

# Transforming the Landscape of Higher Education in Bangladesh: Teachers' Perspectives on Implementing Outcome-Based Education (OBE)

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**Abstract:** The landscape of higher education in Bangladesh has notably transitioned from a traditional teacher-centered model to a student-centered approach that emphasizes achieving specific outcomes. This study examines the significant effort to implement an Outcome-Based Education (OBE) curriculum at the tertiary level in Bangladesh. Using qualitative methods, the research explores the perspectives of four Bangladeshi teachers on the integration of OBE, particularly in light of the curriculum policies established by the Bangladesh Accreditation Council (BAC). Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and classroom observations, then categorized, coded, and analyzed for themes. The findings reveal that teachers have both positive and negative views on the adoption of OBE in their classrooms. Positive outcomes include enhanced ability to design and refine instructional materials and establish learning objectives that meet students' needs and goals. Teachers also noted that OBE principles facilitate active engagement in learning and teaching processes, adaptable to various classroom settings. To successfully shift from a teacher-centered to a student-centered approach, the study suggests that teachers need to focus on creating interactive classrooms, selecting relevant materials, setting clear learning objectives, fully understanding OBE concepts, and implementing these through pair and group activities.

**Keywords:** *Outcome Based Education (OBE); Higher Education in Bangladesh; Student-Centered Learning; Curriculum Policies; Teachers' Perspectives.*

## Introduction

Significant global shifts in educational systems necessitate the transformation of conventional curricula into outcome-based education (OBE) curricula at the tertiary level in Bangladesh. Furthermore, the twenty-first-century global environment demands professionals to possess expertise in adaptability, critical thinking, and independent decision-making (Milon, 2020; Longmore et al., 2018; Alam et al., 2021). Toufique (2014) identified a considerable skills disparity in the

Bangladeshi job market, revealing that 62% of young workers lacked the necessary education to perform their jobs adequately. This finding underscores the ineffectiveness of the current curriculum, which is based on traditional objectives and methods. Conventional educational programs have a limited focus on occupations requiring soft skills, such as effective communication, interpersonal abilities, analytical thinking, and positive work attitudes (Yasmin et al., 2024; Alam et al., 2022b; Alam et al., 2018). In contrast, the OBE curriculum shifts the emphasis from "teaching" to "learning," "skills" to "thinking," "content" to "process," and "teacher instruction" to "student demonstration" (Spady, 1994; Hassan, 2012). The term outcome-based education (OBE) has also been referred to as performance-based education, result-based education, transformation education, and competency-based education (Harden, 2002; Gieseen-Hood, 1999). This educational approach is currently widely accepted and successful in 47 countries, including the USA, the UK, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Malaysia, and the Philippines (Tam, 2014; Midraj, 2018; Rao, 2015). The OBE approach has recently garnered significant interest in Bangladesh, particularly following the university self-assessment program sponsored by the World Bank, which supported the UGC's HEQEP project aimed at enhancing institutional quality. The OBE curriculum prioritizes establishing an educational system that ensures all necessary resources are provided to students, enabling them to successfully attain the desired learning outcomes by the end of their educational journey (Spady, 1994). OBE learning is a highly effective approach that allows teachers to create a distinct classroom environment where students actively engage in classroom activities. This approach aligns with other contemporary educational strategies such as lifelong learning, student-centered learning, active learning, and discovery learning. It ensures that institutions achieve their predetermined goals and objectives by clearly defining all teaching and learning methods in the curriculum (Alam et al., 2022a; Alam et al., 2024; Harden et al., 1999; Midraj, 2018; Milon, 2016; Milon et al., 2018b). The global trend in tertiary education has shifted from a traditional teacher-centered approach to a contemporary student-centered paradigm (Alam et al., 2024; Tam, 2014; Milon & Ali, 2023; Rana et al., 2024). The advent of the Fourth Industrial Revolution has brought about significant transformations in the labor market, emphasizing the demand for modern job-specific soft skills in addition to a basic level of hard skills (Milon et al., 2023).

Consequently, it is essential for graduates to possess the ability to adapt to technical and global challenges to enhance their employability. This global educational paradigm shift aligns with contemporary demands (Milon et al., 2018a). The worldwide transformation has significantly impacted the higher education system in Bangladesh (Banna et al., 2023). The Ministry of Education and the University Grant Commission (UGC) of Bangladesh have underscored the necessity of transforming and implementing the OBE curriculum to cultivate a skilled future workforce. This initiative is supported by the Bangladesh National Qualification Framework (BNQF) Part-B Higher Education Level 7-10, issued in 2021 under the Bangladesh Accreditation Council Act, 2017. Numerous universities in Bangladesh have prioritized the implementation of the OBE curriculum at the National Qualification Framework (NQF) level seventeen to comply with the standards established by the Bangladesh Accreditation Council (BAC). The BAC has identified four domains of learning outcomes: foundational skills, social skills, thinking skills, and personal skills, aiming to mitigate future employment-related skill gaps (BNQF 2021).

