the reconstruction of meaning, and the application of knowledge in real-life contexts (Sherman, 2021; De Witt et al., 2024). Recent studies demonstrate that transformative learning becomes more effective when curriculum structures, learning experiences, and institutional systems are intentionally designed to encourage dialogue, reflection, and concrete

student action (Lamb & Carvalho, 2024; Nicolaides et al., 2022; Sugito, 2024). Consequently, universities are increasingly required to move beyond conventional pedagogy toward systematic educational program design that can strengthen students' academic competence in sustainable ways.

The success of transformative education is closely related not only to pedagogical practice but also to organizational and managerial support. Previous studies highlight that curriculum development, academic leadership, institutional coordination, and continuous evaluation are critical factors in sustaining educational transformation (Trevisan et al., 2024). In addition, the integration of digital learning environments has reshaped the role of lecturers, moving them from knowledge transmitters to designers of transformative learning experiences supported by technology and data-driven curriculum planning (Bitar & Davidovich, 2024; Solera et al., 2025). Research further indicates that students' cognitive and affective competencies improve when reflective curriculum design, collaborative learning environments, and emotional engagement are systematically managed within institutional frameworks (Grund et al., 2024). These findings suggest that transformative learning should be understood not merely as a classroom strategy but as a comprehensive program-design process embedded within higher-education management systems.

Within the context of Islamic higher education, transformative education takes on broader dimensions, integrating intellectual development with spiritual, ethical, and social transformation. Islamic education emphasizes reflection, *tazkiyah* (self-purification), moral responsibility, and meaningful social contribution as integral parts of the learning process (Purnamasari et al., 2023). However, despite the growing discourse on transformative Islamic education, many Islamic higher education institutions have yet to develop systematic management models that integrate transformative learning principles into curriculum design, lecturer development, academic evaluation, and institutional governance (Fadhliyah & Najihatul, 2023; Qomar & Mujamil, 2022). As a result, transformative practices in Islamic education often remain fragmented at the pedagogical level and are rarely operationalized through comprehensive program design and institutional management systems.

Although previous studies have extensively discussed transformative learning, most research remains concentrated on teaching methods, sustainability education, or digital learning innovation (Akhyar et al., 2021). Empirical investigations examining program design, development, and management as organizational variables that influence students' academic competence remain limited, particularly within Islamic Religious Education study programs in Indonesia (Trevisan et al., 2024). Furthermore, there is insufficient evidence regarding how transformative education is operationalized through curriculum documents, learning modules, lecturer training, monitoring systems, and academic evaluation in Islamic higher education contexts. This gap indicates the need for a more integrative framework that connects transformative pedagogy, institutional management, and competency development within Islamic education environments.

This study addresses the gap by developing and empirically testing a transformative education model that shifts the focus from pedagogy toward program design and institutional management. Unlike previous studies that primarily emphasize classroom learning strategies, this research conceptualizes transformative education as a systematic design framework integrating transformative learning principles, organizational development, and quality management within the Islamic Religious Education Study Program at Universitas Islam Negeri K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan. The study contributes theoretically by extending transformative learning discourse into the domain of Islamic higher education program design, while practically offering a contextual model for strengthening curriculum management, lecturer development, and competency-based academic quality improvement.

Therefore, this research focuses on the analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation of a transformative education model to strengthen students' academic competence in the Islamic Religious Education Study Program. The study aims to produce a contextual and applicable

program design model that integrates transformative learning principles with Islamic educational values and institutional management practices. In operational terms, this research tests the hypothesis that transformative education-based program design management has a significant effect on improving students' academic competence in Islamic higher education.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a Research and Development (R&D) approach, using the ADDIE instructional design model, to develop, validate, implement, and evaluate a transformative, education-based program design for the Islamic Religious Education Study Program at Universitas Islam Negeri K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan, Indonesia. The ADDIE framework—Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation—was selected because it provides a systematic and iterative process that enables continuous refinement of educational innovations while integrating curriculum management, transformative learning, and Islamic educational values. Compared with the models of Gall et al. (1996) and Dick et al. (2001), the ADDIE model offers greater flexibility for higher education curriculum development and institutional innovation.

