

Transformational Outcome-Based Education in Islamic Studies: A Learning Design Implemented in the Ethics Course

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the implementation of a Transformational Outcome-Based Education (OBE) model in *Dirāsah Islāmīyah*, situating Islamic moral education within contemporary outcomes-based pedagogical frameworks. The study aims to analyse the instructional design, explore implementation challenges—particularly in assessing affective learning outcomes—and evaluate the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) mechanisms embedded in the process. A qualitative case study approach was employed in an Ethics (*Ilmu Akhlak*) course at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung. Data were collected over one semester through participatory observation, in-depth interviews with one lecturer and 33 students, and document analysis, including the Semester Learning Plan and student portfolios. The findings reveal that the Transformational OBE model was operationalised through strong constructive alignment, integrating Problem-Based Learning (PBL) and Project-Based Learning (PjBL) to promote critical reflection consistent with Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory. Reflective journals emerged as the primary instrument for assessing the internalisation of moral and spiritual values. However, significant challenges were identified, including students' initial resistance to reflective practices and lecturers' difficulties in objectively evaluating affective domains. The CQI mechanism, implemented through the Plan–Do–Check–Act (PDCA) cycle, played a crucial role in enabling iterative pedagogical refinement. In conclusion, this study demonstrates that integrating spiritual objectives into the OBE framework is both feasible and pedagogically valuable, while also highlighting the need for more robust affective assessment strategies in Islamic higher education contexts.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The transformation of higher education in the disruption era and the Fourth Industrial Revolution demands significant curriculum adaptation (Faizin, 2024; Fomunyan, 2020). Higher education institutions are now required to produce graduates who not only master theoretical knowledge but also

possess practical skills relevant to the needs of business and industry, and who are competitive on a global scale (Samuels & Singh, 2025). This demand has driven a learning orientation that prioritises tangible, impactful, and meaningful outcomes, formulated within an Outcome-Based Education (OBE) curriculum. OBE shifts the focus from an input-oriented approach, emphasising learning processes and grades, towards measurable and tangible results (Hasibuan & Harahap, 2024; Karim & Yin, 2013; Samuels & Singh, 2025; Sutarjo et al., 2025; Thiruvengadam, Baskar, Jeyamala, & Abirami, 2022). This transformation aligns with UNESCO's analysis, which emphasizes that higher education must prioritize twenty-first-century competencies, including creativity, problem-solving, collaboration, and digital literacy (UNESCO, 2025).

State Islamic Higher Education Institutions occupy a strategic position in shaping the intellectual development of Muslims in Indonesia (Basri & Usman, 2023). The primary challenge is how to integrate the richness of Islamic scholarly traditions with the demands of modern academia. The Islamic Studies Framework, regulated in PMA No. 13 of 2014, provides a structural basis for the study of the Qur'an, Hadith, Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), Aqeedah (creed), Akhlaq (moral or ethics), Sufism, and Islamic history (Peraturan Menteri Agama, 2014). Yet what is more crucial is how these disciplines can respond to contemporary needs and emerging societal issues (Baharuddin, Isnaini, & Lusiana, 2024).

The application of OBE in Islamic Studies is essential for ensuring measurable learning across cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions. However, the OBE approach is frequently criticised for being mechanistic and for placing excessive emphasis on technical competencies that are easy to quantify (Killen, 2000; Rani, Prasad, Rani, & Nagendra, 2024). It presents a particular challenge for Islamic Studies courses, whose learning outcomes cannot be fully assessed through quantitative instruments and are often not immediately observable (Masruroh, Priatna, Nursobah, & Suherdiana, 2023). Another risk is the erosion of the essence of moral and Sufi education, which places a strong emphasis on the internalisation of values and attitudinal transformation as preparation for confronting global challenges such as moral relativism, hedonism, and pragmatism (Stacey et al., 2018).

Research by Anita Andriani et al., "Measuring Faith with Numbers: Can Islamic Religious Education Exams Assess Spiritual Understanding?", indicates that Islamic learning remains predominantly focused on the cognitive domain, particularly memorisation. Assessment practices continue to rely heavily on numerical test scores, which are insufficient for evaluating faith, belief, and spiritual understanding. A key question arises concerning how the internalisation process can be assessed, and the extent to which values are embodied in students' behaviour. Arlinda Ayu Diah Arfani raised similar concerns in Challenges in Evaluating Islamic Education Learning in Schools: Implications for Educational Objectives, which demonstrates that cognitively oriented learning fails to produce outcomes aligned with educational aims (Andriani, Imam, Ayyubi, Siti, & Apriyanti, 2025). Many students possess high levels of religious knowledge but lack moral character, which hinders their ability to achieve the goal of becoming a holistic human being. Consequently, students struggle to apply Islamic teachings in daily life (Arfani, 2024).

To address these challenges, several learning strategies have been implemented, including habituation. Research by Asep Nursobah et al. entitled "Integrative Model of Religious Habituation in Building Students' Religious Character" demonstrates that religious habituation effectively internalizes Islamic values and contributes to the formation of students' character (Nursobah, Ulhaq, & Ariska, 2025). At the higher education level, the work of Siti Masruroh, Tedi Priatna, Asep Nursobah, and Dadan Suherdiana, "Integration of Islamic Religious Education in General Higher Education Through Outcome-Based Education Curriculum," proposes OBE as a solution to bridge Islamic Religious Education with general study programs (Masruroh et al., 2023). Zainuddin & Zainul Ibrahim describe how Islamic perspectives are incorporated into the Medical Imaging curriculum through OBE (Zainuddin, 2016). Their research offers an OBE design that integrates technical competencies (hard skills) with mandated attitudes and values (soft skills) within Islamic Religious Education (PAI) (Masruroh et al., 2023). Meanwhile, research by Nurti Budiyanti et al., Impact of the *Ullû Al-Ilm* Model on Six Domains of Student Learning Outcomes in Islamic Religious Education, introduces an authentic

measurement tool using a validated questionnaire to assess changes in external/practical domains such as skills, social behaviour, and worship practices (Budiyanti, Komariah, Hermawan, & Hyangsewu, 2024).

