STRENGTHENING THE CURRICULUM OF THE ISLAMIC EDUCATION MANAGEMENT STUDY PROGRAM THROUGH ANALYSIS OF GRADUATE TRACER STUDY RESULTS

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Abstract: The findings of the tracer study have the potential to strengthen the curriculum, but often the results are just administrative fulfillment, with regard to that this study aims to analyze the results of the tracer study as a basis for strengthening the curriculum of the Islamic education management study program at UIN Raden Intan Lampung. The research method used is qualitative with a descriptive study approach. Data collection is done through observation, interviews, and documentation studies. The results showed that Islamic education management graduates are relevant to industry needs, with high job absorption and suitability of fields. Stakeholders assess soft skills as good, but foreign languages and innovation need to be improved. Tracer study is important for curriculum evaluation, although it has not been maximized. Steps to strengthen the curriculum can include revising materials, improving training, and integrating labor market needs. The implication of this research is to contribute to the development of deeper insights into the use of tracer studies as an instrument for evaluating the effectiveness of curriculum strengthening, especially in the context of the Islamic Education Management Study Program.

Keywords: Tracer Study, Curriculum Strengthening, Graduate Competencies

Abstrak: Temuan hasil tracer study memiliki potensi untuk memperkuat kurikulum, namun kerap kali hasilnya sekedar pemenuhan administrasi saja, berkenaan dengan itu penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis hasil tracer study sebagai dasar untuk penguatan kurikulum program studi manajemen pendidikan Islam UIN Raden Intan Lampung. Metode penelitian yang digunakan ialah kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi deskriptif. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui observasi, wawancara, dan studi dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa lulusan manajemen pendidikan Islam relevan dengan kebutuhan industri, dengan penyerapan kerja tinggi dan kesesuaian bidang. Stakeholder menilai soft skills baik, namun bahasa asing dan inovasi perlu ditingkatkan. Tracer study penting untuk evaluasi kurikulum, meski belum dimaksimalkan. Langkah penguatan kurikulum dapat mencakup revisi materi, peningkatan pelatihan, dan integrasi kebutuhan pasar kerja. Implikasi dari penelitian ini adalah memberikan kontribusi terhadap pengembangan wawasan yang lebih mendalam mengenai penggunaan tracer study sebagai instrumen evaluasi efektivitas penguatan kurikulum, khususnya dalam konteks Program Studi Manajemen Pendidikan Islam .

Kata Kunci: Tracer Study, Penguatan Kurikulum, Kompetensi Lulusan

INTRODUCTION

Education is a long-term investment that determines the quality of human resources and the continuity of a nation's civilization (Firman, 2024). Countries in the world, including Indonesia, place education as the main foundation of national development. This is reflected in the Preamble of the fourth paragraph of the 1945 Constitution, which states that one of the national goals is to educate the nation's life. In this context, education is not only tasked with educating the community, but also plays an important role in producing graduates who have superior competence and high competitiveness in the midst of global dynamics, especially in the era of the industrial revolution 4.0 which demands critical, creative, innovative and collaborative competencies (Aziz et al., 2024).

Higher education, as a pillar of higher education, has a strategic responsibility in creating graduates who are competent, adaptive, and ready to face the world of work (Rachman, 2021; Rodin et al., 2024). In line with this role, the National Accreditation Board for Higher Education emphasizes the importance of mastering and disseminating knowledge that is relevant to the needs of the labor market. However, the reality on the ground shows that there is still a gap between the competence of graduates and the expectations of the world of work (Ramdhan & Siregar, 2019). One of the factors that cause this is the lack of optimal relevance of the study program curriculum to industry needs.

One approach to evaluating the extent to which the curriculum is able to equip graduates with the required competencies is through a tracer study. Tracer study or alumni tracing study is a systematic method for obtaining feedback from graduates who have entered the world of work (Manurung, 2018; Mussafi & Rohaya, 2022). This study has strategic value because it can identify competency gaps, evaluate curriculum effectiveness, and become the basis for strengthening the quality of higher education (Hermawan, 2016; Yetri, 2019). In addition, tracer studies also play an important role in developing alumni networks and cooperation with industry, and have a strong juridical footing in national higher education policy through Law Number 12 of 2012 and Permendikbud Number 3 of 2020 (Rofaida & Gautama, 2019; Zulhimma, 2015).

UIN Raden Intan Lampung through the Center for Entrepreneurship and Career Development has made various efforts to improve the competitiveness of graduates, including the implementation of periodic tracer studies. The implementation of the tracer study on this campus is carried out through online and offline methods, with direct involvement of alumni and related stakeholders. The process includes annual planning, synchronization of alumni data, implementation of online and manual

surveys, as well as reporting and evaluation. Nevertheless, some challenges are still faced, such as difficulties in tracking alumni from out of town and limited access to data, which has an impact on the accuracy of the tracer study results.

