

Bridging Expectations and Outcomes: A Discrepancy Model Evaluation of Learning Effectiveness in an Islamic Higher Education Context

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ABSTRACT

This study evaluates the effectiveness of the learning process from the perspective of students in the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) Study Program at STAIN Majene, addressing gaps between expectations and actual educational outcomes. A mixed-methods design was used, integrating quantitative data from structured questionnaires and qualitative insights from in-depth interviews. The Discrepancy Evaluation Model guided the analysis to identify inconsistencies between intended and experienced learning processes. Findings reveal significant disparities in four key areas: the relevance of course material, availability of learning resources, instructional methods, and quality of feedback. Students reported that course content often lacks practical application, resources are insufficient or outdated, teaching methods are predominantly traditional, and feedback lacks personalization. To bridge these gaps, the study recommends aligning the curriculum with industry and societal needs, enhancing digital learning resources, training lecturers in interactive and student-centered pedagogies, and providing more individualized feedback. Importantly, involving students in ongoing program evaluations is emphasized as a critical step toward responsive and effective educational reform. Continuous, collaborative improvements are essential to strengthen learning outcomes and graduate competencies. These findings not only inform internal program development at STAIN Majene but also offer valuable insights for similar Islamic education programs seeking to enhance their effectiveness.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Higher education plays a crucial role in shaping qualified and competitive human resources (Veronika et al., 2023). The learning process in higher education is the foundation for achieving educational goals (Manurung, 2012). Therefore, the effectiveness of learning has become a major concern for all stakeholders, including institutions, lecturers, and especially students (Muhammad et

al., 2011). As the primary recipients of the learning process, students hold a key position in evaluating the success of academic programs (Hasanuddin et al., 2024).

Program evaluation is a strategic step to ensure the quality and relevance of education. In this regard, the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) Study Program at STAIN Majene needs a systematic evaluation to identify its strengths and weaknesses. This study employs the Discrepancy Model, which is known for its capacity to compare expected standards with actual conditions, thus offering concrete and measurable recommendations for improvement (Kusuma, A. S., Ratnaya, I. G., & Candiasa, 2022).

Student perspectives are essential in evaluating learning effectiveness. Their direct involvement provides insights into teaching quality, curriculum relevance, learning materials, and facilities (Hanafi & Apriani, 2024). Feedback from students reflects their satisfaction, motivation, and engagement in learning, making it a valuable input for improving educational programs (Sholeh et al., 2023). By considering student perspectives, educational institutions can identify strengths and weaknesses in the learning process. This approach enables the adjustment of teaching strategies to better meet student needs and fosters a more inclusive, participatory, and quality-oriented learning environment that supports continuous educational improvement.

Learning effectiveness is not limited to academic outcomes or grades but includes non-cognitive achievements such as communication skills (Muktamar et al., 2024), collaboration abilities (Mushoffa, Z., & Nuryatmojo, 2024), and the internalization of moral and ethical values (Fauzi & Hasanah, 2024). In the context of Islamic education, these aspects are vital for developing students' character and integrity as future educators and professionals (Badaruddin, 2020). These non-cognitive outcomes align with the holistic goals of Islamic education, which emphasize personal development alongside intellectual growth. Fostering communication, collaboration, and moral awareness prepares students not only for academic success but also for responsible social roles, ethical leadership, and meaningful contributions to their communities and professions.

Learning effectiveness is defined as the degree to which a learning process successfully meets its objectives (Mahmudah, 2018). These objectives involve the enhancement of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values relevant to the field of study (Saputra, 2023; Usri & Salam, 2024). Students, as direct participants, are best positioned to assess how well these goals are achieved through their learning experiences (Pito, 2018). Their reflections provide authentic insights into the strengths and gaps within instructional methods, course content, and learning environments. By analyzing student experiences, educators can refine pedagogical approaches, align learning activities with intended outcomes, and ensure that educational practices genuinely support cognitive and character development in accordance with academic and professional standards.