Although various studies have discussed the implementation of OBE, very few have explored how OBE can meaningfully capture affective and spiritual learning outcomes, particularly in the Ethics course. The existing literature remains dominated by evaluations of the cognitive domain, while empirical discussions on assessing value internalisation are still limited. Previous studies also indicate that major challenges in OBE implementation often arise in Islamic Religious Education courses, which face difficulties in assessing spiritual and moral competencies. Most research has stopped at identifying problems without offering empirically tested solution models. This study aims to fill this gap by proposing and analysing a hybrid model called Transformational OBE. This approach not only seeks to adapt Islamic education to the OBE paradigm but also enriches OBE by integrating transformative values rooted in Islamic scholarly traditions.

This study adopts a Transformational OBE model that extends beyond traditional OBE. Whereas traditional OBE emphasises technical competencies, Transformational OBE, pioneered by Mezirow, focuses on fundamental changes in learners' thinking, values, and perspectives (Mezirow, 1997). This model integrates the accountability structure of OBE with the depth of transformational learning theory. This relationship is illustrated in Figure 1.

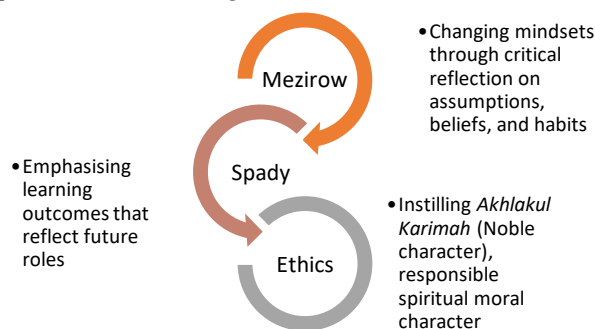


Figure 1. The outcome-based education (OBE) model in the integration of ethics

source: adapted from Mezirow (1997), Spady (1994), and the principles of *al-Ghazali's ethics (ihya' ulum al-din)*

Figure 1 illustrates that the Ethics course focuses on character formation, internalising virtue, and strengthening spiritual awareness. The principles of Transformational OBE, as articulated by Mezirow (1997) and Spady (1998; 1994) emphasise long-term learning outcomes that transcend curriculum boundaries and contribute to shaping a responsible Muslim identity, noble character, and strong spiritual commitment. Killen's concepts (2000) of high expectations and expanded opportunities resonate with the Islamic view of continuous spiritual growth, which is oriented not only towards academic achievement but also moral and spiritual development (Karim & Yin, 2013).

Traditional OBE is grounded in the principles of clarity of focus and constructive alignment (Ohatkar & Deshpande, 2022). While useful, these principles often restrict learning outcomes to the cognitive and psychomotor domains, neglecting the affective dimension. To address this limitation, this model integrates Jack Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory. Mezirow argues that the most significant form of learning is not the accumulation of knowledge, but a "shift in consciousness" that alters a person's frames of reference, assumptions, and beliefs (Mezirow, 1997). This principle aligns with Spady's (1998) recommendation of a transformational approach to OBE, advocating for meaningful, high-quality learning that reflects the complexity of real life and supports learners' future roles (Spady, 1994; 1998).

Based on these conceptual and practical gaps, this study was designed to address several key questions. First, how can the theoretical framework of Transformational OBE be applied concretely in the Ethics course (in terms of learning outcomes, methods, and assessment)? Second, what are the main challenges that lecturers and students face when implementing this design, particularly in measuring

affective and spiritual outcomes? Third, how is the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) mechanism implemented to evaluate and enhance this learning design on an ongoing basis?

2. METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research design using a case study approach to analyse the implementation of Outcome-Based Education (OBE) grounded in transformational learning within an Ethics course in the Islamic Studies cluster. The approach is developed based on Jack Mezirow's transformational learning theory (1997), which posits that meaningful learning occurs through critical reflection, leading to fundamental shifts in learners' frames of reference. In this context, learning is expected not only to develop cognitive abilities but also to cultivate self-awareness and internalise Islamic moral values (Ohatkar & Deshpande, 2022).

The research was conducted in the Al-Qur'an and Tafsir Study Programme at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung during the even semester of the 2024/2025 academic year. The research participants consisted of 33 second-semester students and a lecturer responsible for the Ethics course, which was delivered through a blended learning system. Participants were selected purposively based on the level of their active engagement and reflective involvement throughout the learning process.

Data were collected through three primary techniques: participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Observations were used to examine the dynamics of classroom interaction and the emergence of students' critical reflections. In-depth interviews explored the experiences, perceptions, and shifts in perspective among both students and the lecturer during the implementation of transformational OBE. Document analysis was carried out on the Semester Learning Plan, teaching materials, assessment instruments, student journals, reflection notes, activity reports, and learning outcome records. The research instruments comprised observation and interview guidelines constructed based on indicators of transformational OBE, including critical reflection, learner-centered participatory engagement, and collaborative problem-solving, adapted from Mezirow's framework.

The research process consisted of four stages: preparation, implementation, reflection and evaluation, and data analysis. The preparation stage involved the development of learning tools and research instruments. The implementation stage involved applying the transformational OBE model over the course of one semester. The reflection and evaluation stage incorporated group discussions and the analysis of students' reflective journals. Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994), which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification.