Previous research shows the importance of tracer studies in the process of evaluating and strengthening the higher education curriculum. For example, Akung Daeng's research (2021) shows that the curriculum of economics and development studies programs is quite relevant to industry needs, while Susanti(2021), and Fajaryati (2018) emphasize the importance of graduate feedback as a tool to improve education quality and curriculum relevance. Yetri (2019) added that the tracer study also supports the achievement of the Indonesian National Qualifications Framework. In addition, the VoS Viewer visualization analysis results show recent research trends that highlight the role of alumni in strengthening the curriculum through keywords such as employability, curriculum development, and alumni engagement.
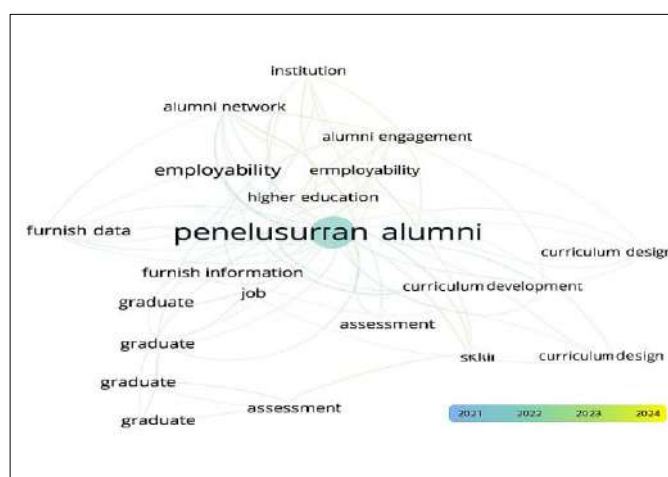
Figure 1. Visualization of Tracer Study Trend using VoS Viewer application

However, there is a gap in studies in the context of Islamic-based study programs, especially the Islamic Education Management Study Program. In fact, this study program is very important in producing professionals in the field of Islamic education who are adaptive and responsive to the demands of the times. Therefore, it is important to conduct a tracer study analysis to assess whether the profile of graduates of this study program is in accordance with the needs of the community and the world of work, and how the results can be used as a basis for strengthening the curriculum.

Based on this, this study aims to analyze the results of the tracer study in the Islamic Education Management Study Program, with a focus on: (1) the suitability of the profile of graduates with the needs of industry and society; (2) the adequacy of graduates' competencies to do their jobs;

and (3) the utilization of tracer study results in strengthening the curriculum.

The distinction of this research lies in the context of a specific study in the field of Islamic Education Management with a tracer study approach as a strategy to strengthen the curriculum based on the real needs of the world of work. In addition, this research uses a tracer study implementation model conducted by career development institutions systematically and continuously. Thus, the contribution of this research is expected to provide constructive input for study program managers and Islamic higher education institutions in designing, adjusting, and improving the curriculum to make it more relevant to the demands of the world of work and increase the competitiveness of graduates in the global era.

METHOD

This research method uses a qualitative descriptive approach that aims to describe in detail the profile and competencies of graduates of the Islamic Education Management Study Program and the role of tracer studies in strengthening the curriculum at UIN Raden Intan Lampung (Creswell, 2012; Sugiyono, 2018). The approach used to analyze graduate tracing data is a qualitative approach with the Miles and Huberman (1994) data analysis model. Data analysis was carried out in three main stages, namely *data reduction*, *data display*, and *conclusion drawing/verification*. The data reduction process involves filtering and sorting out relevant data for analysis, while data presentation aims to organize data in a form that facilitates conclusion drawing. The last stage is conclusion drawing which is done after verification of the data that has been presented.

This research was conducted at the Islamic Education Management Study Program of UIN Raden Intan Lampung, in collaboration with the Center for Entrepreneurship and Career Development of UIN Raden Intan Lampung. The data sources in this research consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through in-depth interviews with the Head of the study program and Secretary of the Islamic Education Management study program, as well as other related parties who have relevant information. Meanwhile, secondary data was obtained from related documents, including the results of the tracer study that had been carried out previously by UIN Raden Intan Lampung, as well as additional data from the Faculty of Islamic Education Management.

The data collection techniques used include observation, interviews, and documentation studies. Observations were made to directly observe activities related to tracer studies and curriculum strengthening. Interviews were conducted to gather information from relevant parties, such as the Head and Secretary of the Islamic Education Management Department, as well as other relevant stakeholders. In addition, documentation studies are carried out by collecting data

from important documents, such as the results of tracer studies that have been carried out previously. The data analysis technique used is qualitative descriptive analysis, which aims to describe in depth the profile of graduates, the competencies needed in the world of work, and the role of tracer studies in strengthening the curriculum.