In the PAI Study Program at STAIN Majene, effectiveness also involves students' ability to internalize Islamic values (Faisal, 2020), apply knowledge in real-life contexts (Yusniar, 2023), and contribute positively to society (Susanto, 2022). Furthermore, the program aims to produce graduates with pedagogical competence (Nashiroh et al., 2020; Usri et al., 2024), good personal character (Ali, 2022), and a high degree of professionalism (Akhmad, 2015).

A comprehensive evaluation must consider various dimensions, including learning design, infrastructure, teaching interactions, and student learning outcomes. Besides cognitive achievements, the evaluation should also consider students' satisfaction with the course content, instructional methods, assessment systems, and facilities (Hasanuddin, 2020). This holistic approach provides a broader picture of the strengths and areas for improvement (Caswanda et al., 2024; Sarosa, 2021).

Islamic Religious Higher Education Institutions (PTKIs), such as STAIN Majene, face unique challenges in delivering effective education. These institutions must not only produce graduates with strong competencies in Islamic studies but also uphold and disseminate moderate Islamic values. Therefore, evaluations in PTKIs must go beyond academic outcomes to assess how effectively these values are embedded in the curriculum, teaching methods, and assessment systems.

This study employs the Discrepancy Model to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the gaps between intended objectives and actual outcomes across key program components—namely,

curriculum design (syllabus, lesson plans), resource deployment (learning tools and materials), instructional processes (teaching methods and classroom engagement), and learning outputs (assignments, exams, and projects). The model accommodates both internal standards developed by STAIN Majene and external benchmarks from regulatory bodies (Kusuma et al., 2022), allowing for a nuanced and adaptable evaluation framework.

A significant research gap addressed by this study is the absence of holistic evaluations of Islamic Religious Education programs in PTKIs that incorporate student perspectives through the Discrepancy Model. Previous research has largely concentrated on content analysis or cognitive learning outcomes, often overlooking the experiential and satisfaction aspects that are vital to a well-rounded evaluation. This study addresses that gap by introducing a more participatory and integrative approach.

The findings are expected to offer both theoretical insights and practical value to the field of learning evaluation in Islamic higher education. Academic leaders, program administrators, and lecturers can leverage the results to develop evidence-based strategies for enhancing educational quality. Moreover, the outcomes may serve as a replicable model for other Islamic Religious Higher Education Institutions aiming to improve the relevance, inclusivity, and effectiveness of their academic programs.

By incorporating student feedback, this study offers a stakeholder-based evaluation of PAI programs, emphasizing the alignment between expected and actual learning practices.

2. METHODS

This study adopts a convergent mixed-methods design, where quantitative and qualitative data are collected simultaneously, analyzed separately, and integrated during interpretation (Creswell, 2012). This approach is suitable for providing a comprehensive understanding of learning effectiveness by combining statistical trends with in-depth personal insights.

The participants in this study include 50 students enrolled in the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) Study Program at STAIN Majene and 6 lecturers responsible for teaching within the program. A stratified purposive sampling technique was used to ensure diverse representation among students based on academic year and gender, and to select lecturers with various levels of teaching experience. The student sample consisted of 30 female and 20 male students from different year levels.

To prepare for data collection, a preliminary study was conducted through informal interviews with both students and lecturers to identify key concerns related to the effectiveness of the learning process. These findings, alongside insights from relevant literature, informed the development of research instruments, including a structured questionnaire and semi-structured interview guides. These instruments were reviewed by experts in educational evaluation and Islamic education to ensure validity and relevance. Pilot testing of the instruments was also conducted to verify their reliability.

Data were collected through multiple methods. The structured Likert-scale questionnaire was distributed to all 120 students to gather quantitative data on their perceptions regarding various dimensions of the learning process, such as curriculum relevance, teaching quality, facilities, assessments, and overall satisfaction (Mardapi, 2024). In-depth interviews were conducted with 12 selected students and 6 lecturers to explore their personal experiences and perceptions of the learning process. Observation sheets were used to monitor classroom activities, and document analysis was conducted on official learning materials, including syllabi, lesson plans, curriculum frameworks, and evaluation reports.