Research Setting and Participants

The research was conducted over two consecutive academic semesters in the Islamic Religious Education Study Program. Participants consisted of undergraduate students, lecturers teaching core courses, study program administrators, and curriculum experts. Student participants ($n = 246$) were selected using purposive stratified random sampling based on semester level to ensure proportional representation across academic stages. Lecturers, administrators, and experts were purposively recruited based on their involvement in curriculum development and academic governance. Inclusion criteria required participants to have direct experience with curriculum implementation, while experts were required to possess recognized expertise in curriculum development or transformative education.

Development Procedure

The development process followed the five ADDIE stages:

1. *Analysis.* A comprehensive needs assessment was conducted through curriculum document analysis, interviews, observations, stakeholder surveys, and SWOT analysis to identify institutional needs and curriculum gaps.
2. *Design.* The findings were translated into a prototype consisting of curriculum mapping, graduate learning outcomes, transformative learning strategies, reflective learning activities, project-based assessments, and the integration of Islamic values.
3. *Development.* Curriculum documents, Semester Learning Plans, instructional modules, assessment instruments, and digital learning media were developed and iteratively revised through expert validation.
4. *Implementation.* The prototype was piloted over one academic semester to evaluate its practicality, usability, and participants' responses.
5. *Evaluation.* Formative and summative evaluations assessed implementation quality, institutional feasibility, and improvements in students' academic competence, with findings informing final revisions.

Data Collection and Instruments

Data were collected using semi-structured interviews, structured questionnaires, classroom observations, document analysis, and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). The questionnaire measured two principal constructs: transformative education-based program design and students' academic competence, using a five-point Likert scale. Interview and observation protocols explored

curriculum implementation, learning experiences, institutional support, and transformative educational practices.

Instrument Validity and Reliability

Instrument content validity was established through expert judgment involving specialists in curriculum studies, educational management, and Islamic higher education. The resulting Aiken's V coefficients ranged from 0.82 to 0.91, indicating strong content validity. Internal consistency was examined using Cronbach's Alpha, yielding coefficients of 0.88 for the transformative education design instrument and 0.90 for the academic competence instrument. A pilot study conducted before the main implementation confirmed item clarity and response consistency.

Data Analysis

A convergent mixed-methods strategy was employed to integrate quantitative and qualitative findings. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, independent-samples t-tests, F-tests, and simple linear regression after testing assumptions of normality, homogeneity, linearity, and multicollinearity. Effect sizes were also calculated to determine the magnitude of observed differences. Qualitative data from interviews, observations, FGDs, and documents were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles et al. (2014), comprising data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Coding was conducted iteratively through open coding, categorization, theme development, and cross-case comparison. Credibility was enhanced through data source triangulation, methodological triangulation, member checking, peer debriefing, and audit trail documentation.

Research Ethics

Ethical approval was obtained from the institutional research ethics committee of Universitas Islam Negeri K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan prior to data collection. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants. Participation was voluntary, anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed, and all procedures complied with internationally accepted ethical standards for educational research involving human participants.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Analysis Stages

The results of the analysis stage indicate that the development of transformative education-based learning design focuses on students' academic competencies, including cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects, as well as the need for critical, reflective, collaborative, applicable, and integrated learning that integrates Islamic values with modern science. The analysis also found a gap between actual achievements and expected competency standards. This was conveyed by the head of the study program (AT); "... transformative education-based learning design is an important need in the development of the curriculum of the Islamic Religious Education Study Program at UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan, because transformative education is relevant to answering the challenges of the times, not only emphasizing the transfer of knowledge, but also forming critical awareness, Islamic values, and 21st-century skills". Meanwhile, (AT) also stated, "... with this approach, Islamic Religious Education students are expected to not only become teachers who master theory, but also agents of social change who are able to present solutions in society". According to Wahid Pekalongan, an education expert (SK), the Head of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Pekalongan Regency, he stated, "...transformative education in Islamic higher education institutions is important for developing students who understand Islamic teachings and are able to apply them in real life ". He also stated, "...the curriculum must be student-centered, relevant to needs, integrate Islamic values with modern science, and utilize technology to enrich the learning process, as this design encourages critical, creative, and problem-solving thinking."