To ensure data validity, the study employed source triangulation (using lecturers, students, and documents) and methodological triangulation (utilising observation, interviews, and document analysis). Member checking was conducted to verify that the researcher's interpretations corresponded with participants' actual experiences. Analysis was performed through the open coding of interview transcripts and observation notes, which were subsequently categorised into thematic patterns representing the dynamics of transformational learning, such as critical reflection, perspective transformation, and the internalization of moral values. This analytical approach enabled a comprehensive and systematic portrayal of how learning transformation occurs within the context of OBE-based Islamic education.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Findings

3.1.1 Learning Design of Transformational OBE-Based Ethics Course

a) Transformational OBE Framework

The basic framework of Outcome-Based Education (OBE) begins with establishing the Outcome-Based Student (OBS) profile through the Program Learning Outcomes (PLO), which are formulated within the curriculum (OBC). The curriculum outlines the Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) and Sub-Course Learning Outcomes (Sub-CLOs), serving as a reference for lecturers and students. In practice, lecturers act as facilitators who collaboratively plan, discuss, and implement learning methods and strategies with students to ensure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes of the program. The final stage involves determining assessment models that appropriately measure these targeted outcomes.

Instructional planning within OBE is essentially the reverse of the traditional teaching approach (Killen, 2000). The framework comprises three key stages: 1) Defining intended learning outcomes, 2) Designing strategies, content, and teaching methods that effectively support the achievement of these outcomes, and 3) Developing assessment mechanisms to measure learning outcomes objectively (Killen, 2000). It is shown in Figure 2.

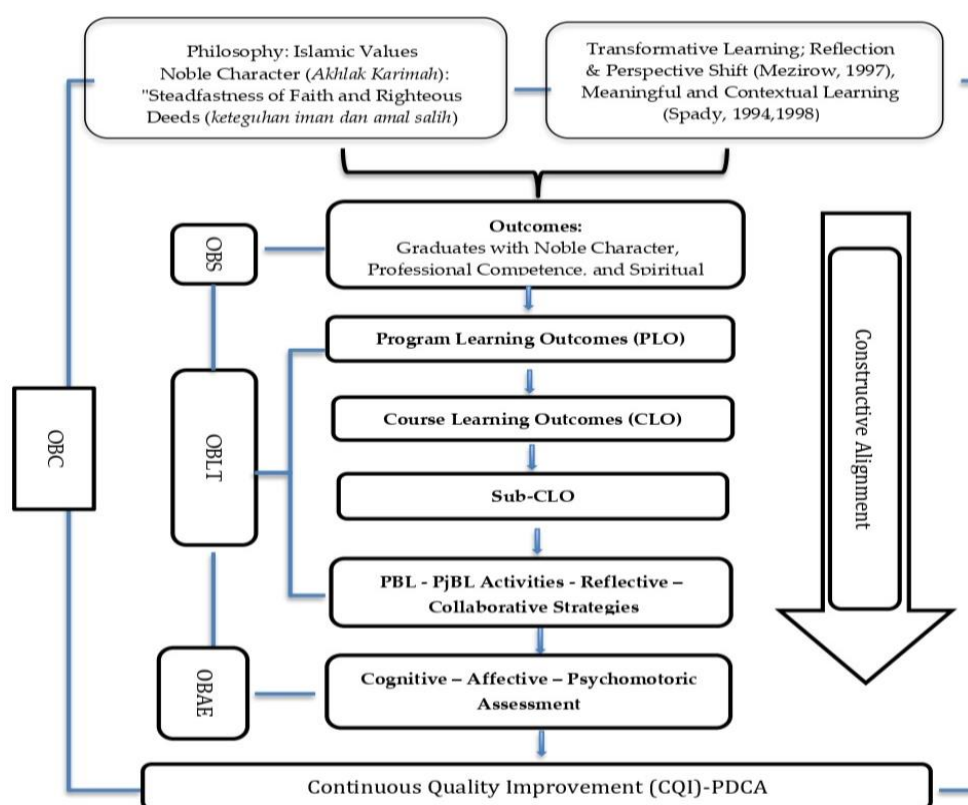


Figure 2. Obe Transformational Framework.

Source: Adapted From Mezirow (1997), Spady (1994, 1998)

b) Program Learning Outcomes

Program Learning Outcomes (PLO) are formulated to align with the Outcome-Based Student (OBS) profile, which reflects the desired competencies of graduates. These PLOs are categorised into three balanced domains as shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Program Learning Outcomes in Ethics Course 2024

Form	Formulation of Programme Learning Outcomes	Outcomes
PLO 1	Graduates master theoretical concepts of Akhlak Karimah and steadfast faith, and internalise and apply them in virtuous behaviour.	Moral integrity
PLO2	Graduates can analyse practical problems and utilise knowledge and technology to design ethical solutions in their field.	Professional Competence
PLO3	Graduates are capable of acting as ethical and critical agents of social change within the framework of <i>rahmatan lil-'alamin</i> .	Spiritual Awareness as a basis for thinking and acting

3.1.2 Implementation of Transformational OBE-Based Learning Design

The Outcome-Based Curriculum (OBC) encompasses curriculum design from philosophical foundations to the formulation of learning materials intended to realise the graduate profile or OBS. This curriculum is based on the main philosophical foundation of Islamic Values (*Akhlak Karimah*), which incorporates Islamic values as the core of the course, including the values of monotheism.

The learning design presented in Table 1 seeks to realise transformational learning within Islamic Studies by integrating contemporary pedagogical frameworks with Islamic spiritual values to cultivate noble character. The learning process employs a reflective spiral approach derived from Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory (1997), which emphasises profound shifts in learners' awareness and behaviour, moving beyond the conventional focus on cognitive and affective assessment. Within this model, study materials are systematically aligned with the Programme Learning Outcomes (PLOs) through corresponding Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) and Sub-CLOs, ensuring coherence between learning content, teaching strategies, and intended outcomes.