Furthermore, the Bangladesh Accreditation Council has outlined ten internationally recognized standards to enhance the quality of academic institutions. One of these standards focuses on

curriculum development, aiming to elucidate critical aspects of the framework to ensure the effective implementation of an OBE curriculum (BAC, 2019). Out of 138 institutions, 69 have established their own Institutional Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) to conduct self-evaluation and implement the Post Self-Assessment Improvement Plan (BNQF, 2021). This indicates that 50% of universities have commenced the process of transforming and enhancing their OBE curriculum, a crucial benchmark for ensuring quality. However, the universities that do not participate in this initiative may hinder the nationwide advancement of the OBE curriculum's implementation. Before the process of institutional accreditation, assessing the challenges in implementing the OBE curriculum at the tertiary education level in Bangladesh was considered one of the most formidable topics. Furthermore, it has been noted that most prior research has focused on the concepts or difficulties associated with OBE, with only a limited number of studies investigating teachers' perspectives. This study identifies a deficiency in representing instructors' perspectives on the implementation of the OBE curriculum in tertiary education in Bangladesh.

In recent decades, education has undergone significant changes due to the dynamic requirements for skills and the evolving methods of teaching, learning, and assessment across various disciplines (Milon et al., 2018a). These changes are readily observable in all forms of education, as students are increasingly required to engage in practical experiences that are directly relevant to the real world (Senaratne & Gunarathne, 2019; Milon et al., 2017). Moreover, adopting the OBE curriculum has a beneficial influence on the attitudes of both teachers and learners (Alimyar, 2020). Although there is a growing demand for the OBE curriculum from the UGC, the Ministry of Education, the Bangladesh Accreditation Council, and universities, its implementation is still in the early stages. Consequently, the current effort to adopt the OBE curriculum necessitates increased focus to ensure successful implementation in higher education. Implementing the OBE curriculum at the higher education level in Bangladesh has thus emerged as a significant concern. While numerous studies have been undertaken on the application of the OBE curriculum elsewhere, only a handful have been carried out in Bangladesh. The OBE curriculum in Bangladesh is a recent addition, prompted by the implementation of a new educational policy. Hence, it is imperative to examine the instructors' perspectives on the execution of the OBE curriculum in tertiary education in Bangladesh.

This study is crucial given the scarcity of research on the application of the OBE curriculum in higher education in Bangladesh. Consequently, this work significantly enhances the current knowledge base in this field. This research can aid instructors in various disciplines in evaluating the efficacy of their teaching and assessment methods. Additionally, it will enable institutions to analyze the value of transitioning from a traditional instruction-focused strategy to a more learner-centered approach. Since its establishment in 2017, the Bangladesh Accreditation Council (BAC) has been working alongside the UGC and the Ministry of Education of Bangladesh to establish the Bangladesh National Qualification Framework (BNQF) 2021. This framework aims to create a cohesive education system in higher education throughout Bangladesh. During this period of change, the implementation of the OBE curriculum faces numerous challenges that policymakers have not yet addressed. The recommendations of this study will assist policymakers in formulating appropriate policies for the advancement of education in Bangladesh. Moreover, this study will benefit future employers by helping to reduce skill shortages in the sector by providing institutions with suitable guidance to promote high-quality education that aligns with industry standards.

The objective of this study is to ascertain the perspectives of teachers regarding the effective execution of the OBE curriculum in higher education institutions in Bangladesh. It is important to note that 50% of universities in Bangladesh have not yet participated in the quality enhancement program through the IQAC, despite the BNQF already implementing a quality framework to improve and develop institutional accreditation. Given the scarcity of studies on teachers' opinions of applying the OBE curriculum, conducting a study on this topic has become an urgent and essential matter. This study aims to investigate the perspectives of Bangladeshi university educators on the execution of the OBE curriculum in tertiary education in Bangladesh.

To achieve this objective, two research questions are considered:

1. What are the perceptions of university teachers regarding the implementation of the OBE curriculum at the tertiary education level in Bangladesh?
2. What are the suggestions for the implementation of OBE at the tertiary education level in Bangladesh?

The subsequent segments of the research follow a structured chronological order. The "Literature Review" section encapsulates an in-depth exploration of existing scholarly works. Following this, the "Methodology of the Study" elucidates the comprehensive approach employed in conducting the research. Subsequently, the "Results and Discussion" section scrutinizes the findings and provides a detailed analysis. In the ensuing "Recommendations" section, actionable insights and suggestions are delineated. Finally, the "Conclusion" section encapsulates a concise summary and inference drawn from the study's outcomes.

