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Research Article

The Transition to Outcome-Based Education (OBE): A Phenomenological Study of Islamic Religious Education Lecturers

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Abstract

This study aims to explore in depth the understanding, challenges, and support experienced by Islamic Religious Education (IRE) lecturers during the transition to the Outcome-Based Education (OBE) curriculum, which often faces skepticism and technical challenges. This study employs a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design to explore the meaning of the lived experiences of four lecturers from the IRE study program. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and analyzed using a framework analysis based on Kurt Lewin's Three Phases of Change Model (Unfreeze, Change, Refreeze), and enriched with Hochschild's Emotional Labor Theory. The research findings indicate that the OBE transition experienced a systemic failure in the Refreeze Phase. The Unfreeze Phase successfully created cognitive dissonance about the need for change, but immediately triggered negative emotional labor such as "anxiety," "confusion," and "burden." The Change Phase was hindered by dominant restraining forces, particularly the difficulty of designing assessments (considered "the most difficult"), increased workload, and a lack of systemic training support. Consequently, the Refreeze Phase failed; OBE is "not yet established" and is perceived as merely a "momentary trend" of administrative compliance ("discharging obligations"), not as an internalized pedagogical change.

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INTRODUCTION

The paradigm shift in higher education is generally driven by two main factors: findings in cognitive science that students actively construct knowledge rather than receive it, and concerns about graduate unemployment rates. The gap between academic qualifications and the demands of the workplace, caused by a lack of practical experience and communication skills, is a crucial issue. *Outcome-Based Education* (OBE) is a response introduced as a curriculum approach designed to bridge the gap between university and professional careers (Kaliannan & Chandran, 2012). OBE promises a shift in focus from delivering theoretical material to developing measurable, verifiable, and scalable competencies and skills. This approach is expected to encourage more organized, innovative, and adaptive teaching methods (Asim et al., 2021).

Although Outcome-Based Education offers promising prospects for improving graduate competencies, its implementation has also generated significant debates and challenges among educators. Several studies have shown that the positive impact of OBE on improving student's core competencies is not always statistically proven (Chan & Chan, 2009). Among educators and education personnel, skepticism often arises, viewing OBE as a "passing trend" or an *unfunded mandate* (Bresciani, 2003). Excessive standardization within the OBE framework could actually limit (*ensnar*e) the autonomy of lecturers and students, rather than empowering them.

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When applied rigidly, OBE risks shifting lecturer's focus from essential pedagogical considerations to procedural accountability, potentially triggering assessment burnout *among* students (Ecclestone, 1999).

The context of higher education in Indonesia reflects challenges identified globally. The transition from a competency-based curriculum to OBE presents lecturers with significant challenges. Lecturers must grapple with formulating effective learning outcomes, adapting course frameworks to the OBE format, and, most importantly, implementing learning outcome assessments, which is considered the most challenging aspect (Mufanti et al., 2024).This problem is exacerbated by the persistence of a teacher-*centered teaching paradigm*, high workloads, minimal systemic support from universities, and limited infrastructure and quality of student input.

The successful implementation of a curriculum policy such as OBE depends heavily on how its implementers interpret it. One policy, however, can encourage pedagogical innovation if teachers have the room to maneuver *and* discuss, thereby deepening their understanding. Conversely, an OBE policy can restrict academic freedom if adopted as a rigid set of technocratic rules (Barman et al., 2014). Therefore, the success of OBE is not only determined by systemic factors, but also depends on institutional commitment, professional development of lecturers, as well as the readiness, understanding, and attitude of lecturers as the main implementers in the field (Damit et al., 2021; Chan & Chan, 2009).