PLO 1, which focuses on the mastery of concepts, internalisation of character, and righteous action, emphasises both theoretical understanding and value internalisation. The materials address foundational concepts in morality and Sufism, including human nature and spiritual potential, as well as the essence of morality in relation to Allah. Further components include processes of internalisation and habit formation, cultivating patience (*sabr*) and trust in Allah (*tawakkul*), integrating optimism (*raja'*), and engaging in self-evaluation and repentance. Spiritual practices such as *dhikr* are incorporated to strengthen learners' connection with God, while the framework of *Tazkiyatun Nafs* supports the internalisation of virtuous traits and the elimination of negative ones (*takhalli/tahalli*) (Faizah, Rusydati, & Muhammad, 2018).

PLO 2 concentrates on professional competence, problem analysis, and the development of ethical solutions. It includes the application of ethical reasoning to contemporary issues through scientific and technological tools. Learning activities encompass digital ethics and solution development, moral analysis of social media, designing ethical campaigns, ethical reasoning in practical contexts, examining moral problems within *muamalah*, and reflective inquiry into ethical approaches to environmental issues. These activities enable students to connect ethical principles with real-world challenges, thereby fostering applied competence.

PLO 3 emphasises ethical agency, critical ethics, and the principle of *rahmatan lil-'alamin*. This domain nurtures students' capacity for social and political critique through the evaluation of political behaviour and Islamic political ethics. Ecological awareness is developed through critical reflection on environmental ethics and the formulation of solution-oriented responses. Additionally, students are encouraged to demonstrate moral transformation through structured review activities, simulations, and presentations that consolidate the integration of knowledge, values, and ethical practices.

3.1.3 Assessment Results and Student Transformation

The implementation of Outcome-Based Learning and Teaching (OBLT) represents the operational phase of the Outcome-Based Curriculum (OBC), ensuring that students achieve integrated Course

Learning Outcomes (CLO). The transformational learning process was carried out in several stages, each focusing on different dimensions of conceptual understanding, internalisation of values, reflective development, and behavioural transformation. These phases are summarised in Table 2.

a) Stages of Transformational-Based Implementation

Table 2. Stages of Implementing Transformational OBE in Ethics Course

Phase	Week	Implementation of Transformational-Based Learning
Formation of the Basic Framework	1–2	Students learn the basic concepts of ethics, Sufism, and the nature of humanity, serving as an exposure phase for building conceptual and linguistic foundations.
Internalisation of Values & Critical Analysis	3–7	Ethical values are connected to real-world issues, including social media, business, politics, and the environment. Students undertake case studies and argumentative critiques that require critical reflection and imaginative problem-solving (Mezirow, 1997).
Self-Reflection & Behavioural Change	9–13	This phase emphasises personal moral development through themes such as patience, trust in God, optimism, repentance, remembrance, and purification of the soul. Assignments are designed as reflective journals and portfolios to support the transformation of thinking and behaviour.
Demonstration of Real Transformation	14–15	Students create creative projects and present their work in project-based learning.

Source: Adapted from Mezirow (1997) and Spady (1994)

b) Observation Results of Learning Activities

(1) Collaborative Learning Activities

Active learning conducted through Small Group Discussions and group presentations enabled students to explore moral concepts in depth using case studies. These activities encouraged students to provide constructive feedback on both the topics discussed and the application of moral principles. The “Everyone Is a Teacher Here” method further fostered shared responsibility by requiring students to share their understanding and experiences. This approach strengthened learner autonomy and accountability in the learning process. Students also produced pamphlets and videos promoting moral messages and water stewardship based on ethical values, either individually or in groups. Observation and interview data indicate that the Ethics course typically begins with a perception-building and reflective introduction, followed by project-based activities, case studies, and group discussions. Students actively analysed various social phenomena, including environmental cleanliness and water usage ethics, demonstrating increasing engagement with real-world moral issues.

(2) Problem-Based Learning (PBL) Activities

Problem-Based Learning was implemented to develop students’ ability to apply ethical theory to complex decision-making, especially in situations involving moral dilemmas. A prominent example is students’ engagement with the West Java Governor’s controversial policy on “semi-military” education for students, which has been labelled as problematic. On 1 May 2025, 272 students from Bogor, Depok, and Cianjur were placed in a military programme due to behavioural concerns, such as fighting, smoking, drinking, and using noisy exhaust pipes (Yanuar, 2025). The case generated ethical tension regarding the perceived excessiveness of state intervention, including concerns about militarism and the belief that educational responsibility rests primarily with the family. Student responses reflected diverse perspectives. Some viewed the policy as excessive, while others evaluated it through the lens of QS. Al-Tahrim: 6, which highlights the obligation to protect oneself and one’s family. Drawing on *maqāṣid al-sharī’ah*, several students argued that family education is a *fardhu’ ain* duty of parents or guardians, and by extension, of the government as protector of public welfare (Syathiby, 2006). They suggested that the policy may be justified so long as it upholds *mu’āsyarah bi al-ma’ruf* and considers

children's psychological needs and parental capacities. From this perspective, the policy does not contradict QS. Al-Tahrim: 6 if implemented ethically.

This case is highly appropriate for PBL because, as Hmelo-Silver (2004) and Jonassen (1997) state, an effective PBL issue must be ill-structured (without a single solution), authentic (rooted in real social contexts), and complex (requiring multidisciplinary reasoning). The discussion prompted students to move beyond textual interpretation and to analyse policy, psychological, and social-contextual dimensions. It aligns with the principle of authenticity in learning, which requires both authenticity and context (Savery & Duffy, 1995).