To ensure data validity, this research uses triangulation techniques, namely by combining data from various sources, such as tracer study results, interviews with related parties, and other supporting documents. In addition, credibility checks were carried out through confirmation of interview results with the parties involved, to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the information obtained.

The data used in this study include the results of the UIN Raden Intan Lampung tracer study in 2023, which describes the profile of graduates and the competencies of graduates of the Islamic Education Management Study Program. Furthermore, the results of the 2022 Faculty tracer study were used to analyze the role of tracer studies based on the perceptions of graduate users and alumni. In addition, interviews with the Head of the study program and the Secretary of the study program were conducted to obtain further information regarding the role of tracer studies in strengthening the curriculum in the Islamic education management study program. This research is expected to provide a clearer picture of the impact and role of tracer study in improving the quality

of curriculum and competence of graduates in the Islamic Education Management Study Program of UIN Raden Intan Lampung.

RESULTS ND DISCUSSION

Based on the tracer study data, the number of graduates of the Islamic Education Management Study Program shows a consistent increase every year: in 2020 there were 97 graduates, 110 graduates in 2021, and 156 graduates in 2022. In total, 363 graduates from the last three years participated in filling out the tracer study questionnaire, providing an overview of the distribution, competence, and relevance of Islamic Education Management graduates to the needs of the world of work.

Of the total 156 respondents who filled out the tracer study questionnaire, they were alumni from three batches of graduates, namely 2020, 2021, and 2022. Based on data regarding alumni status, it is known that 75% of all respondents who filled out the questionnaire were already working, while 4% were still looking for work. In addition, there are alumni who choose to be entrepreneurs. Meanwhile, some alumni who are not working prefer to continue their education to a higher level. This data provides a clear picture of the distribution of alumni employment status and their career choices after graduation.

With regard to the period of getting a job, most alumni of the Islamic Education Management Study Program got a job in less than 6 months, with 55% of alumni getting a job within 3 months after

graduation. As many as 34% of alumni got jobs within 3-6 months, while no alumni took more than 6 months to get a job. This data shows the relevance of graduates' competencies to the needs of the labor market. Most graduates work in the private and government sectors, with 19% of alumni choosing entrepreneurship. The percentage of graduates working in the non-profit sector is still low, indicating that opportunities in the social sector or non-governmental organizations have not been widely utilized by graduates.

The results of the tracer study also explain that, English competency appears less needed than other competencies. This can be seen from the smaller value/radius on the English language competency axis. Competencies such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and management of Islamic education generally have higher values, indicating that these soft skills are highly expected by employers.

Strengthening the Islamic Education Management Study Program Curriculum through Tracer Study Results

Before discussing its strengthening, the results of the tracer study are first presented which explain the students' perceptions of the relevance of the curriculum to current employment. The tracer study results show that the curriculum implemented in educational institutions is quite effective in preparing graduates for the world of work. A total of 93.5% of respondents considered the curriculum to be very relevant or relevant, while only 6.5% felt it was less or very irrelevant. Despite the positive results, periodic evaluation is still needed to ensure the curriculum continues to evolve in accordance with industry dynamics and labor market needs.

Strengthening the curriculum does not only depend on the results of internal evaluation, but is also strongly influenced by input from graduate users. The perception of external users or stakeholders, such as the business world and industry, is an important indicator in seeing the extent to which the curriculum is able to produce competent and adaptive graduates. Therefore, the strengthening strategy is carried out by considering the real needs of the changing world of work. Curriculum adjustments must be responsive to changing times, technological advances, and new Islamic education management needs that arise.

Curriculum strengthening is also based on consideration of graduate user perceptions of alumni. This assessment includes various important aspects that support the work readiness of alumni, including moral aspects, professional Islamic education management, Islamic education management, communication skills, teamwork, and mastery of technology. The following are the results of the survey conducted:

Table 1. Graduate Users' Perception of Graduates

No	Aspects	Less Good	Medium	Good	Very good
A	**Integrity**				
2	Discipline	7	12	59	22
3	Honesty	11,5	18	46, 5	24
4	Work Motivation	7.5	18.5	56.5	17.5
5	Work Ethic	8	19	56.5	16.5
6	Morality	7	19.5	51.5	22
7	Ethics	6.5	14	56	23.5
B	**Professionalism**				
1	Ability to apply skills/ In-work jobs	7	19	54	20
2	Work productivity	6.5	18	52.5	23
3	Innovation	7.5	18.5	51	23
4	Ability to Complete Problems in work	8	19.5	53.5	19
5	Adaptability to the environment	8.5	18.5	51.5	21.5
6	Responsive to market needs	7	18	51.5	23.5
C	**Personality**				
1	Emotional maturity/self-control	8	19	52	21
2	Self-confidence	8,5	18	55	18.5
D	**Communication Skills**				
1	Ability to use Foreign Languages in work (English/Mandarin/or other)	7	18.5	57	17.5
2	Ability to express ideas and opinions	7.5	19	53.5	20
E	**Leadership**				
1	Managerial skills	8	19.5	51	21.5
2	Ability as a motivator in the work environment	8.5	19.5	53	19
F	**Technology Mastery**				
4	Ability to utilize information technology in Jobs	9	19.5	53	18.5
5	Ability to use modern tools according to job demands	9.5	19	53.5	18
F	**Teamwork**				
1	Ability to socialize in the work environment	7,5	18	53.5	21
2	Openness to criticism and suggestions	8	18.5	55	18.5
3	Ability to work together in a team	8.5	18.5	57	16
	Self-Development				
1	Motivation in learning new things for the betterment of the institution/ Company	9	19	58.5	13.5
	Breadth of Interdisciplinary Insight				
1	Interdisciplinary insights of graduates	9.5	19	59	12.5