Despite the importance of this topic, previous research on OBE implementation in Indonesia has generally been limited to case studies using survey methods. This reliance on surveys as the sole method limits the depth of investigation into lecturer's experiences and perspectives in implementing OBE. What differentiates this research from previous studies is its focus on the deep, subjective lived experiences of the educators rather than surface-level institutional readiness or quantitative compliance metrics. However, previous studies have rarely examined OBE implementation challenges from the perspective of lecturers in Indonesian higher education institutions. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by comprehensively exploring through a phenomenological approach the deeply rooted understandings, psychological challenges faced, and systemic support received by Islamic Religious Education (IRE) lecturers during the curriculum transition to OBE. To achieve this objective, this study is guided by the following research questions: How is Outcome-Based Education implemented in higher education? What challenges do lecturers face in implementing OBE? How do lecturers perceive OBE assessment practices?

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design to explore the lived experiences and subjective meanings of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) lecturers during their transition to the Outcome-Based Education (OBE) curriculum (Farrell, 2020; Stolz, 2023). Participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique to ensure they had relevant experience with the phenomenon. The participants consisted of four IRE lecturers (Guntur, Widyastuti, Barid, and Asdiqoh) who were directly involved in the OBE implementation.

Data were collected through in-depth, structured interviews guided by an interview protocol specifically developed to explore the research's conceptual framework. This method was chosen to invite participants to provide rich, detailed, and direct accounts of their implementation experiences. The gathered data were analyzed iteratively using a framework analysis based on Kurt Lewin's Three-Phase Model of Change: Unfreeze, Change, and Refreeze (Burnes, 2019). To enrich the interpretation of the subjective experiences, the analysis also integrated concepts from Hochschild's Emotional Labor Theory (1983) to evaluate how lecturers managed emotional burdens during the transition.

To ensure the trustworthiness, validity, and reliability of the qualitative data, this study employed member checking and provided rich, thick descriptions. Transcribed interviews and initial interpretations were returned to the participants to verify the accuracy of the data and ensure their lived experiences were represented correctly. Furthermore, peer debriefing was conducted among the researchers to minimize subjective bias during the framework analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

This data presentation presents findings from in-depth interviews that explore lecturer's perceptions, challenges, and experiences in transitioning to an Outcome-Based Education (OBE) curriculum. Data were collected from Guntur, Widyastuti, Barid, and Asdiqoh and organized according to three phases of the change process.

Phase 1: Unfreeze (Initial Experience Thawing)

This phase examines initial perceptions, understanding *of the status quo* prior to OBE, and any skepticism or cognitive dissonance that arose when the OBE policy was introduced.

1. Understanding Curriculum and Teaching Methods (Status Quo)

   Prior to the implementation of OBE, the four interviewees had diverse understanding of and practices in teaching. Guntur views the curriculum as the primary determinant of how universities select their graduates. Although he teaches according to the program's syllabus, he has implemented project-based learning *for* courses such as instructional media. Similar to Guntur, Widyastuti has also implemented student-centered methods. Before OBE, she was familiar with the KKNI (*Kerangka Kualifikasi Nasional Indonesia*, National Qualifications Framework)-Based Curriculum and the Kurikulum Merdeka (MBKM). Widyastuti's teaching style combines interactive lectures, discussions, presentations, and project assignments, essentially "encouraging students to be active."

   Asdiqoh understands the curriculum as a set of learning materials, methods, resources, and evaluation tools. He teaches using a structured syllabus based on the KKNI developed by the study program team, but lecturers are allowed to develop the material. Meanwhile, Barid, the lecturer with the shortest tenure, stated that before the OBE, he taught by referring to a pre-developed Learning Plan (RPS).

2. Introduction to OBE

   The timing and manner in which the interviewees learned about OBE varied greatly. Asdiqoh learned about it since the launch of MBKM around 2020. Guntur learned about it in 2023 when the policy was released by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, and discussed at the study program association, the Indonesian Islamic Religious Education Study Program Association (*Perkumpulan Program Studi Pendidikan Agama Islam Indonesia*, PPPAII). Unlike both of them, Barid first learned about OBE when participating in the Basic Instructional Technique Skills Improvement Program (Program Peningkatan Kompetensi Dosen Pemula, PKDP) in 2025, while Widyastuti only heard about it at the beginning of the current semester, around September 2025.