(3) Reflective Activities and Journal Reports

Transformative Learning and Spiritual Awareness strategies were implemented through Reflective Journals that documented students' dhikr practices and their experiences in internalising spiritual and environmental values. Analysis of these journals shows that several students had reached the Valuing and Organisation levels in the affective domain (Adzkiya, 2025; Natania, 2025; Zamzam, 2025). Students described dhikr as a personal necessity and a technique for managing emotional strain and academic pressure. One student, Zamzam (2025), expressed:

"Zikr is not just a protective phrase, but an affirmation of tawhid that teaches that true protection comes only from Allah, not from human strength or effort alone. This habit serves as a way to cleanse the heart of doubt, worry, anxiety, and negligence (*ghaflah*). Cultivate *maqam muraqabah*, which is the feeling of always being watched and protected by Allah in every situation. Strengthen faith, cultivate the values of *tawakal* (trust in Allah), patience, and gratitude. Shape a more patient and submissive personality, and bring Allah into every step of life, as explained in QS. *Al-Fath* [48]:4 about Allah who instils tranquillity into the hearts of believers. The plan for the future is to continue to maintain this habit of dhikr consistently, not only after prayer and before sleep, but also in other moments of the day. The goal is to make dhikr a part of one's way of thinking and behaving, so that every step and decision is always based on the awareness that Allah is the best protector and helper in life" (Zamzam, 2025).

Building this habit certainly requires effort, as there are many challenges to overcome in making it a routine. This fact can be seen in the reflection of Junal Natania (2025):

"The greatest challenge in maintaining consistency in dhikr for me is first and foremost overcoming laziness and neglect due to busyness, which sometimes leaves me without energy, and the laziness that follows the end of menstruation, when the heart feels heavy for dhikr, especially when the mind is filled with worldly concerns. However, with a strong intention and the awareness that dhikr is a necessity for the soul, I gradually learned to make it a daily habit, not just an obligation, even though I am not yet consistent. "Before regularly performing dhikr, my heart often felt restless, easily anxious, and uneasy when facing various problems. After consistently reading Ratib Al-Haddad, I felt a great change in my heart, becoming calmer, my mind clearer, and my emotions more controlled. Dhikr helps me feel closer to Allah and more at peace while carrying out my daily activities. In every little thing, I feel that Allah always helps and protects me. After regularly reciting the Ratib Al-Haddad Dhikr, the virtue that has grown within me is primarily patience. Since reciting this dhikr, I feel more patient in facing life's challenges, more sincere in my deeds, more sincere in helping others without expecting anything in return, and less prone to complaining when faced with misfortune. I remain grateful for what we have and for the experiences we share. The Dzikir also cultivates humility, as it constantly reminds me that all strength comes from Allah, not from oneself." (Natania, 2025)

(4) Project-Based Learning (PjBL) Activities

Project-Based Learning marked the stage in which students translated the curriculum into concrete moral action. It was most evident in the Community Service project, where students developed proposals, identified problems, designed solutions, and formulated sustainability plans. Activities included maintaining the cleanliness of mosques and sanitation facilities, which enhanced social interaction with local communities and strengthened students' leadership skills.

These projects functioned as catalysts for transformational learning (Mezirow, 1997). Students reported a shift from conceptual understanding—such as "cleanliness is part of faith"—to a deeper individual and collective awareness. One group explained that small acts, such as tidying prayer garments and cleaning the prayer room, significantly improved the quality of worship and should be practised regularly. They cited the hadith, "Verily, Allah is Pure and loves purity" (Al-Tirmidzi, 1975),

to emphasise that cleanliness reflects both worship and shared responsibility (Community Services Report, Group 12). Additional outputs included community-service videos documenting mosque-cleaning activities and campaigns promoting public hygiene. These activities were not symbolic but served as concrete enactments of moral values, reinforcing behavioural and character transformation central to the Ethics course. As shown in Figure 3, these projects translated abstract ethical principles into visible practices of service, collaboration, and care for shared communal spaces.

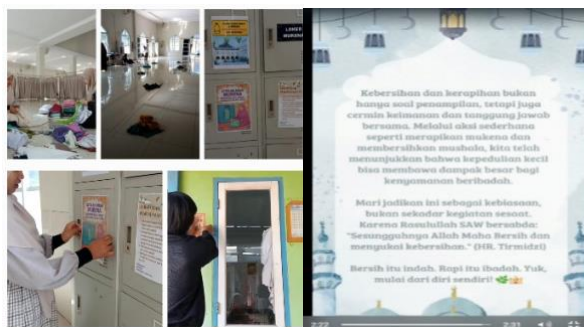


Figure 3. Implementation of moral values in community services

The second project involved the creation of a “Save the Water” campaign as a continuation of the earlier “healing with nature” activity. Students visited a mountain area to observe the natural environment and subsequently reflected on their experiences to design a campaign promoting water conservation. According to their reflections, this activity enabled them to practise moral values authentically. As one student stated, “When we created the ‘Save Water’ pamphlets, we felt we were practising moral values, not just completing an assignment” (Amrianti, 2025). It reflects a shift from task-oriented behaviour towards value-driven engagement. Interviews further revealed that Project-Based Learning (PjBL) provided meaningful opportunities to connect moral values with contemporary issues such as digital literacy and environmental ethics. One student explained, “I learn ethics not only about human relationships but also about the responsibility to use technology wisely and preserve nature” (Bin Daiman, 2025). His statement highlights that the learning experience elicited intrinsic motivation and fostered a deeper ethical consciousness extending beyond the classroom. As illustrated in Figure 4, students translated these insights into visually engaging poster campaigns shared via Instagram and TikTok, demonstrating how moral values can be communicated creatively within contemporary digital spaces.