A first-semester student (KP): "...I see that the application of Islamic values still tends to be theoretical and lacks concrete examples. I want learning to be more contextual, varied (not just lectures), and wisely integrated with technology." Another source (MA): "...I like project-based learning, case studies, and discussions, which internalize Islamic character in academic and social practices...". A third-semester student (RD): "...has a high level of learning independence, with a habit of reading additional literature and utilizing online learning resources." He also added, "...I hope the OBE curriculum can develop soft skills, adaptability, innovation, and involvement in real-life projects that impact society." A 5th-semester student (KJ) stated, "...I have been accustomed to writing scientific papers since the first semester. I feel there has been progress in my ability to write systematically, although I still need guidance on organizing ideas and using citations." The findings indicate the need to strengthen academic literacy and to provide mentoring from lecturers in scientific writing. Students are also active in discussions and presentations to develop understanding and insight, reflecting metacognitive awareness in transformative learning. Another source (IK) also stated, "... learning should not only be theoretical, but also connected to real-world practices, such as the application of Islamic law in buying and selling, and the hope of more field practice to make learning more relevant to everyday life."

A 7th-semester student (FF) expressed the opinion, "... learning should be able to develop soft skills, innovation, and student involvement in real-world projects... for example, during the Community Service Program". He also linked theory to direct practice and emphasized the importance of Islamic values in learning, which shape students' morals and character. Field experience through the Community Service Program is a crucial opportunity to connect theory with practice. He also stated, "... the classroom management in the Learning Strategies course and the da'wah theory studied were very relevant and applicable during the Community Service Program." However, he recognized the need for adaptation, as not all theories align with realities on the ground. This reinforces the importance of a contextual approach to learning, as emphasized in the design of experience-based transformative education. (MJ) "... I want the transformative Islamic Religious Education Study Program to be not only theory-oriented, but also applicable in real life through practices such as Practice Practice, community service, and environmental da'wah." He hopes it will be flexible, interdisciplinary, and foster reflective thinking, leadership, and problem-solving skills in line with global demands.

Interview results indicate that transformative OBE-based education is crucial for developing competent, adaptive, and Islamic-characterized graduates in Islamic Religious Education. The findings also indicate that learning remains conventional and does not optimally encourage critical thinking, reflection, and the use of technology and innovative methods. Observation results indicate that learning remains conventional and less supportive of critical and reflective thinking. Although supported by competent lecturers and an Islamic-based curriculum, the use of technology and innovative methods is still limited. Therefore, transformative learning designs are needed to develop adaptive, critical, creative, and Islamic-oriented student competencies. explained in Table 1 below:

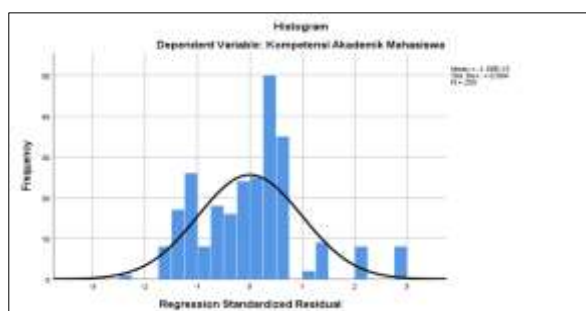
Table 1: Pre-Post Comparison of Students' Academic Competence and Transformative Learning Implementation

Indicator	Before	After
Active participation in classroom discussion	54%	83%
Critical thinking ability	49%	80%
Scientific writing competence	52%	78%
Collaborative learning engagement	58%	88%
Integration of Islamic values in learning activities	63%	90%
Use of digital learning media and AI	40%	79%
Reflective learning practices	46%	84%
Project-based learning involvement	44%	86%
Student creativity and innovation	50%	81%
Social and community-based learning participation	47%	82%