3. Initial Reactions (Skepticism and Resistance)

   Initial reactions to the transition to the OBE curriculum tended to be tinged with confusion and anxiety. Asdiqoh expressed feeling "somewhat anxious" and "confused," as he imagined the formulation would be "more complicated" and that there would be a need to define measurable outcomes. Guntur also felt that OBE had the potential to be a "special burden for lecturers," particularly due to its seemingly complex assessment model.

   Widyastuti expressed feeling "still confused." This confusion was exacerbated by the fact that she felt she had only just been introduced to the Kurikulum Merdeka. Barid's reaction was "shock." He initially expressed confusion about how to structure the OBE learning materials and what fundamentally differentiated them from the previous curriculum. In response, Guntur, who is active in the study program association, immediately sought out various resources and participated in discussions to gain a deeper understanding of the OBE model.

4. Perception of the Need for Change (Cognitive Dissonance)

   Despite initial resistance, the interviewees understood the reasons for this curriculum change. Guntur saw the urgency of this transition stemming from "the needs of the business world and industry." He felt the previous curriculum had "minimal opportunities for students to get involved in the field." Widyastuti, based on articles she read, distinguished the previous curriculum as being too focused on theory, while OBE aims to "ensure graduates are competent, adaptive, and work-ready." Asdiqoh viewed curriculum change as

an inevitability that must be done at least every four years to adapt to the needs of the professional world. According to him, the previous curriculum was not inherently problematic, but "still needed development." Meanwhile, Barid viewed curriculum change more as an external demand, namely "academic and accreditation demands."

Phase 2: Change (Implementation Experience Movement)

This phase examines the primary challenges, difficulties, and shifts in the role of lecturers during the transition to and implementation of OBE in the classroom.

1. Implementation Challenges

   The challenges faced were diverse. Barid identified the biggest challenge for him as structural: "There has not been any intensive training or mentoring for learning OBE." This made it difficult for Barid to navigate technical aspects, such as determining the CPMK (*Capaian Pembelajaran Mata Kuliah*, Course Learning Outcomes), Sub-CPMK, and other instruments. Asdiqoh experienced challenges in "preparing the learning design," as he had to formulate learning outcomes before he could develop the Semester Learning Plan (*Rencana Pembelajaran Semester*, RPS) and evaluation system. Guntur highlighted another aspect, namely the cultural challenge of "the habits of lecturers and students who are patterned on a lecture model limited to discussion/discourse."

   Unlike the other three lecturers, Widyastuti did not report any significant challenges. She felt proactive in reading numerous articles. She assumed that "I was actually already applying OBE principles (before I knew the term), particularly in her English course, where students' outcomes included creating interactive e-books using various applications and Artificial Intelligence (AI).

2. Experience in Formulating Outcomes (CPMK) and Assessment

   Differences in experience were also evident in the technical aspects of outcome formulation and assessment. For Asdiqoh, difficulties arose when "determining measurable and observable abilities" from the student's perspective after participating in the learning. Barid also found it difficult because "there was no in-depth training." Barid had to interpret the Learning Plan format individually and consulted friends, but the information was deemed "not yet valid." Guntur found it difficult to formulate the CPMK in the collaboration aspect, namely "synchronizing understandings from various disciplines between lecturers." Only Widyastuti stated that "currently not experiencing difficulties," because she actively sought information from articles and AI.

   Regarding assessment, three interviewees (Guntur, Barid, and Asdiqoh) agreed that this was a difficult aspect. Barid stated that the assessment aspect felt difficult "because he did not know the science yet." Asdiqoh felt the OBE assessment was "rather difficult" because it "requires an evaluation model that can measure a profile of tangible outcomes directly." Guntur considered it "the most difficult," not because of the concept itself, but because its execution was "too rigid and time-consuming with *tools* that did not support it." He also highlighted the problem of equal understanding of assessment among lecturers who should have designed it together. Widyastuti, once again, had a different response. She stated, "I do not understand it yet, and I have not applied it." She suspected that the project assignments she had been given (such as *e-books* and research proposals) might align with the OBE *performance assessment*, but she "did not know if this was true or not."