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics to summarize responses and test research hypotheses (Handayani, 2023). Qualitative data were analyzed through content analysis (Sitasari, 2022) to identify key themes and contextual insights. To ensure robust findings, a data integration process was implemented during the analysis phase, in which patterns from the quantitative data were compared and merged with themes from the qualitative data. This allowed

the identification of confirming, contradicting, or complementary evidence that enhanced the interpretation of results (Sofyan, 2024).

To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, several validation techniques were applied. Source and method triangulation (Rahardjo, 2010) ensured the consistency of information across data sources and methods. Detailed and contextual descriptions were provided to support the transferability of findings. An external audit by independent reviewers was used to assess the dependability of the research process, and confirmability was enhanced by peer debriefing and cross-checking the analysis with other researchers.

The combination of structured quantitative assessment and rich qualitative exploration allows this study to offer a holistic evaluation of the effectiveness of the PAI learning process at STAIN Majene. The findings are expected to provide practical, evidence-based recommendations for improving Islamic religious education in higher education contexts.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Findings

Before presenting the results of the evaluation, it is important to provide a brief description of the learning program in the PAI STAIN Majene Bachelor Study Program. This program aims to produce graduates who have pedagogic competence, good personality, and high professionalism as Islamic teachers or education personnel. The program curriculum is designed to integrate Islamic sciences with education, as well as develop practical skills needed in the world of work. The learning process is carried out through various methods, such as lectures, discussions, case studies, assignments, and field practice. Evaluation of student learning outcomes is carried out through various forms, such as written exams, oral exams, individual assignments, group assignments, and field practice reports.

The curriculum of the PAI STAIN Majene Bachelor Study Program is designed based on the Indonesian National Qualifications Framework (KKNI) and the National Higher Education Standards (SNPT). This curriculum consists of compulsory courses and elective courses that are grouped into several categories, namely: a) General Basic Courses (MKDU): This course aims to provide a foundation of basic knowledge and skills needed by all students, such as Indonesian, English, Pancasila Education, and Citizenship; b) Basic Islamic Course (MKDK): This course aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of Islamic teachings, including the Qur'an, Hadith, Faith, Morals, Fiqh, and History of Islamic Civilization; c) Science and Skills Course (MKK): This course aims to develop knowledge and skills relevant to the field of Islamic religious education, including Islamic Philosophy of Education, Islamic Educational Psychology, PAI Learning Methodology, PAI Learning Media, PAI Learning Evaluation, and PAI Curriculum Development; d) Work Skills Course (MKB): This course aims to develop practical skills needed in the world of work, such as Micro Teaching, Field Experience Practice (PPL), and Classroom Action Research (PTK); and e) Elective Courses: These courses provide students with the opportunity to deepen their knowledge and skills that match their interests and talents, such as Multicultural Education, Inclusive Education, and Information Technology in Education.

The PAI STAIN Majene Bachelor Study Program curriculum is designed to provide a comprehensive and balanced education that integrates Islamic studies with educational theory and practice. It aims to equip students with the necessary knowledge and skills to become effective educators in religious and general education. The curriculum's structure, which includes both compulsory and elective courses, ensures that students develop a strong foundation in Islamic teachings while also gaining practical teaching skills that are crucial for their professional development. The inclusion of work skills courses such as Micro Teaching, Field Practice (PPL), and Classroom Action Research (PTK) is designed to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world teaching experience, preparing graduates to effectively engage in classroom settings and contribute to the advancement of Islamic education. Furthermore, the elective courses offer students the flexibility to specialize in areas of interest, such as multicultural education and the integration of information

technology in education, thus fostering a more diverse and adaptable set of competencies that align with the evolving demands of the education sector.

The learning process in the PAI STAIN Majene Bachelor Study Program is carried out through various innovative and interactive learning approaches, methods, and strategies. Lecturers use various learning media, such as power point, videos, and e-learning, to increase students' interest and motivation to learn. In addition, lecturers also provide tasks that are challenging and relevant to the world of work, such as making lesson plans, developing learning media, and conducting classroom action research.