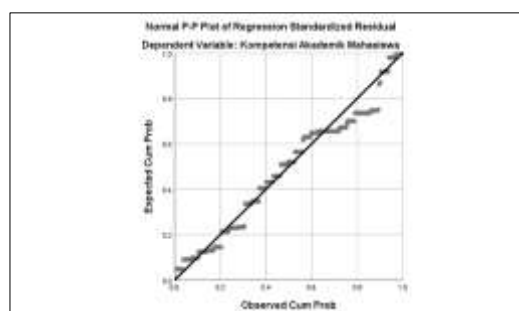
Source: Researcher's Observation and Learning Evaluation Data (2025)

In Table 1, the pre-post comparison showed significant improvements in students' academic competence and transformative learning engagement following the implementation of the transformative education-based OBE model. Before implementation, learning remained teacher-centered, with limited critical discussion and minimal use of digital media. After implementation, major increases appeared in collaborative learning engagement (58%-88%), project-based learning involvement (44%-86%), reflective learning practices (46%-84%), and the integration of Islamic values into learning activities (63%-90%).

The results of the questionnaire showed that the prerequisite test of the regression model met the classical assumptions, including normality, multicollinearity, heteroscedasticity, and linearity, so that the model was suitable for use.



Source: Processed primary data, 2025



Source: Processed primary data, 2025

Figure 2. Normality Test (Histogram Diagram)

Figure 3. Normality Test (Scatter Plot Graph)

The histogram shows that the regression residuals are normally distributed, thus meeting the assumption of normality. The P-P plot shows that the residuals follow a straight line, indicating normality.

Table 2: t-test

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Collinearity Statistics		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
(Constants)	7.314	1.124		6.508	.000	—	—
Design	.867	.122	.710	6.289	.000	.776	1.158
SWOT Analysis	.582	.089	.364	2.893	.004	.861	1.338
Transformative Education	.840	.104	.524	4.629	.000	.786	1.220

a. Dependent Variable: Student academic competence (Y)

Source: Processed primary data, 2025

Table 3. ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	7512.996		2504.332	259.952	.000 ^b
Residual	2418.086	51	9.634		
Total	9931.082	54			

a. Dependent Variable: Student academic competence (Y)

b. Predictors: (Constant), Transformative Education, Design, SWOT Analysis

Source: Processed primary data, 2025

The t-test showed that the Design, SWOT Analysis, and Transformative Education variables had a positive and significant effect on Student Academic Competence ($p < 0.05$). Furthermore, the F-test yielded a p-value of $0.000 < 0.05$, indicating that all independent variables had a significant effect on students' academic competence.

Table 4. Regression Measurement Results

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		

1	(Constant)	7.314	1.124		6.508	.000
	Design	.867	.122	.710	6.289	.000
	SWOT Analysis	.582	.089	.364	2.893	.004
	Transformative Education	.840	.104	.524	4.629	.000

Source: Processed primary data, 2025

The regression results show that Design (X_1), SWOT Analysis (X_2), and Transformative Education (X_3) have a positive and significant effect on Student Academic Competence (Y), with the Design variable having the most dominant influence ($\beta = 0.710$; Sig. 0.000). Thus, the multiple regression analysis produces the equation $Y = 7.314 + 0.867X_1 + 0.582X_2 + 0.840X_3$.

Table 5: Coefficient of Determination

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R-Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.870 ^a	.757	.754	3.10384

Source: Processed primary data, 2025

The results of the analysis are in Table 2. In the Model Summary, the R value of 0.870 indicates a very strong relationship between the Design variables (X_1), SWOT Analysis (X_2), and Transformative Education (X_3) and Student Academic Competence (Y). The R Square value of 0.757 indicates that the three independent variables explain 75.7% of the variation in Student Academic Competence, while factors outside the study influence 24.3%. The Adjusted R-Square value of 0.754 indicates that the model has strong explanatory power, with a relatively low prediction error rate of 3.10384.