## 1. Literature Review

### 2.1 Outcome-Based Education (OBE)

The concept of Outcome-Based Education (OBE) has been extensively explored in academic literature. Spady (1988) defines OBE as an educational approach characterized by the deliberate creation and documentation of instructional materials, where the establishment of goals and outcomes is prioritized during curriculum development. In this perspective, the curriculum is tailored according to the desired outcomes envisioned by educators for their students upon completion of their studies. Giese-Hood (1999) further describes OBE as a pedagogical methodology that emphasizes both the content and process of student learning. Moreover, Midraj (2018) and Tam (2014) elucidate OBE as an educational framework where educators and students are well-versed in the educational standards and learning objectives that students are expected to achieve and practically demonstrate by the conclusion of their learning journey. This perspective highlights the importance of aligning teaching strategies with predefined educational outcomes. Gurukkal (2020) underscores the necessity of establishing appropriate learning objectives consistent with the curriculum content to ensure effective educational outcomes.

Furthermore, Rao (2020) delves into the identification of attainable and measurable results aligned with the cognitive, emotional, and psychomotor aspects of Bloom's taxonomy. Malan (2000) presents a model of teaching and learning that integrates elements from previous approaches, such as mastery learning, competency-based learning, and active learning. This model advocates for a student-centric educational system that prioritizes individual learning needs and fosters stakeholder collaboration in curriculum design. Davis (2003) emphasizes the significance of defining desired objectives before

designing the educational process, thereby highlighting the central tenet of OBE. Additionally, Mitra and Gupta (2020) assert that the primary goal of OBE is to equip students with the requisite skills and knowledge to thrive in the global job market. They argue that Optimal Business Education (OBE) can effectively address the evolving demands of the market by cultivating essential competencies in students. Moreover, Yusof et al. (2017) advocate for the OBE curriculum as the most suitable approach to address contemporary challenges in education. They posit that transitioning from traditional curriculum paradigms to Outcome-Based Education (OBE) is imperative for maintaining global competitiveness. In essence, OBE emerges as a comprehensive educational framework that prioritizes defined learning outcomes and fosters student success in a dynamic global landscape.

## ***2.2 Difference between OBE curriculum and Traditional curriculum***

Researchers contend that the Outcome-Based Education (OBE) model represents a modified instructional strategy that places learner integrity and positive motivation as paramount variables for educators (Sawant, 2016). Originating from Tyler's educational model, known as the 'Achievement of Desired Outcomes' in the early 1950s, the OBE approach has evolved through various stages of development, culminating in its widespread implementation across educational systems globally. This paradigm views education as a multifaceted process, encompassing educational goals, learning experiences, and progress evaluation. Bloom (1977) played a pivotal role in the initial stages of the OBE approach by developing a classification system for the learning domain, which incorporated educational goals. Lewy (1977) affirmed the relevance of Tyler's approach to both cognitive and affective outcomes. Further enhancements to Tyler's paradigm were made by Wheeler (1969), who introduced additional elements such as purposes, objectives, learning experiences, content, and assessment.

A fundamental distinction between traditional and OBE curricula lies in their orientation. While traditional education predominantly focuses on the delivery of study materials, commonly referred to as an input, the OBE curriculum prioritizes the outcomes that learners will acquire (Sawant, 2016). An (2014) asserts that the implementation of OBE accommodates various educational paradigms and does not prescribe specific teaching or learning styles. Instead, it emphasizes the demonstration of students' abilities and knowledge acquired from specific skills and topics. Traditionally, education tends to prioritize the role of the teacher and is less adaptable, relying on predefined goals, standards, and instruction. Conversely, the OBE curriculum is highly flexible and aims to drive educational reform (An, 2014). Midraj (2018) and Spady (1993) further affirm this by highlighting the specific skills and abilities emphasized in the OBE curriculum that learners should demonstrate upon course completion.

In contrast to a conventional curriculum focused on objectives, where emphasis is placed on the knowledge and skills acquired by students at the end of a course, the OBE curriculum places greater emphasis on what learners can demonstrate upon completion (Harden et al., 1999). This retrogressive approach, as characterized by Harden et al. (1999), prioritizes the identification of graduates' qualities over the methods used to cultivate them, thereby shaping a curriculum centered on measurable outcomes and learner proficiency. The institutional accreditation model has undergone a significant transition, shifting its emphasis from teachers to learners, thereby expecting students to actively participate in the educational process. According to the Outcome-Based Education (OBE) model, faculty members are tasked with facilitating the learning process rather than adopting the instructional role typical of traditional teaching approaches (Cuseo, 2015). Central to the design and

organization of the OBE curriculum is the concept of constructive alignment, as proposed by Biggs (1996). This notion closely intertwines with the OBE framework, emphasizing the alignment of intended learning outcomes, teaching activities, and assessment methods. By ensuring that these components are in harmony, constructive alignment aims to enhance the effectiveness of teaching and learning within the OBE context.