Figure 4. Implementation of Moral Values in Posters
 Source: Instagram Raniaf16 and TikTok M

3.1.4 Outcome-Based Assessment and Evaluation Mechanism

The measurement of Course Learning Outcomes (CLO) was conducted holistically across the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. In the cognitive domain, assessment focused on conceptual understanding and analytical reasoning through essays and structured presentations. Students were required, for example, to distinguish systematically between morals, ethics, and morality, or to elaborate on concepts such as *qalb* and *nafs*. Affective assessment evaluated the

internalisation of moral and spiritual values using observation sheets, weekly spiritual journals, habit logs, and attitude rubrics. This component focused on assessing the steadfastness of faith, internalisation of values, and behavioural transformation. The psychomotor domain was assessed through action-based tasks, including environmental campaigns, community service activities, and portfolio compilation, which served as core instruments for mid-term and final evaluations. This holistic mechanism aligns with collaborative and reflective learning principles, with lecturers assuming the role of facilitators to promote lifelong learning (Khaerani, 2025a; Mardapi, 2008; Suwarno & Aeni, 2021).

To streamline the evaluation of course outcomes, CLO clustering was conducted, allowing for measurement to occur in a structured and coherent manner at the end of the learning cycle. As summarised in Table 3, this clustering clarifies the relationship between each CLO, its targeted competency domain, assessment instruments, and corresponding PLOs, thereby ensuring a coherent and transparent evaluation of student learning.

Table 2. Mapping CLO and Learning Assessment in Ethics

CLO	Main Domain	Competency Focus	Assessment Form	Linked to PLO
CLO-1	Cognitive (C4)	Analysis of Moral Foundations & Sufism	Essay (Essay Section)	PLO-1, 2
CLO-2	Cognitive (C5)	Evaluating of the Nature and Potential of Humanity	Presentation (Discussion and Presentation Section)	PLO-1, 2
CLO-3	Psychomotor / Social Action (C4–C6)	Analysing and designing ethical solutions (Digital, Business, Politics, Environment)	Infographic Projects, Case Studies, Argumentative Essays, Project Reflection Posters	PLO-2, 3
CLO-4	Affective / Internalisation (A1–A5)	Cultivating and integrating spiritual values (Patience, Trust in God, Remembrance, Purification of the Soul)	Reflective Journal, Mini Research, Dhikr Journal	PLO-1, 3, 4
CLO 1–3	Mid-Term Evaluation (Comprehensive)	Demonstrating noble character and applying problem solving	Project Report and Presentation (Community Service)	PLO 1, 2, 3
CLO 1–4	Final Evaluation (Holistic)	Synthesis and comprehensive evaluation of moral development	Course Activity Portfolio (Final Exam), Portfolio Rubric	PLO 1, 2, 3

3.1.5 Qualitative and Quantitative Assessment Results

a) Assessment Success

The final course score was calculated by combining all assessment instruments—essays, reflective journals, and project-based assignments—and converting them into a 0–100 numerical scale using an established analytical rubric. Each level of achievement in the Reflective Journal Rubric (A1 to A5/Characterisation) was assigned a tiered weighting to reflect progressive internalisation of values. The overall student score represented a weighted average of all CLO components (CLO 1–4), with the affective (CLO-4) and psychomotor (CLO-3) domains receiving higher proportional weight to align with the transformational orientation of the course (Suwarno & Aeni, 2021).

Quantitative results support the qualitative findings. Of the 33 students, 19 achieved “Excellent” performance across all assessment domains. These students demonstrated strong mastery of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor competencies, with an average score of 88. Meanwhile, 11 students reached a “Satisfactory” level, and three students required further attention. The consistent average score of 88 among the top-performing group indicates comprehensive achievement of the CLOs. To ensure transparency, validity, and student engagement in the assessment process, results from essays,

reflections, and project tasks were presented and discussed in class as part of a member-checking mechanism. The details can be seen in the graph below:

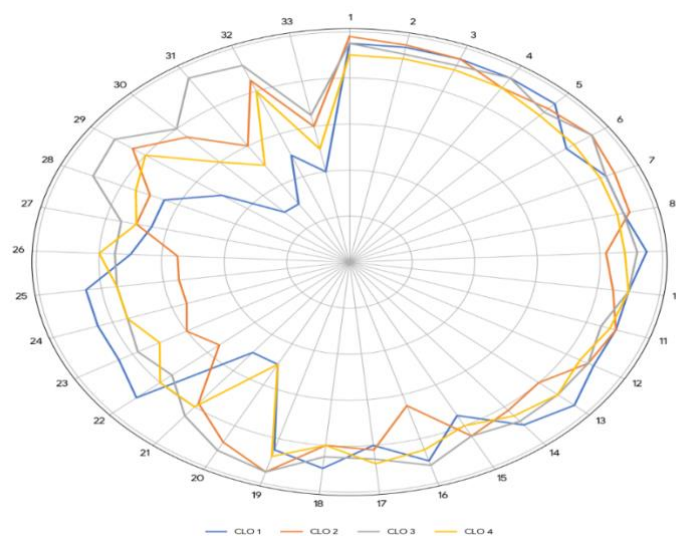


Figure 5. Visualisation of Course Learning Outcomes (CLO) Achievement – Ethics Course (N = 33)

Figure 5 presents the four CLO scores of 33 students, where lines plotted further from the centre indicate higher scores. Overall, most students achieved high scores clustered near the outer circles, which suggests that the majority of the class understood the course material well. CLO 3, which concerns the ability to analyse and design technology-based ethical and moral campaigns, emerged as the most strongly mastered outcome. In contrast, CLO 2 and CLO 4, which relate to the ability to evaluate the nature and potential of humanity and to integrate spiritual values (Patience, Trust in God, Remembrance, and Purification of the Soul), show performance at a generally good level; yet, several students appear to struggle. This pattern is evident in the presence of a few lines pointing towards the central area of the chart, indicating lower scores.