Design Stages

The transformative, education-based design aims to enhance students' academic competence through a reflective, critical, and collaborative approach grounded in Islamic values. Learning is directed toward developing students' Islamic character and noble morals, and toward equipping them to become agents of change by integrating Islamic knowledge, modern science, and transformative values, in accordance with the principles of Outcome-Based Education (OBE). Material is developed reflectively and contextually, integrating Islamic values such as honesty, trustworthiness, justice, patience, sincerity, and collaboration. The learning model used is reflective, collaborative, and contextual, using Project-Based Learning (PjBL), Project-Based Learning (PBL), case studies, and service learning, supported by digitally based blended learning. Evaluation is conducted in a transformative manner through projects, scientific papers, innovation, community service, and the assessment of students' reflective attitudes and responsibilities. This design resulted in a blueprint for transformative learning based on OBE, oriented towards improving students' academic competence and Islamic character in the Islamic Education Study Program at Universitas Islam Negeri K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan.

Development Stages

The result is a learning tool ready for implementation to improve students' academic competence and Islamic character in the Islamic Education Study Program at Universitas Islam Negeri K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan.

Table 6. Summary of Expert Validation Results for Learning Tools

Evaluated Component	Validation Aspects	Average Score (1–5)	Category
Transformative Education-Based Design Document with OBE	Alignment with vision and mission, clarity of learning outcomes, transformative integration, and implementation feasibility	4.6	Highly Feasible
OBE Curriculum Learning Module Based on Transformative Education	Material relevance, alignment with learning outcomes, active learning strategies, and technology integration	4.4	Highly Feasible

Semester Learning Plan Based on Transformative Education with OBE	Clarity of course learning outcomes, suitability of methods with OBE, evaluation variety, and reinforcement of Islamic values	4.3	Highly Feasible
Evaluation Guidebook Based on Transformative Education with OBE	Completeness of instruments, success indicators, assessment techniques, and practicality of use	4.5	Highly Feasible

Source: Researcher's Data Processing, 2025

Table 6 shows that overall, the 4 devices, namely the design document, module, Semester Learning Plan, and evaluation guidebook, have an average score of 4.45 (very suitable). This indicates that the expert validation results of the developed device are "very good" and suitable for use in the trial phase (implementation). Figure 4 shows the graph of the device expert validation results below.



Figure 4. Graph of Tool Expert Validation Results

The development stage resulted in a transformative learning tool based on Outcome-Based Education (OBE) that was ready for implementation, including study program design documents, learning modules, lesson plans, and evaluation guides. All products were validated and declared highly suitable for improving the academic competency of Islamic Religious Education students at Universitas Islam Negeri K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan.

Implementation Stages

The implementation of transformative education-based Outcome-Based Education (OBE) across the five observed courses demonstrated achievement levels ranging from Good to Very Good. A comparison of implementation results is outlined in Table 3 below.

Table 7. Comparison of Learning Implementation Results

Course Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Description
Dirasat Islamiyah	4	3	2	2	4	3	4	4	3	1. Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)
Educational Management	4	3	3	4	4	3	4	4	3	Formulation
Religious Moderation	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	3	4	2. Methods & Models
Pancasila	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3. Media Usage
Educational Technology	4	4	3	4	3	4	4	3	4	4. Student Activities
										5. Integration of Islamic Values
										6. Assessment & Feedback
										7. Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)
										Achievement
										8. Reflection & Improvement
										9. Learning Outcomes

Source: Researcher's Data Processing, 2025. Score Description: 1=very poor, 2=poor, 3=good, 4=very good. (Mahrishi et al., 2025; Parmigiani et al., 2024; Sortwell et al., 2024; Susanta & Edwin, 2025; Zheng et al., 2023).