3. Impact on Workload and Role Shift

   The implementation of OBE had a direct impact on the workload of lecturers. Guntur and Barid both felt an increased burden. Barid felt "very burdened because he was not used to it," while Guntur felt burdened by "having to formulate a process for output results" and the "numerous assignment assessments." Conversely, Asdiqoh felt "it did not actually affect the workload," but he acknowledged that "it takes time and concentration" to examine the material to ensure it matches the output carefully. Widyastuti also felt "not burdensome," for her, "the important thing is to learn a lot."

   Regarding the shift in roles from *teacher-centered* to *student-centered*, three informants (Guntur, Widyastuti, and Asdiqoh) felt there was no significant change because they had already been doing it. Widyastuti stated, "I have always taught with a student-centered approach." Asdiqoh also stated, "Previously, I preferred being a facilitator." Guntur also stated that *the student-centered* (project-based) model, (which) "I have been doing

since the OBE policy was implemented." Only Barid felt "no visible change." He reported that his practice remains the same: "sometimes teaching, sometimes facilitating students."

Phase 3: Refreeze (Institutionalization Experience Freezing)

This phase measures the extent to which OBE has been integrated into normal practice or has failed to become stable, as well as the factors that support and inhibit its institutionalization.

1. Institutional Status (Established or a Momentary Trend?)

   The four interviewees unanimously stated that OBE has not yet been established and has not yet become a new habit or culture. Asdiqoh and Barid firmly called it a "momentary trend." Barid called the implementation of OBE "a momentary trend that is administrative and fulfills obligations but does not yet know the exact science." Guntur stated the same thing, "It is not yet established and also not yet a habit, because it is limited to discussions on the preparation of RPS." Widyastuti, as a senior lecturer, supported this view. She stated that "for senior lecturers like me and my friends, we are not yet familiar with OBE because we have never participated in socialization or seminars (*workshops*) about OBE."

2. Institutional Support

   The failure of OBE's institutionalization is directly related to a lack of institutional support. Widyastuti and Barid answered that there was "no support yet" regarding training or infrastructure. The RPS *template* was provided, but Asdiqoh stated that "there has not been a complete explanation from the Quality Assurance Agency (*Lembaga Penjaminan Mutu*, LPM)," so lecturers had to find and learn on their own. Guntur described this as "not yet significant," adding that OBE requires "complex learning resources."

3. The Need for Institutionalization in the Future

   The speakers identified a crucial need to make OBE an integral part of academic culture, not just an administrative burden. Training and outreach are crucial. Widyastuti emphasized the need for "socialization, training, and motivation." Barid demanded "clear rules/policies with maximum support" so that lecturers truly master OBE, not just make it a requirement for accreditation. In addition to human resources, Guntur highlighted infrastructure needs, including "software such as computer programs" and "out-of-class learning facilities." Meanwhile, Asdiqoh hopes for practicality through clear standardization, namely "the existence of 'definite' standards for output outcomes created by the team, so that lecturers can simply use them."

Discussion

This study makes a distinct scientific contribution by integrating Kurt Lewin's three-phase change model with Hochschild's Emotional Labor theory to dissect the OBE transition in higher education. While previous literature on OBE implementation in Indonesia has predominantly relied on case studies using quantitative survey methods, this phenomenological approach provides a novel theoretical lens to uncover the subjective, psychological, and emotional dynamics of educators. By doing so, this study moves beyond measuring surface-level institutional readiness to explain why systemic curriculum changes often stall and fail to institutionalize, specifically within the context of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) lecturers.

Phase 1: Unfreeze

The unfreeze phase is a process that disrupts stability or the status quo to create motivation or a need for change. This process often begins with cognitive dissonance, the discomfort caused by the conflict between old practices and new demands.