CLO 1 displays the widest variation in results. Some students reached scores of up to 95, whereas others obtained scores as low as 30. This discrepancy arises because several students did not complete the assigned tasks, and some submitted incomplete essays. To address this imbalance, lecturers should reevaluate the assessment format and instructions and provide enrichment or remedial activities for students with low scores. Such support may include asking students to revise and complete their assignments so that their CLO achievement can improve more equitably across the class.

b) Implementation Challenges

Despite the overall success of the learning process, several challenges emerged, particularly in students' ability to demonstrate reflective depth. Instances of "reflective dysfunction" were identified, including three students who submitted copy-pasted content and three others who produced extremely brief reflections. These issues limited the depth of insight and indicated a lack of discipline in establishing consistent reflective habits. One student, for instance, reported anxiety and restlessness but was unable to articulate strategies for self-improvement or demonstrate meaningful internalisation of dhikr practices. Although ritualistic behaviour was high, meaningful engagement with the reflective process was initially absent. Following targeted feedback and clear guidance, all six students demonstrated improvement and revised their reflections in accordance with the agreed-upon standards (Khaerani, 2025b).

3.2 Discussion

3.2.1 Interpretation of OBLT Strategy and Consistency with Transformational Theory

The curriculum design aims to equip students with practical and applicable competencies, shifting the learning paradigm from mere knowledge acquisition to personal transformation development. As illustrated in Table 2, the learning process progresses through several phases:

- (1) The first phase involves developing basic knowledge through analytical activities in Weeks 1 and 2, supported by collaborative strategies and small-group discussions.
- (2) The second phase, spanning Weeks 3–7, focuses on value internalisation and critical analysis using Problem-Based Learning (PBL) strategies, applied to issues such as *muamalah*, socio-political ethics, and environmental ethics.
- (3) The third phase, Weeks 9–13, emphasises *muhasabah bi an-nafsi*, where students engage in reflective practice, cultivate affective awareness, and develop a commitment to personal moral change. Learning topics emphasise personal character development, including patience, trust in God, repentance, remembrance of God, and the culmination of *Tazkiyatun Nafs*.
- (4) The final phase of real transformation involves a significant pedagogical shift from a conceptual focus and depth of critical thinking to the internalisation of values through independent and collective practice. Accordingly, assessment formats shift from analytical essays to reflective journals, dhikr journals, problem-solving tasks, and project-based assessments (Khaerani, 2025a).

This progression constitutes empirical evidence of the OBC's transformative orientation. Guided by Mezirow's theory, the design intentionally transitions students from "knowing" (Phases 1–7) to "becoming" (Phases 9–13), reflecting the distinction between traditional learning—focused on knowledge transfer and understanding of moral concepts—and transformational learning—which emphasises perspective and behaviour transformation through PBL, reflective dialogue, and action-oriented projects. Such transformation requires educators to design learning experiences that cultivate predetermined outcomes while fostering profound shifts in understanding, identity, and behaviour (Brown-Kramer, 2021).

3.2.2 Conceptual and Theoretical Alignment

Transformational learning extends beyond the mastery of discrete competencies; it reshapes existing frameworks of thinking to make learners more inclusive, reflective, and able to integrate personal experience with moral values (Mezirow, 1997). The integration of PBL, critical reflection, and action commitment within PjBL aligns with Kolb's experiential learning cycle (2015), where learners engage in concrete experience, reflect critically, conceptualise abstractly, and apply their understanding through action.

The Community Service Project demonstrates this alignment by enabling students to apply the moral values they have learned throughout the course. By utilising digital platforms to disseminate their moral campaigns, students enhance their communication skills, digital literacy, and ethical understanding. This approach aligns with transformational OBE principles, which emphasise the internalisation of ethical values and their application in authentic social contexts. Accordingly, the Ethics course learning does not remain theoretical but becomes experiential and societally impactful.

The reflective journal of Natania (2025) exemplifies the transition from cognitive comprehension to affective characterisation. Her sustained recitation of Ratib al-Haddad stimulated further exploration of its theological underpinnings (cognitive) while simultaneously enabling emotional transformation—manifested in improved self-control, reduced anxiety, and increased patience and gratitude (affective) (Natania, 2025). Her ability to overcome psychological obstacles and cultivate moral behaviour reflects the characterisation stage of Bloom's affective taxonomy. However, while some students reached

characterisation, others remained in the Responding stage, though early signs of Valuing were visible in journals such as those by Cep and Badrul (Badrul, 2025; Cep, 2025).

Effective facilitation requires educators to employ diverse pedagogical approaches to accommodate students' varying learning needs (Hu, 2024; Rufaidah & Wardani, 2025). The integration of PBL, reflective learning, and PjBL aligns with the principles of Mezirow's Transformative Learning and Kolb's Experiential Learning, where learning begins with real experiences, followed by reflection, conceptualisation, and action. Constructive alignment (A. D. Biggs et al., 1999; J. Biggs, 1999) ensures coherence between objectives, processes, and evaluation, enabling moral transformation to progress from knowledge acquisition to tangible ethical behaviour.

3.2.3 Interpretation of the OBAE Mechanism and Holistic Achievement

Analysis of Table 3 shows that the qualitative assessment successfully captured the core objective of the Ethics course: spiritual transformation (CLO-4). Most students demonstrated internalisation of moral and spiritual values through consistent dhikr practice. A review of portfolios, reflective journals, essays, and the PBL process revealed two broad categories of learners. Nearly half of the 33 participants achieved holistic mastery, making dhikr not only a routine practice but also a spiritual necessity that influenced emotional regulation, anxiety reduction, and inner tranquillity. These students achieved CLO-1 and CLO-2 (cognitive), CLO-3 (general skills), and CLO-4 (affective), showing attainment at the highest affective level (A5/Characterisation). Their ability to link spiritual experiences with personal transformation—such as overcoming academic anxiety, reducing overthinking, strengthening inner calm, and adopting value-based behaviour—demonstrates comprehensive achievement of transformational learning outcomes (Gamal, 2025; Mursyidin, 2025; Natania, 2025).