### **2.3 Structure, Design & Development of OBE Curriculum**

The design and implementation of educational programs should be guided by learning outcomes that align with the abilities expected of graduates, as advocated by institutional stakeholders (Spady, 1994). Learning outcomes denote specific abilities or skills that a student demonstrates after completing a learning experience, representing changes resulting from their learning process. These outcomes must correspond to the requirements of all university stakeholders. Bloom (1977) categorized graduate qualities into three domains: cognitive, emotional, and psychomotor, which form the basis of learning outcomes. The process of designing an Outcome-Based Education (OBE) curriculum entails reorganizing curriculum structures, assessment methods, and reporting mechanisms in education (Tucker, 2004). Towers (1996) and Harden (2009) delineate key activities crucial for successful OBE implementation, including determining desired learning outcomes, assessing student progress based on demonstrated achievements, employing diverse teaching and evaluation strategies to cater to individual needs, and providing adequate support to help students reach their highest potential. Furthermore, Acharya (2003) highlights the importance of considering inquiries into the specific knowledge or skills intended for learners to acquire. This involves understanding the rationale behind the desired knowledge acquisition by professors, determining effective teaching methods, and establishing mechanisms for assessing student learning. Coherence within the OBE curriculum necessitates alignment between desired outcomes and methodologies employed for teaching, learning, and assessment.

## **3. Methodology of the Study**

### **3.1 Research Design**

This study employs qualitative research methods to investigate the perspectives of Bangladeshi teachers regarding the implementation of OBE curriculum at the tertiary level. Qualitative research is particularly suited for in-depth analysis, allowing researchers to delve deeply into phenomena such as educational practices. Qualitative studies are beneficial for exploring complex subjects like educational reforms because they enable researchers to delve deeply into the subject matter. By examining social behaviors, beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions, qualitative research provides valuable insights into the experiences of individuals and groups (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). In this study, the researchers aim to understand the attitudes and perspectives of Bangladeshi university instructors regarding Outcome-Based Education (OBE) and its implementation in classrooms. Classroom observations provide firsthand insights into instructional practices and evaluation methods employed by teachers. Through analysis of these events, researchers gain a deeper understanding of the significance attributed to them by individuals (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). Following data collection, the analysis is conducted by considering participants' perceptions and beliefs regarding OBE. This approach allows for a thorough examination of the subject matter, contributing valuable insights to the field of education.

### 3.2 Participants and their selection criteria

Data were gathered from four lecturers at a private university in Bangladesh, selected through purposeful sampling. Among the participants, two were male and two were female, all of whom had prior acquaintance with the researchers. The selection criteria aimed to include individuals who had attended workshops on Outcome-Based Education (OBE), possessing the requisite knowledge and skills for its implementation in their classrooms. Morrison (2000) emphasized the importance of consciously selecting participants closest in proximity to serve as responders in a study. Convenience sampling, a form of purposive sampling, was employed, considering factors such as time, accessibility, and participant availability (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). This sampling method was chosen for its ability to establish rapport between the researcher and participants, crucial for qualitative studies. The deliberate sample technique facilitated a thorough investigation, as participants were considered knowledgeable and insightful regarding OBE implementation. To protect participants' privacy, pseudonyms (T1, T2, T3, and T4) were assigned to them. The following table provides a succinct overview of the participants' demographic data.

Table 1

#### *The Demographic Information of Four Respondents*

Name (pseudonym)	Gender	Highest Degree	Designation	Years of Teaching Experience
T1	Male	PhD	Associate Professor	15
T2	Male	MA	Assistant Professor	10
T3	Female	MA	Sr. Lecturer	5
T4	Female	MA	Lecturer	2

### 3.3 Data Collection Method

In this qualitative study, data collection involved employing both in-depth interviews and classroom observations. The interview questions were formulated based on prior research conducted by Spady (1994), Acharya (2003), Spady (1993), and Akramy (2021). Semi-structured interviews were chosen to provide flexibility in exploring themes while maintaining a structured approach to inquiry (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). This design allows for follow-up questions and probes, enabling a deeper understanding of participants' perspectives on Outcome-Based Education (OBE) implementation. Conducted in May 2023, the interviews were held in person and audio-recorded for accuracy. Each interview was transcribed meticulously to ensure precision and comprehensiveness. Transcribed data were subsequently reviewed by participants to enhance the study's validity and reliability (Denscombe, 2010). Additionally, classroom observations were conducted to assess the alignment between Bangladeshi university instructors' ideas and practices and the impact of OBE on classroom evaluation methods.