The survey results indicate that the majority of graduates are able to answer the needs of stakeholders quite well. However, there are still a number of graduates who have not fully met the expected expectations. In general, alumni show adequate competence in the world of work, although there are several aspects that need to be improved, especially in terms of communication skills, openness to input, and strengthening the quality of Islamic education management.

With regard to the results of the tracer study conducted by the Islamic Education Management Study Program, it has been clearly used as a basis in the process of strengthening and developing the curriculum. The findings of the tracer study show that the majority of Islamic education management graduates have competencies that are in line with industry needs, especially in the realm of *soft skills* such as interpersonal communication *skills*, team collaboration, Islamic education management leadership, and integrity and work ethics. Based on this data, the curriculum team systematically maintains and strengthens relevant courses, such as Education Human Resource Management, Islamic Education Management, and Professional Ethics.

Furthermore, one of the important findings from the tracer study was the low mastery of foreign languages and the management of Islamic education and information technology by some graduates. In response to this, the curriculum was revised by adding weight to the Educational English course and integrating digital content and *technology-enhanced learning* into several key courses. For example, in the 2023 curriculum revision, a *project-based learning* approach with a digital base has been implemented in the Educational Planning course, as well as the utilization of digital learning evaluation applications in Educational Program Evaluation.

The utilization of tracer study results in curriculum development is in line with the views of experts. Daeng et.al. (2021) Akung Daeng, Ihsan Rois, & Ade Paranata (2021) emphasized that the tracer study is an important tool in evaluating the suitability of graduate competencies for the world of work, as well as strategic input in developing an adaptive curriculum. Fajaryati et al., (2018) also emphasized that tracer study data can provide a concrete picture of graduate performance, which is very useful for improving and perfecting the learning process in study programs.

From a theoretical perspective, this approach is in line with the Outcome-Based Education theory developed by Spady(1994), which emphasizes the importance of designing curriculum based on real results or outcomes of graduates. In this context, tracer studies become an important instrument to measure whether learning outcomes are actually achieved and relevant to the needs of the world of work (Rodin et al., 2024; Spady, 1994;

Suking et al., 2022). In addition, according to Biggs & Tang (2011) in the constructive alignment model, curriculum development should be based on a deep understanding of the professional needs of graduates, where tracer studies serve as a very useful feedback mechanism. Schomburg(2007), in the Handbook for Tracer Studies, emphasizes that tracer study results should be integrated into the internal quality assurance cycle to bridge the gap between the world of education and the job market. This is also done by the Islamic Education Management Study Program through discussion forums with graduate users, alumni research, and updating graduate learning outcomes based on periodic evaluations.

Although the implementation still faces technical and coordinative challenges, the results of the tracer study have provided a clear direction in the preparation of a curriculum based on market needs and the times. This proves that the Islamic Education Management Study Program has utilized the tracer study not only as a documentation tool, but as a strategic instrument in realizing a responsive, dynamic, and evidence-based *curriculum development.*

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the tracer study conducted by the Islamic Education Management Study Program, it can be concluded that the majority of graduates have demonstrated competencies that are relevant to the demands of the world of work, especially in aspects of *soft skills* such as communication, teamwork, Islamic education management, and professional ethics. This finding provides a strong basis for the curriculum development team to maintain and improve the learning substance in courses that support character development and professionalism of graduates. On the other hand, the findings of the tracer study also show that there are still weaknesses in mastering foreign languages and digital literacy. In response to these results, the study program has revised the curriculum by adding weight to the strengthening of the English aspect and integrating the use of technology in several core courses. This shows that the tracer study is not only used as an administrative document, but is actually utilized as a basis for academic policy making. The utilization of tracer study results is in line with Outcome-Based Education and constructive alignment theories, which emphasize the importance of curriculum alignment with learning outcomes and industry needs. In addition, referring to, the tracer study serves as a strategic bridge between higher education and the world of work.

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