Evaluation of student learning outcomes is carried out comprehensively and continuously, including cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. Lecturers use a variety of assessment instruments, such as written exams, oral exams, individual assignments, group assignments, presentations, and field practice reports. Feedback is provided regularly to students to assist them in improving learning outcomes. This continuous and multifaceted evaluation approach ensures a more accurate measurement of student competencies across different domains. It also encourages active learning and self-reflection. Regular feedback not only helps students recognize their strengths and weaknesses but also motivates them to take responsibility for their academic and personal development.

3.1.1 Evaluation of learning design in the Bachelor of Islamic Religious Education study program STAIN Majene

The evaluation of the learning design in the Bachelor of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) Study Program at STAIN Majene was carried out through an in-depth analysis of the curriculum, syllabuses, and lesson plans (RPP), as well as interviews with the lecturers in charge of the course. The results of the documentation study showed that the curriculum of the PAI STAIN Majene learning program has been aligned with the national standards of higher education as well as the vision and mission of the institution. The course syllabus has also included learning outcomes, learning materials, learning methods, and relevant assessment systems. The course lesson plan also contains learning objectives, systematic learning steps, and comprehensive evaluation tools. In line with these findings, the results of interviews with lecturers show that the curriculum of the PAI STAIN Majene learning program is considered relevant to the needs of the job market and scientific development. Lecturers also argued that the syllabus and lesson plan of the course were very helpful in planning and carrying out learning effectively and efficiently. However, from the perspective of students, although the majority (80%) stated that the learning materials presented were relevant, there were a small number (20%) who felt that the learning materials were too theoretical and not applicable. In addition, some students expressed difficulties in understanding the relationship between one course and another, and expected a more integrated and structured curriculum of the PAI STAIN Majene learning program.

Table 1. Student and lecturer perspectives on the learning design

Aspect Evaluated	Student Response (n = 50)	Lecturer Response (n = 6)
Relevance of Learning Materials	40 students (80%): Considered materials relevant to the course goals.	All 6 lecturers (100%): Believe materials are aligned with standards and needs.
Theoretical vs. Practical Balance	10 students (20%): Felt the content was too theoretical and less applicable.	2 lecturers (33%): Noted room for more practical integration.
Curriculum Integration	15 students (30%): Reported difficulty in connecting content across courses.	3 lecturers (50%): Agreed curriculum integration could be strengthened.
Clarity of Syllabus and Lesson Plans	43 students (86%): Found syllabuses and lesson plans helpful and clear.	All 6 lecturers: Rely on them for structured delivery.
Expectations for Curriculum Improvement	19 students (38%): Suggested improvements for better structure and integration.	4 lecturers (67%): Supported updates to enhance curricular coherence.

The valuation of the learning design in the PAI Study Program at STAIN Majene reveals a generally positive alignment with academic standards and institutional goals, particularly from the lecturers' perspective. Most students (80%) acknowledged the relevance of learning materials to course objectives, which is strongly supported by all lecturers. Additionally, the majority of students (86%) found the syllabus and lesson plans clear and helpful in guiding their learning, consistent with the views of lecturers who use these tools to structure classroom instruction. These findings indicate that the fundamental structure and documentation of the curriculum are functioning effectively to support the delivery of Islamic Religious Education.

Despite these strengths, the data also highlight areas requiring significant improvement, especially from the student perspective. A noteworthy portion of students (20%) felt that the content was overly theoretical and lacked practical application, a concern echoed by one-third of the lecturers. Furthermore, 30% of students reported difficulty in connecting content across courses, suggesting insufficient curriculum integration. This is corroborated by 50% of the lecturers, who agreed that curricular coherence could be improved. The fact that 38% of students and 67% of lecturers called for updates to the curriculum underscores a shared recognition of the need for revision. These findings reinforce the importance of integrating more practical elements and enhancing the interconnection between courses to improve the overall effectiveness and relevance of the program.