3.2.4. Evaluation of OBE-Based Learning: Continuous Quality Improvement

The evaluation of OBE-based learning demonstrates that the transformative model effectively enhanced students' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor abilities, yielding predominantly excellent and satisfactory outcomes. Success in measuring affective outcomes supports the findings of Andriani et al. (Andriani et al., 2025), who argue that spiritual and moral competencies can be assessed qualitatively through rubric-based evaluation. However, challenges emerged regarding workload intensity. The high volume of assignments occasionally led to repetitive or superficial submissions, suggesting the need for more flexible timelines and more frequent formative feedback to support deeper engagement (Khaerani, 2025a). From the lecturer's perspective, this approach is "work-intensive", requiring rigorous reading of extensive reflections and essays. Consequently, a technologically integrated assessment system is recommended to streamline qualitative data analysis and ensure sustainability. Digital platforms would help manage reflective journals, portfolios, and project products while maintaining accountability and efficiency.

Pedagogically, the variety of learning strategies expanded students' opportunities for exploration and self-discovery. Students can explore their abilities and even discover unthinkable phenomena, such as those involving Ratib al-Haddad practices. It illustrates peer-to-peer learning, embodying the principle that "everyone is a teacher here" (Aiman, 2025; Cep, 2025). From a curriculum development perspective, the strategic recommendation is to integrate assessment systems into advanced digital platforms to support both quantitative and qualitative assessment modes.

3.2.5 Theoretical and Practical Implications: Improving Graduate Quality

Thematic analysis of reflective journals reveals that OBE not only fosters professional readiness but also promotes ecological consciousness and spiritual transformation in graduates. Three major themes emerged: (1) evolving understanding of nature management and self-regulation, (2) affective experiences in nature and their spiritual benefits, and (3) the impact of these experiences on character formation. Initially, some students viewed environmental responsibility as a technical task, such as tree planting or recycling (AR, 2025). As learning progressed, they developed a more comprehensive understanding, highlighting ecological restoration and disaster prevention (Febiola, 2025). The internalisation peak is evident in statements such as “Preserving nature is our moral responsibility as human beings” (Yasin, 2025) and “Preserving nature is a form of worship to the Creator” (Suseno, 2025).

These findings confirm that OBE functions as both a competency-based framework and a transformative educational model that nurtures spiritual, ecological, and ethical awareness. The combination of active learning, critical reflection, and experiential engagement aligns with Mezirow’s meaning perspective transformation (Mezirow, 1997). Students’ experiences also demonstrate constructive alignment in practice, with learning activities, assessments, and outcomes forming an interconnected system (Anggraini, 2025). Ultimately, OBE supports the development of graduates with moral leadership, social empathy, ecological responsibility, and spiritual resilience—competencies essential for the 21st century, narrowing the gap between higher education and the world of work.

3.2.6. Methodological Contributions and Limitations

This study makes a conceptual and methodological contribution to the literature on the implementation of OBE in Islamic higher education institutions. Unlike previous research that identifies challenges in measuring spiritual competencies, this study offers a feasible qualitative alternative through reflective journals, action projects, and social engagement activities. The model provides a replicable framework—including lesson plan structures, reflective instruments, and authentic rubrics—that bridges the gap between OBE theory and moral learning practice.

However, several limitations exist. The findings cannot be generalised to all Islamic Higher Education Institutions due to contextual differences in institutional culture and student characteristics. The use of self-reflection as a primary data source also raises the risk of social desirability bias and limited verbal expression of internal experiences. Time constraints present another limitation, as the study captures only one semester, whereas moral transformation is a long-term process. Future research should expand institutional contexts, extend observation periods, and combine reflective data with longitudinal methods to develop a more comprehensive understanding of OBE’s transformational impact on character formation.

4. CONCLUSION

The implementation of Transformational Outcome-Based Education in the Ethics course demonstrates the successful integration of contemporary OBE principles with Islamic pedagogical foundations that emphasise moral and spiritual values. The learning design was constructed through constructive alignment, systematically mapping the Programme Learning Outcomes (PLO) to Course Learning Outcomes (CLO) across the cognitive, psychomotor, and affective domains. Each outcome was aligned with appropriate learning strategies—including Problem-Based Learning, critical reflection, case studies, project-based tasks, and portfolio assessment—supported by rubric-based instruments designed to capture evidence of changes in students’ attitudes, awareness, and behavioural dispositions. The findings indicate that this model enhances not only students’ mastery of conceptual material but also facilitates the process of self-transformation consistent with Mezirow’s Transformative Learning Theory. Despite challenges related to objectively assessing affective outcomes and students’ initial adjustment to reflective learning, the overall process demonstrates that spiritual,

moral, and behavioral competencies can be meaningfully developed through qualitative, authentic assessment methods. The application of Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) through the Plan–Do–Check–Act (PDCA) cycle further ensures that teaching, assessment, and curriculum design are continually refined.

This study offers a practical blueprint for Islamic Higher Education Institutions in designing a moral curriculum rooted in Islamic values yet aligned with global educational standards. More broadly, the transformational OBE framework provides a strategic foundation for Islamic higher education to move beyond content-focused instruction toward pedagogies that cultivate character, spirituality, and ethical agency. As such, transformational OBE in Islamic Studies holds the potential to produce graduates who are not only academically competent but also morally grounded and spiritually resilient, qualities essential in addressing the challenges of the twenty-first century.

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