1. Initial status quo: Prior to OBE, lecturers operated within a stable yet varied status quo. Some lecturers (Guntur, Widyastuti, Asdiqoh) claimed to have implemented a student-centered approach (such as project-based), while others (Barid) focused more on implementing RPS. From the beginning, concerns arose that an overly prescriptive and standardized OBE could entrap lecturers and students in instrumentalism, where the focus shifts from deep understanding to achieving narrowly measurable outcomes (Ecclestone, 1999).
2. Unfreezing (dissonance and resistance): The introduction of OBE disrupted *the status quo*. Lecturers' initial reactions reflected classic restraining forces. Exposure data revealed negative emotional responses, such as "somewhat anxious," "confused," and "shocked," as well as the perception that OBE would be a "special burden." These responses align with emotional labor theory, which argues that high job demands (such as curriculum changes) tend to trigger negative emotions (Holman et al., 2008). Under these conditions,

lecturers are still expected to display certain emotions in accordance with the profession's *display rules*, such as affective neutrality when assessing or strategic friendliness when interacting with students (Wharton, 2009).

3. Motivation driving change: Despite resistance, the thaw process was successful because lecturers identified driving forces. They experienced cognitive dissonance between the old curriculum and external demands. Guntur and Widyastuti identified a gap between theory and the "needs of the business and industrial world," in line with the main goal of OBE to bridge the gap between academia and the job market (Kaliannan & Chandran, 2012). Meanwhile, Barid and Asdiqoh saw it as an unavoidable external demand (accreditation and profession). Tran et al. (2017) found four types of lecturer responses to the new research policy (which is also a change in demand): enthusiasm, distress, resignation, and dissatisfaction, mediated by emotional experiences and identity negotiation.

Phase 2: Change (Movement / Implementation)

The Change phase is the actual implementation phase, where movement toward a new state occurs. The success of this phase depends on whether the driving forces successfully overcome the restraining forces (Strebel, 1994). Data shows that it is in this phase that the true challenges of OBE implementation become apparent.

1. Dominant restraining forces: The challenges reported by the lecturers (Barid, Asdiqoh, Guntur) accurately reflect the literature findings regarding barriers to OBE implementation. These barriers include:
   a. Assessment difficulties: Assessments can be conducted directly by requiring students to demonstrate their achievements, which are generally measured quantitatively, or indirectly based on opinions (Rani, 2020). Three of the four informants (Guntur, Barid, Asdiqoh) confirmed that designing assessments is the most difficult part. Asdiqoh mentioned the difficulty of "determining measurable abilities," while Guntur complained that the process was "too rigid." This confirms the findings of Mufanti et al. (2024) and Damit et al. (2021) that assessment is the most challenging aspect of the OBE transition. There is often a gap between the ideal concept of OBE and its practice in various settings, where learning outcomes *often* function more as assessment and regulation tools than authentic guides for the teaching-learning process, even tending to result in a fragmented curriculum (Morcke et al., 2013).

      This phenomenological finding also strongly aligns with the critique highlighted by Japee and Oza (2021), who argue that OBE is often criticized for reducing teaching and learning to quasi-scientific planning procedures geared toward instrumental means and specified ends. When outcomes are stated as rigid intellectual scaffolding, it risks limiting inquiry and giving unwarranted authority over knowledge to curriculum framers rather than the educators in the classroom. Furthermore, Pradhan (2021) warns that an improper assessment system that fails to accommodate the diversity in student success remains one of the most critical obstacles in OBE implementation.