3.1.2 Evaluation of learning resources and in the bachelor of Islamic Religious Education study program STAIN Majene

The evaluation of *the installation*, namely learning resources and tools in the Bachelor of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) Study Program STAIN Majene, was carried out through direct observation, interviews with lecturers and students, and documentation studies. The results of observations showed that the STAIN Majene library has a fairly complete collection of books and journals, although most of them are old publications. Computer laboratories have adequate facilities, but internet access is still limited. The classroom is considered quite comfortable, but it is not equipped with adequate multimedia facilities. In interviews with lecturers, it was revealed that the availability of adequate learning resources and tools is very important to support the learning process. Lecturers also admitted that they often use alternative learning resources and tools, such as the internet and social media, to overcome the limitations that exist at STAIN Majene. From the perspective of students, the majority stated that it was difficult to access the latest books and journals in the library, and needed faster and more stable internet access. The results of the questionnaire showed that only 60% of students were satisfied with the availability of learning resources, with the main complaints related to the lack of up-to-date reference books and access to online journals. In interviews, students expressed a desire to have more access to *e-learning* and other digital learning resources that can be accessed anytime and anywhere.

Table 2. Access to learning resources based on student and lecturer perspectives

Aspect Evaluated	Student Response (n = 50)	Lecturer Response (n = 6)
Satisfaction with Availability of Resources	30 students (60%): Satisfied with available learning resources.	4 lecturers (67%): Consider current resources adequate but in need of improvement.
Access to Up-to-date Books and Journals	Majority (70–80%): Found it difficult to access current books and online journals.	5 lecturers (83%): Acknowledge the need for more recent and relevant reference texts.
Internet Access	Most students: Expressed the need for faster, more stable internet for learning.	3 lecturers (50%): Agreed that internet infrastructure needs upgrading.
Access to Digital Learning Platforms	35 students (70%): Requested more e-learning and digital resources access.	4 lecturers (67%): Supported the integration of more digital learning tools.

The evaluation of learning resources and tools in the PAI Study Program at STAIN Majene highlights several infrastructure challenges that impact the quality of the learning experience. While the library and computer labs provide basic academic support, the availability of updated reference materials and stable internet access remains insufficient. Only 60% of students reported satisfaction with the current resources, and a significant majority expressed difficulty accessing up-to-date books and online journals. These limitations have prompted both students and lecturers to rely on alternative platforms, including internet-based sources and social media. Furthermore, most students emphasized the urgent need for faster and more reliable internet, along with greater access to digital learning platforms that can be utilized flexibly beyond campus boundaries.

Lecturer feedback reinforces the student perspective, with 83% acknowledging the lack of current academic materials and 67% expressing support for expanding digital learning resources. Half of the lecturers agreed that internet infrastructure needs to be improved to better support online learning. Despite considering the available facilities adequate to some extent, both groups recognize the importance of updating and expanding learning tools to enhance the educational process. These findings underscore the need for strategic investment in digital infrastructure, up-to-date academic materials, and the integration of e-learning platforms to create a more accessible, modern, and effective learning environment for PAI students at STAIN Majene.

3.1.3 Evaluation of the learning process in the bachelor of Islamic Religious Education study program STAIN Majene

Evaluation of the learning process in the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) Study Program was carried out through observation, interviews with lecturers and students, and documentation studies, focusing on lecturer-student interaction, learning methods, and classroom atmosphere. Observations showed quite good interaction, although it was dominated by one-way communication. The most commonly used methods were lectures, discussions, and assignments, while innovative methods were rarely applied. The classroom atmosphere is quite conducive, but it is less interactive. Lecturers tried to create an interactive atmosphere, but were constrained by time and the number of students. The majority of students felt comfortable and motivated, but expected lecturers to use innovative and interactive methods more often. The results of the questionnaire showed that 75% of students were motivated by the way lecturers taught, but only 50% felt that the methods varied. Students preferred methods that actively involved them and expected constructive feedback. They also highlighted the importance of lecturers' ability to manage the classroom and to create an inclusive atmosphere.