Observations provided a genuine and adaptable environment to evaluate how participants implemented OBE principles in teaching and evaluation. Tuckman (1994) emphasizes the importance of discreetly observing participants in their natural setting, particularly in a single classroom, to gain insights into their instructional practices. The researcher employed this methodology until it either

confirmed or challenged initial interpretations of participants' perspectives. By integrating semi-structured interviews with observations, the researcher gained insight into the significance individuals attribute to their actions in educational settings. This approach allowed for a comprehensive examination of participants' alignment with OBE principles (Tuckman, 1994). During interviews, additional questions were posed to stimulate deeper reflection and encourage participants to articulate their thoughts on OBE. Field notes were recorded during observations to document significant findings, behaviors, and interactions. The data collection period spanned six weeks, encompassing both interview sessions and classroom observations. This comprehensive approach ensured a thorough exploration of participants' perspectives on OBE implementation at the tertiary level.

### **3.4 Data Analysis**

In qualitative research, the data analysis process is integral for extracting meaningful insights from gathered data. In this study, the researchers adhered to Marshall and Rossman's (2014) comprehensive seven-stage process for qualitative data analysis. These stages encompass compiling, immersing, producing themes and categories, coding, interpreting, considering alternative understandings, and composing results. Employing this systematic methodology ensured a thorough and methodical examination of data collected from interviews and classroom observations. Initially, all sources of data, including interview transcripts and observation notes, were gathered and organized systematically. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and observations. Following interviews, data were compiled and subjected to coding and theme analysis. Subsequently, two participants from the interview pool were observed in their respective classrooms to assess alignment between their perspectives on Outcome-Based Education (OBE) and instructional practices.

OBE emphasizes students' learning objectives and the expectation that they achieve predetermined outcomes by session's end. The observation aimed to ensure consistency with interview data collection methods and to assess instructors' implementation of OBE concepts and practices. Four tertiary-level teachers from Bangladesh, representing diverse disciplines, participated in this qualitative study at a private institution. Their teaching experiences ranged from 2 to 15 years, with most holding Master's degrees in relevant subjects. They taught students spanning first-year to final-year, with class sizes exceeding 60 pupils. Two out of the four instructors interviewed were observed during their classes. Observation duration spanned six days, with each instructor observed for three days. Researchers monitored instructors to ascertain whether they implemented OBE concepts and practices or merely possessed theoretical understanding. Observation sessions lasted a full session (60 minutes) per day, allowing researchers to observe instructors' interactions with students closely.

### **3.5 Ethical Considerations**

Stringent ethical considerations were meticulously adhered to throughout every phase of the data collection process. The researcher meticulously curated a series of inquiries for the semi-structured interview, ensuring relevance and appropriateness for participants. Additionally, participants were administered a consent form, allowing them to explicitly indicate their willingness to participate in the study. All four participants willingly and explicitly expressed their opinions and attitudes regarding Outcome Based Education (OBE). Prior to the interview, mutually agreeable days and times were designated for scheduling discussions between researchers and participants. On the interview day, participants were provided with a detailed explanation of the research study and its objectives to



ensure informed consent. Interviews were conducted in Bangla, the predominant language in Bangladesh, considering English as a foreign language not widely understood by the majority of the population (Milon & Ali, 2023; Milon et al., 2023). Participants were explicitly informed of their autonomy to withdraw from the study at any point without providing a reason. The researchers remained available to offer clarification and assistance in response to any inquiries or concerns voiced by participants, prioritizing the ethical integrity of the research process.

#### 4. Findings

The purpose of this study was to explore the attitudes of Bangladeshi University instructors towards the implementation of Outcome-Based Education (OBE) within the educational context of Bangladesh. Subsequent to conducting semi-structured interviews, the researcher systematically organized the collected data, applied coding techniques, and proceeded with a thematic analysis. Through this analysis, four prominent themes emerged: (i) perspectives on the fundamental nature of OBE, (ii) varied interpretations of OBE, (iii) the formulation of learning outcomes utilizing Bloom's Taxonomy, and (iv) the shift from teacher-centered instruction to a student-centered learning approach. The forthcoming section of the study involves a detailed examination of these research findings.

##### 4.1 Findings from Interviews

###### 4.1.1 Beliefs on the fundamental nature of Outcome-Based Education (OBE)

In relation to the first theme, "Beliefs on the fundamental nature of Outcome-Based Education (OBE)," three participants articulated that OBE serves as a beneficial approach, offering enhanced learning opportunities. The overarching aim of OBE, as perceived by these participants, is to empower learners to achieve significant milestones, while diminishing the reliance on instructors in the teaching-learning process. OBE consistently underscores the importance of students setting high expectations for themselves, with active engagement in various classroom activities being identified as the primary means to attain these goals and enhance learning and comprehension. The sentiments of participants are encapsulated in the following two verbatim quotes:

To effectively implement Outcome-Based Education (OBE), instructors must prioritize the learning outcomes of their students. OBE is a pedagogical approach designed to furnish each learner with clearly defined educational goals or objectives.