      To overcome this rigidity and prevent assessment burnout, institutions might need to adopt more comprehensive instructional assessment models. As suggested by Wang and Yang (2024), modern OBE instructional assessment should comprehensively evaluate the effect of student's course learning and course instruction from multiple dimensions and with multiple indicators, moving away from traditional and purely subjective grading methods.
   b. Increased workload: Guntur and Barid explicitly experience increased workload, such as "heavy assignment assessment." This aligns with findings by Mufanti et al. (2024) and Damit et al. (2021), which identify workload as a key challenge. The promise of OBE to improve learning quality contrasts with concerns about the potential for instrumentalism, standardization, and burnout (Ecclestone, 1999). Lecturer's workloads extend into personal time, making academic work feel like work in the creative industries (Gill, 2014). The ideal role of lecturers as caring facilitators clashes with the reality of demanding intense emotional labor to manage frustration, anxiety, and stress resulting from workloads, policy changes, and changing dynamics of lecturer-student relationships (Mann, 2018; Nixon & Scullion, 2022).
   c. Lack of systemic support: Barid highlighted the lack of "intensive training or mentoring," which forced her to interpret the OBE format individually. This reflects the lack of systemic support, also identified by Mufanti et al. (2024) and Damit et al. (2021). The fact that OBE-related performance is often not linked to lectures evaluations (promotion, *tenure*) can also reduce motivation to engage deeply

(Bresciani, 2003). Lecturers who are enthusiastic about implementing OBE and those who are not generally receive the same performance assessment.

2. The risks of rigid implementation: Guntur's complaint about assessment being "too rigid" highlights the dangers warned against by Ecclestone (1999). If OBE is implemented rigidly as "procedural accountability," it risks triggering assessment burnout and diverting focus from essential pedagogy. This psychological burden is a significant, yet often overlooked, barrier to successful curriculum reform. Hamidi et al. (2024) corroborate this dynamic, noting that teachers who experience low confidence or high stress often develop unhealthy negative emotions, which subsequently hinders their ability to build strong relationships and deliver effective instruction. When institutions fail to provide adequate training, they unintentionally force lecturers into a state of emotional exhaustion rather than pedagogical innovation.
3. Phenomenology of different experiences: The data revealed two different phenomenological experiences in responding to change, similar to the orientations found by Naylor & Nyanjom (2021):
   a. Proactive orientation (Widyastuti): This interviewee was "proactive in reading many articles," did not feel overwhelmed, and felt "actually I had already applied" the OBE principles. She experienced no technical difficulties. This reflects a proactive "futuristic" orientation and high self-efficacy (Naylor & Nyanjom, 2021).
   b. Overwhelmed orientation (Guntur, Barid, dan Asdiqoh): These informants experienced negative emotions (anxiety, confusion, burden) and encountered significant technical difficulties. This reflects a "cautious" (worried, overwhelmed) or "ambivalent" (frustrated) orientation (Naylor & Nyanjom, 2021).

Phase 3: Refreeze

The Refreeze phase aims to stabilize new changes, so they become the norm and prevent regression. Freezing requires new behaviors to be reinforced by the organization's culture, policies, and practices (Burnes, 2019). Refreeze phase failure: The interviews collectively point to a failure in the *Refreeze phase*. All four interviewees agreed that OBE is "not yet established." Three main factors support this finding:

   a. The Perception of a "momentary trend": Asdiqoh and Barid explicitly refer to OBE as a " momentary trend." Barid even calls it "administrative and obligatory." This perception aligns with the findings of Bresciani (2003), who noted that lecturer's skepticism regarding OBE as a "momentary trend" (faddism) *or* "unfunded mandate" is a significant barrier to its institutionalization.
   b. Institutional support failure: *Refreeze* failed due to a lack of institutional support to reinforce new behaviors. Widyastuti and Barid stated that support such as training was "not yet available." Asdiqoh confirmed that "there was no complete explanation," forcing lecturers to learn independently. This confirms that the implementation of OBE will not be successful without institutional commitment and lecturer professional development (Damit et al., 2021).
   c. Rigid top-down implementation: The statement that OBE is limited to "discussing the creation of RPS" or "dropping obligations" indicates a top-down and technocratic implementation. According to Barman et al. (2014), policies adopted as rigid (technocratic) rules will limit academic freedom. Without strong top-down commitment and structural adjustment, it is difficult to achieve the fundamental shift required by OBE, which, as Wang and Yang (2024) assert, demands the abandonment of previous teacher-centered curriculum construction methods. Successful refreeze requires a participatory approach (Burnes, 2019) and provides "room to maneuver" for lecturers to discuss and adapt their pedagogy (Barman et al., 2014), which was not evident in the data.