Based on Table 7, Pancasila showed the highest implementation performance with very good scores across all indicators, followed by Religious Moderation and Educational Technology, particularly in project-based and collaborative learning activities. In contrast, Dirasat Islamiyah and Educational Management still showed limitations in their utilization of digital media and in their

transformative projects. Student engagement increased significantly across all courses, as evidenced by students' active participation in discussions, presentations, collaborative projects, and reflective learning activities, particularly in Religious Moderation, Pancasila, and Educational Technology. Furthermore, pre–post learning outcomes indicated improvements in students' critical thinking, communication, collaboration, creativity, and reflective attitudes, demonstrating that the implementation of transformative education-based OBE effectively strengthened academic competencies, practical skills, and transformative character integrated with Islamic values.

Evaluation Stages

The evaluation results indicate that all courses have implemented the principles of Outcome-Based Education (OBE) and effectively integrated Islamic values. The average achievement score was in the Good–Very Good (81–90%) range, with key strengths including the clarity of the Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) and Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs), the integration of Islamic values, and active student involvement in reflective and collaborative learning. However, several aspects still need improvement, such as optimizing interactive digital media, strengthening student-centered learning activities, and deepening student reflection. Overall, the implementation of the transformative educational design was deemed highly effective in improving the academic competencies and Islamic character of students in Islamic Education at Universitas Islam Negeri K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan.

Table 8. Score Data (Formative & Summative)

Course Name	Formative (1–4)	Summative (1–4)
Dirasat Islamiyah	3.5	3.0
Educational Management	3.0	3.2
Religious Moderation	4.0	4.0
Pancasila	4.0	4.0
Educational Technology	4.0	4.0

Source: Researcher's Data Processing, 2025

The implementation of OBE based on transformative education effectively improves students' academic competencies, practical skills, and character. Average scores from formative observations and summative projects, using a collaborative and reflective approach, yield the best results. A focus group discussion (FGD) on September 18, 2025, at the Faculty of Computer Science and Technology of Universitas Islam Negeri K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan emphasized the importance of improving critical thinking and the relevance of learning. However, it continues to need strategic innovation, technology training, and refinement of assessment instruments. It was recommended to develop digital modules and comprehensive rubrics, and to expand implementation to more courses.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that transformative learning grounded in Outcome-Based Education (OBE) significantly strengthens students' academic competence in Islamic higher education. Among the variables examined, instructional design emerged as the most influential factor on academic competence. This finding indicates that the core challenge in Islamic Education is not merely the implementation of curriculum standards but the reconstruction of pedagogical structures that integrate Islamic values, critical reflection, collaboration, and measurable competencies into coherent learning experiences. While previous studies emphasized institutional readiness, assessment alignment, and curriculum mapping as central determinants of successful OBE implementation (Al-Kahtani et al., 2025; Asim et al., 2021), the present study suggests that within Islamic higher education contexts, instructional design itself becomes the primary transformative mechanism because it mediates how values, competencies, and reflective practices are translated into classroom experiences.

The strong influence of the design variable reflects the persistence of teacher-centered and content-oriented approaches in Islamic higher education that limit reflective inquiry, higher-order thinking, and the integration of religious knowledge with contemporary realities. Therefore, the transformative OBE design developed in this study functions not only as a curriculum framework but also as a pedagogical reconstruction that positions students as active and reflective learners, supporting previous studies on the role of instructional design in promoting higher-order thinking and learner engagement in Islamic education (Mahrisi et al., 2025; Merzel, 2023; Sunra et al., 2024). The analysis also revealed students' difficulties with critical thinking, reflective learning, and the integration of Islamic values with modern scientific perspectives, indicating that OBE implementation in Islamic higher education cannot rely solely on secular competency frameworks without contextual adaptation. Existing OBE models often emphasize employability and measurable outcomes, whereas Islamic higher education also prioritizes moral formation, religious moderation, and spiritual responsibility, consistent with studies highlighting the gap between competency orientation and value internalization in Islamic education (Sortwell et al., 2024; Taimur & Onuki, 2022; Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019). Therefore, transformative OBE in Islamic higher education should be understood as a value-integrative educational paradigm connecting cognitive competence, ethical consciousness, and social responsibility.