Table 3. Teaching methods and student motivation based on student and lecturer perspectives

Aspect Evaluated	Student Response (n = 50)	Lecturer Response (n = 6)
Motivation from Lecturer's Teaching	38 students (75%) felt motivated by how lecturers delivered the lessons.	5 lecturers (83%) believed their teaching approach positively impacted student motivation.
Variety in Teaching Methods	25 students (50%) felt the teaching methods lacked variety.	3 lecturers (50%) admitted to using limited methods due to time or resource constraints.
Preferred Learning Methods	Most students preferred interactive and participatory methods (e.g., group work, and discussion).	4 lecturers (67%) acknowledged the importance of active learning, but faced logistical limits.
Feedback from Lecturers	Students expected more consistent and constructive feedback.	4 lecturers (67%) reported providing feedback, though not always systematically.
Classroom Atmosphere	Students emphasized the need for inclusive and well-managed classroom environments.	5 lecturers (83%) stated they aimed to create inclusive, supportive learning environments.

The evaluation of the learning process in the PAI Study Program at STAIN Majene reveals that although lecturer-student interaction exists and contributes to a generally conducive classroom atmosphere, the communication tends to be one-way and lacks dynamism. Most lecturers rely on traditional teaching methods such as lectures and assignments, which limits opportunities for student engagement. This is consistent with student feedback, where only 50% felt that teaching methods were sufficiently varied. Although 75% of students reported feeling motivated by how lecturers delivered the material, they also expressed a desire for more participatory approaches such as discussions, group work, and other interactive strategies that foster active involvement in the learning process.

Lecturers acknowledged the importance of active learning and creating inclusive classrooms, with 83% stating that their teaching approach helped motivate students and 67% affirming the significance of participatory learning. However, they also pointed out constraints such as limited time and large class sizes, which hinder their ability to implement varied and innovative teaching methods consistently. Additionally, while most lecturers claimed to provide feedback, they admitted it was not always given in a structured or consistent manner, which directly impacts the students' ability to improve and feel supported academically.

The students' emphasis on the need for a more inclusive and interactive classroom atmosphere underscores a gap between current teaching practices and learner expectations. Although students generally feel comfortable in the classroom setting, they desire more frequent and constructive feedback as well as greater opportunities for collaboration and discussion. This suggests that while the foundational aspects of the learning process are in place, enhancements in teaching method diversity and feedback mechanisms are necessary to fully engage students and improve the overall effectiveness of the learning experience in the PAI Study Program.

3.2 Discussion

The results of the evaluation show that the curriculum design of the PAI STAIN Majene Study Program has met national standards (KKNI and SNPT) and aligns with institutional goals and job market demands. However, 20% of students perceived the material as too theoretical and lacking real-world applicability. This discrepancy reveals a misalignment between curricular intent and students' perceived relevance. Biggs & Tang (2011) highlight the importance of constructive alignment, where learning objectives, teaching methods, and assessments must be coherently structured to produce meaningful outcomes. If this alignment is weak—particularly when the curriculum leans heavily on theory—students may struggle to connect academic content to professional practice, limiting its transformative potential.

This challenge is not unique to STAIN Majene. Similar findings are evident in Islamic higher education institutions across Southeast Asia. For instance, Rohman et al. (2024) found that PTKIs in Indonesia, Pakistan, and India face comparable difficulties in contextualizing curriculum content to meet the demands of society and the labor market. Herman & Muadin (2023) argue that a curriculum must be flexible and responsive to contemporary scientific and societal shifts. The fragmented perception of course content among STAIN Majene students reflects a lack of curricular integration, which undermines the development of interdisciplinary understanding. Fogarty's (1991) integrated curriculum model can serve as a conceptual framework to enhance coherence and facilitate a more holistic student learning experience, fostering deeper cognitive and applied learning outcomes.

Regarding the availability of learning resources, both students and lecturers acknowledged deficiencies, particularly in the areas of up-to-date reference materials and internet access. While physical infrastructure such as classrooms and computer labs were deemed adequate, their effectiveness is limited without robust digital support. According to Gagné et al. (2005), adequate learning resources form the backbone of an effective instructional system. A lack of access to current scholarly materials and digital platforms not only restricts students' academic development but also perpetuates educational inequities, especially in peripheral regions. Comparative studies from Malaysian Islamic universities (e.g., Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia) show better outcomes where investment in e-resources and institutional repositories is prioritized.