Phenomenological analysis using Lewin's model shows that the OBE transition in this context was successful in the *Unfreeze Phase* (creating awareness of the need for change) but encountered significant obstacles in the *Change Phase* (especially in aspects of assessment, workload, and lack of training). Ultimately, this transition failed in the *Refreeze Phase*. The lack of systematic institutional support and the administratively rigid (technocratic) implementation approach led to OBE being perceived as merely a "fad" (Bresciani, 2003), rather than as an internalized pedagogical change that emphasizes administrative compliance. To achieve a genuine pedagogical shift rather than mere administrative compliance, there must be a fundamental transformation in mindset. Asim et al. (2021) emphasize that transitioning to an educator-centered to student-centered approach in OBE evaluation necessitates a profound shift in the attitude and frame of mind of both educators and

educational authorities. Without this cognitive shift, unclear and ambiguous settings of outcomes will inevitably limit collaboration and avert teacher contribution, ultimately leading to faculty resistance.

Based on research findings regarding obstacles in the *Change Phase* and the failure *of the Refreeze Phase*, the following recommendations are formulated for higher education institutions: 1. Shifting the focus from administrative compliance to pedagogical development. Institutions must stop treating OBE merely as a means of fulfilling accreditation requirements (and thereby removing obligations). The main recommendation is to provide "room to maneuver" *for* lecturers to discuss, experiment with, and adapt OBE pedagogical principles, rather than imposing rigid, technocratic rules. 2. Providing intensive training and mentoring on the most difficult aspects. Considering that designing assessments is the "most difficult" challenge, institutions must prioritize "intense" and "maximum" training and mentoring in this area. Training should not only be socialization but should be in the form of practical workshops *to* design valid but not "too rigid" assessment instruments. 3. Providing institutional support for the *Refreeze Phase*. To overcome the "fad" status, institutions must actively invest resources in the *Refreeze Phase*. This includes providing "comprehensive explanations" from Quality Assurance Agencies (*Lembaga Penjaminan Mutu*), providing supporting infrastructure such as "software" and "learning facilities," and establishing clear outcome standards to reinforce new behaviors and establish them as an established academic culture.

CONCLUSION

Based on a phenomenological analysis using Kurt Lewin's model and Emotional Labor theory, this study concludes that the OBE curriculum transition in the context of the IRE lecturers studied has failed to reach the institutionalization stage (*Refreeze*) and remains stuck in mere administrative compliance. Addressing the implementation of OBE in higher education (RQ1), the *Unfreeze Phase* successfully created cognitive dissonance regarding the need for change to meet external demands. However, a top-down and rigid approach prevented this awareness from evolving into intrinsic motivation, leading to systemic failure in the *Refreeze Phase* where OBE is perceived merely as an administrative "momentary trend" rather than an internalized pedagogical culture. Regarding the challenges faced by lecturers (RQ2), significant restraining forces dominated the *Change Phase*. Lecturers struggled with increased workloads and a critical lack of intensive training or mentoring. These structural barriers triggered intense negative emotional labor, leaving lecturers feeling anxious, confused, and overwhelmed. Furthermore, concerning the perception of assessment practices (RQ3), lecturers viewed OBE assessment as the most difficult aspect of the transition. The demand to design direct, measurable outcomes was perceived as overly rigid and technically demanding, risking an instrumentalist approach where the focus shifts from authentic student learning to fulfilling procedural accountability. To ensure a successful transition in the future, higher education institutions must shift their focus from administrative compliance to genuine pedagogical development. Providing lecturers with the "room to maneuver," delivering intensive practical workshops specifically focused on assessment design, and building robust systemic support (including software and clear institutional standards) are crucial steps to move OBE from a temporary mandate to an established academic culture.

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