The development and implementation stages also reveal important insights regarding the relationship between transformative pedagogy and institutional culture. The implementation of project-based learning, reflective learning activities, authentic assessment, and digital integration contributed positively to student engagement and collaborative learning. However, several challenges emerged, particularly related to student adaptation, time management, and technological readiness. These findings suggest that transformative OBE is highly dependent on contextual and institutional conditions. The model was more effective in courses where lecturers possessed sufficient pedagogical flexibility and technological competence, particularly in Educational Technology courses. Conversely, adaptation difficulties emerged in contexts where students remained accustomed to passive, lecturer-dominated learning traditions. Similar findings have been reported in studies that emphasize that the success of transformative, technology-integrated Islamic education depends significantly on lecturers' readiness, institutional support, and digital literacy (Mufanti et al., 2024; Tan et al., 2024; Zhuang et al., 2025).

These findings also indicate that transformative learning within Islamic higher education is not solely an instructional issue but also a cultural transformation process. Traditional academic cultures emphasizing memorization and authority-oriented learning may limit the development of reflective and dialogical learning environments. In this regard, the transformative OBE approach introduced in this study helps shift the orientation of Islamic higher education from knowledge transmission to knowledge transformation. This supports recent discussions on pedagogy and self-determined learning in Islamic education, which emphasize learner autonomy, critical reflection, and adaptive learning in digital environments (Colomer et al., 2020; Kia & Majesty, 2025; Mezirow, 1997). The findings, therefore, reinforce the argument that Islamic higher education requires pedagogical innovation that responds to contemporary educational challenges without neglecting Islamic ethical foundations.

The evaluation findings further demonstrate that the transformative OBE approach contributes not only to cognitive achievement but also to affective and collaborative competencies. The improvement in students' critical thinking, collaboration, moderation, and project skills suggests that transformative learning in Islamic higher education should be interpreted holistically rather than narrowly measured by academic scores alone. This finding is important because many OBE implementations in higher education tend to prioritize measurable cognitive indicators while neglecting moral and social dimensions. The present study, therefore, extends previous findings by Kandiko et al. (2023) and Katawazai (2021), showing that competency achievement in Islamic

higher education is closely linked to the reflective, ethical, and collaborative dimensions of learning (Kandiko et al., 2023; Katawazai, 2021).

Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of transformative learning theory in Islamic higher education by expanding Mezirow's perspective beyond individual critical reflection toward a moral-spiritual transformation rooted in Islamic ethics, moderation, collective responsibility, and spiritual consciousness. The findings propose a value-integrative transformative OBE framework that combines competency development with ethical and spiritual formation, thereby enriching contemporary discussions on the epistemological reconstruction of OBE in Islamic education (Varela-Losada et al., 2022; Trevisan et al., 2024; Zheng et al., 2023). In practice, Islamic higher education institutions need to implement transformative OBE by strengthening lecturers' pedagogical competencies, integrating Islamic values with contemporary issues, and supporting sustainable implementation through digital infrastructure, continuous training, and an adaptive academic culture (Merzel, 2023; Bustami & Corebima, 2017). This study was limited to a specific institutional context and selected courses, focusing mainly on short-term academic outcomes. Future research should examine transformative OBE implementation across different Islamic universities and explore its long-term impact on graduates' adaptability, ethical leadership, and contribution to society in broader contexts.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that integrating transformative education and Outcome-Based Education (OBE) in the Islamic Religious Education Study Program at Universitas Islam Negeri K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan not only strengthens students' academic competence but also promotes reflective, spiritual, and socially responsible learning. Conceptually, the study contributes to the development of transformative learning theory in Islamic higher education by integrating critical reflection, Islamic values, and outcome-oriented learning into a holistic educational framework. In practice, the findings provide a reference for developing curriculum design, learning strategies, and competency-based evaluation that are better aligned with 21st-century educational demands. However, implementing this model in other institutions requires supporting conditions, such as institutional readiness, lecturer competence, technological infrastructure, and a commitment to OBE-based learning. Future studies are recommended to examine the long-term impact of transformative education across different institutional and disciplinary contexts to strengthen its broader applicability in Islamic higher education.

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