(T1, 2023, Interview)

The aim of OBE is to foster a robust intrinsic motivation for learning among students and promote their active involvement in classroom activities orchestrated by educators. The OBE framework advocates for active engagement from both teachers and students in the teaching-learning process. In essence, leveraging the internet enables us to acquire knowledge and expertise by facilitating exploration and gathering of new information on particular subjects. Overall, this approach to teaching and learning proves highly effective and advantageous for both students and educators in attaining desired objectives.

(T2, 2023, Interview)

###### 4.1.2 Varying interpretations of OBE

In relation to issue (ii), "Varying interpretations of OBE," the majority of respondents highlighted Outcome-Based Education (OBE) as the primary method to transition passive learners into active

participants in the learning process. They emphasized that OBE facilitates active engagement among students, enabling them to take ownership of their learning. Moreover, respondents noted that OBE encourages instructors to consider the individual needs of their students and provide them with diverse and authentic learning resources beyond traditional textbooks. Several excerpts from interviews with participants elucidate these perspectives:

OBE strongly advocates for the integration of formative assessment into teaching practices to ensure meaningful and productive academic outcomes. Additionally, OBE suggests the application of its principles in the classroom until the needs and expectations of students are adequately addressed.

(T4, 2023, Interview)

Through Outcome-Based Education (OBE), students participate in a wide range of activities that promote active and collaborative engagement, allowing for reflection on their learning.

(T2, 2023, Interview)

The OBE program cultivates a supportive learning environment that values and respects the perspectives of all students. Furthermore, it encourages instructors to prioritize student outcomes over traditional lecture-based delivery methods. OBE places significant emphasis on high-level learner participation, with a focus on achieving desired outcomes.

(T1, 2023, Interview)

However, several educators expressed unfavorable perspectives on Outcome-Based Education (OBE), juxtaposed with positive ones. They underscored that OBE may not be suitable for certain subjects, such as Mathematics, English, and Political Sciences. According to their views, implementing OBE concepts and principles in classrooms proves time-consuming due to inadequate provision of necessary resources such as chairs, tables for project activities, electronic devices, and stationery to facilitate progress in their activities. Below are excerpts from interviews with two participants:

While OBE presents an effective pedagogical approach that prioritizes student-centered learning, it demands a significant investment of time to fully comprehend its significance and integrate it into classroom practice. Many educators lack familiarity with the principles and characteristics of OBE. It is essential that comprehensive training is provided prior to the implementation of Outcome-Based Education (OBE) in classrooms, ensuring that the specific needs of each class are addressed.

(T3, 2023, Interview)

The majority of our classes are at maximum capacity with student enrolment exceeding sixty pupils per session. Consequently, rearranging chairs or altering seating arrangements proves impractical. The implementation of OBE may pose challenges for instructors. Moreover, students may not be adequately prepared to embrace OBE in their classrooms.

(T2, 2023, Interview)

#### **4.1.3 Setting learning outcomes using Bloom's Taxonomy**

The third theme revolves around the consideration of Bloom's Taxonomy in setting learning outcomes within the framework of Outcome-Based Education (OBE). Participants highlighted that in OBE, instructors are tasked with creating objectives aligned with students' needs, prioritizing their acquisition and comprehension of knowledge and skills over teachers' expectations and preferences. Moreover, the establishment of explicit objectives for classroom activities offers guidance for both educators and students, ensuring adherence to the learning and teaching processes. The following excerpts from interviews with three participants further elucidate these perspectives:

Before participating in the OBE program, I formulated learning objectives for my students in a manner that lacked measurability and effectiveness. It was uncertain whether the desired outcomes were achieved by the end of the session. Currently, I am witnessing numerous positive changes not only in my teaching methods but also in the clearly defined learning outcomes for students.

(T1, 2023, Interview)

Previously, both I and the majority of teachers prioritized student input. However, following OBE training, we have seen significant improvements in our daily courses. Our teaching approach now emphasizes not only student input but also the development and preparation of teaching materials and activities addressing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. This ensures the sessions are beneficial for learners. By carefully planning our activities and considering these three critical factors, we ensure our activities are both interactive and practical, effectively engaging students.

(T2, 2023, Interview)

The OBE approach has proven highly beneficial, particularly in the field of engineering. When establishing learning objectives, our focus lies on students' requirements. Subsequently, we refine these objectives using Bloom's Taxonomy to ensure they are effectively measurable. In setting objectives, we utilize verbs aligned with the "SMART" framework to facilitate their attainment by the end of the session.