To address this gap, there needs to be a strategic emphasis on digital transformation. Bates (2015) in *Teaching in a Digital Age* advocates for the integration of online platforms to enhance access and flexibility. Limited internet and e-learning access at STAIN Majene suggests systemic constraints that must be urgently addressed to remain pedagogically relevant. Moreover, UNESCO (2021) emphasizes that digital learning ecosystems are crucial for sustainable educational development in the Global South. By aligning with these international best practices, STAIN Majene can enhance its inclusivity, reach, and educational resilience.

The learning process is still predominantly conventional, relying on lectures and basic discussions. Although some students reported being motivated by the lecturers' delivery, only 50% recognized variety in teaching methods. This overreliance on didactic approaches limits opportunities for student agency. Vygotsky's (1978) socio-constructivist theory underscores that learning is most effective when students co-construct knowledge through active, social engagement. Similar critiques have been made in studies at Anandha (2023), where a lack of innovative pedagogy hindered student engagement.

Joyce & Calhoun (2024) advocate for the adoption of diverse instructional models such as problem-based learning (PBL), cooperative learning, and flipped classrooms. These models not only enhance participation but also foster critical thinking and collaborative problem-solving. Given the increasing complexity of societal challenges, Islamic higher education must move beyond rote memorization to cultivate these higher-order skills. This is particularly urgent in light of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, which demands pedagogical shifts across all disciplines, including religious education (Schwab, 2017).

Finally, although the classroom environment at STAIN Majene was generally conducive, it lacked interactivity, which limits holistic learning. Bloom's (1956) taxonomy reminds us that education must address cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains in tandem. The lack of interaction impedes affective engagement and practical skill development. Moreover, feedback—a vital component of formative assessment—is still inconsistently delivered. Hattie (2008) identifies feedback as one of the most influential factors in student achievement. The desire of students for more constructive feedback highlights a gap in dialogical teaching practices. Comparative research in Australian Islamic colleges (Halstead & McLaughlin, 2004) similarly stresses that culturally responsive pedagogy, combined with timely feedback, is key to improving outcomes in faith-based education.

In conclusion, while the PAI STAIN Majene Study Program exhibits strengths in curricular alignment and institutional support, significant challenges remain in pedagogical execution, resource accessibility, and student-centered learning. Addressing these requires not only internal reform but also engagement with global discourses and best practices in Islamic and higher education pedagogy. Collaborative efforts among faculty, administrators, and students are essential to drive meaningful change. Embracing innovative teaching methods, enhancing digital infrastructure, and fostering academic partnerships can bridge existing gaps. By doing so, the program can better prepare graduates to meet contemporary educational demands while upholding Islamic values and academic excellence.

4. CONCLUSION

This study reveals a notable gap between student expectations and the actual learning experience in the PAI Study Program at STAIN Majene, particularly in terms of material applicability, access to learning resources, teaching method variety, and feedback quality. Applying the Discrepancy model, the findings suggest that while the program aligns with formal curricular standards, several aspects of its implementation require improvement to better support student learning and future employability. Key recommendations include enhancing the curriculum's practical orientation, investing in digital infrastructure, training lecturers in interactive pedagogies, and developing systematic, personalized feedback mechanisms.

A critical step forward is the inclusion of students as active participants in curriculum evaluation and development, ensuring that reforms reflect the lived experiences and aspirations of learners. Such

participatory approaches can help foster a more inclusive and responsive educational environment. However, the study's findings are context-specific and based on a limited sample from a single institution, which may constrain generalizability. Future research should explore comparative studies across multiple PTKIs and employ mixed methods to deepen understanding of pedagogical practices and student outcomes in Islamic higher education.

Through continuous, evidence-based improvements involving all stakeholders, STAIN Majene can enhance the quality and relevance of its PAI program. This study offers foundational insights not only for internal development but also as a reflective model for other institutions seeking to bridge the gap between policy, pedagogy, and student-centered outcomes.

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