(T4, 2023, Interview)

#### ***4.1.4 The transition from teacher-centered instruction to a student-centered learning approach***

All participants within the theme of transitioning from teacher-centered instruction to a student-centered learning approach articulated a steadfast commitment to earnestly implementing Outcome-Based Education (OBE) in their classrooms. They underscored that post OBE training, teaching is perceived as a duty, necessitating attentiveness to students' challenges. Utilizing the principles of OBE, instructors prioritize student-centered learning methodologies, craft curricula and materials tailored to learners' needs, and integrate communicative and supportive activities. Through these measures, learners are afforded opportunities for substantial achievements after each session. Here are direct quotations from two interviewees:

Prior to undergoing OBE training, I juggled multiple responsibilities including delivering lectures, designing instructional materials, arranging classroom seating, among various others. Through deeper immersion in OBE principles, I've embraced a shift from a teacher-centered to a student-centered learning approach. This transition has spurred heightened

student motivation and active engagement in classroom activities. I've come to realize the necessity of granting students greater autonomy to foster agency in their learning journey and encourage active participation in the educational process.

(T2, 2023, Interview)

The transition from conventional teaching methods to OBE implementation in our classrooms poses challenges and demands significant time investment. Despite inadequate facilities, we remain committed to integrating OBE concepts into our teaching practices. Both educators and students exhibit limited enthusiasm and proficiency in traditional teaching methods. OBE streamlines the efforts of teachers and students alike in facilitating the learning and teaching processes, ensuring smooth and effective classroom progress.

(T3, 2023, Interview)

#### 4.2 Findings from Classroom Observations

The classroom observations revealed a discernible gap between teachers and students concerning the implementation of Outcome-Based Education (OBE) in the teaching and learning process. It was observed that teachers in both English and Engineering classrooms predominantly employed teacher-centered teaching methods, delivering the curriculum with a high degree of authority (Hasan et al., 2019). However, limited facilitation of learning was evident, with notable exceptions in one Engineering class. In both instances, teachers appeared ill-prepared, resulting in minimal student engagement and learning outcomes. Despite attempts to integrate OBE principles, there was a reluctance to utilize teaching materials effectively, and a lack of adherence to structured activity stages for student engagement. One positive observation was the teachers' proactive formation of small groups of students, demonstrating a student-centered approach in selecting group members. The widely adopted jigsaw approach facilitated this grouping process. Moreover, teachers exhibited a friendly demeanor while interacting with students, promptly addressing any queries raised in the classrooms.

Students in both classes were engaged in productive activities during the session, displaying aptitude in responding to teacher inquiries and completing exercises. However, some students harbored apprehension towards teachers, possibly due to perceived authoritarian behavior. Notably, while teachers demonstrated engagement and preparation, some students were overlooked, leading to unequal participation opportunities. Overall, it was observed that teachers endeavored to apply OBE principles, particularly in designing learning outcomes aligned with Bloom's Taxonomy. Classroom activities encompassed cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains, promoting intentional student engagement. Students displayed enthusiasm for active participation, indicating a dynamic and participatory learning environment.

#### 5. Discussion

This section comprehensively explores the findings of a study regarding the attitudes of Bangladeshi University instructors toward the integration of Outcome-Based Education (OBE) within the country's educational framework. Drawing on relevant literature, it seeks to provide context and substantiate the analysis. Outcome-Based Education (OBE) stands as a potent educational approach aimed at nurturing highly skilled individuals. The first theme, "Beliefs on the fundamental nature of Outcome-

Based Education (OBE)," underscores the student-centered focus of OBE, which addresses learners' needs while fostering autonomy and critical thinking skills. Existing critiques of traditional management education highlight its inadequacy in producing graduates capable of meeting global demands (Thomas & Cornuel, 2012). Consequently, there is a pressing need to enhance the skills of the younger generation to harness demographic advantages and maximize Bangladesh's economic growth potential (Chowdhury & Das, 2022).

In discussing the second theme, "Varying interpretations on OBE," it becomes apparent that OBE plays a pivotal role in transforming passive learners into active participants in their education. The incorporation of learning outcomes is fundamental to this process, as emphasized by prior studies (Bloom, 1973; Glaser, 1963). The adoption of an outcome-based education curriculum at the tertiary level has gained momentum globally, aligning with findings by Chowdhury & Das (2022). The evolving landscape of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, technological advancements, globalization, and demographic shifts necessitate changes in the education system to meet evolving business needs (Khan et al., 2023; Zhao and Ferran, 2016; Gazi, 2020; BNQF, 2021). However, some instructors express reservations about OBE's applicability in certain disciplines like Political Science and English due to implementation challenges, echoing previous research (Robenson, 2006; Lee, 2003; Maleki, 2021).

The third theme, "Setting learning outcomes considering Bloom's Taxonomy," reveals the importance of aligning course outlines with learners' needs, facilitated by OBE training. This underscores the significance of establishing clear learning objectives, as highlighted by Rajaei et al. (2013). Finally, the fourth theme, "Shifting teacher-centered learning to a student-centered learning approach," illustrates the transformative impact of OBE training on instructors' attitudes. Teachers now view teaching as an obligation, driven by a commitment to address students' needs, consistent with findings by Spady & Tang (2015). While the study offers valuable insights into Bangladeshi University instructors' attitudes toward OBE, it is essential to contextualize these findings within the broader literature on the challenges of OBE implementation. Through a comprehensive analysis of current research, educators and policymakers can collaborate to establish supportive learning environments that empower both instructors and students.

## **6. Concluding Remarks with Policy Implications**

This study employed qualitative methods to investigate the attitudes of university instructors in Bangladesh regarding the implementation of Outcome-Based Education (OBE) across various faculties. The research delves into the impact of OBE on instructors' teaching approaches and explores the application of OBE principles and premises through observation. Additionally, it discusses the instructors' views and proposals for implementing OBE in Bangladeshi institutions and examines how it affects the teaching and learning processes of teachers and students. Based on the findings, it is now the responsibility of the government and universities to establish appropriate guidelines, policies, and instructions to ensure the progress of the current development program. Jansen (1998) proposed allocating an adequate amount of time for faculty members to effectively handle classroom activities in line with the OBE paradigm. Conducting training programs is essential to maintain awareness of both the theoretical framework and practical application of OBE, as without such programs, the effectiveness of OBE may diminish over time (Mogashoa, 2013; Rao, 2020).

In order to effectively apply the OBE curriculum, it is crucial for teachers to have a comprehensive understanding of the fundamental philosophy behind the OBE model. This understanding enables

them to align desired outcomes, teaching methods, and assessment procedures, thereby ensuring the successful execution of the OBE curriculum. Universities should evaluate the ideal classroom capacity to facilitate the most effective execution of the OBE curriculum (Ortega and Cruz, 2016; Jansen, 1998; Eng et al., 2012). In the current highly competitive period, it is imperative for all graduates to possess fundamental technological, communication, linguistic, lifelong learning, and teamwork proficiencies. Therefore, according to Katawazai (2021), implementing the outcome-based education system at the secondary level of education is advisable to provide students with effective preparation before they enter tertiary education. The education ministry of Bangladesh and the UGC should establish equitable guidelines for teaching obligations, responsibilities, teacher-student ratios, credit hours, notional credit hours, engagement in research, collaboration with industry, technological integration, teacher incentives, and other factors supporting outcome-based education. These guidelines should be enforced by universities.

The industry should express its need for specific skills to the university through industry-university collaboration programs for human capital development and recruitment of skilled workers. University authorities should fully commit to adopting the OBE curriculum to realize their vision and mission, prioritizing ethical, social, and economic considerations. The Institutional Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) and faculties should be granted adequate authority and independence to oversee the implementation of Outcome-Based Education (OBE) and identify and address any areas of concern promptly. Establishing a specialized team comprising experts from various fields to create, execute, and assess OBE curricula in universities is advisable. Frontline personnel should be provided with an incentive package to foster heightened motivation and unwavering dedication (Alam & Mitu, 2018; Mitu, 2019). Universities should aim to improve the level of commitment and dedication among top managers, teaching staff, support service staff, and students to successfully implement the OBE curriculum and create high-quality teaching and learning environments in Bangladesh's universities (Khan et al., 2023; Mitu, 2020).

Finally, for effective application of OBE, instructors should undergo annual or biannual evaluations conducted by the Ministry of Education (MoE), UGC, and BAC. These evaluations aim to identify any deficiencies in teaching and address them through capacity building workshops and training sessions. However, it is essential to acknowledge the constraints of this research. One limitation is the relatively small sample size, which may impact the generalizability of the findings to a broader population. The study utilized qualitative methods and involved a limited number of participants, comprising four university teachers for semi-structured interviews and two instructors for observation. Furthermore, this research focused solely on the perspectives of instructors regarding the introduction of Outcome-Based Education (OBE) at a single university. It did not encompass the attitudes and perspectives of teachers from other universities across Bangladesh. Thus, the scope of the investigation was narrow, potentially limiting the applicability of the findings to a wider context. To address these limitations, future research endeavors will aim to broaden the scope and incorporate a larger number of participants using diverse research instruments across various contexts. Subsequent studies will explore the opinions of teachers from both public and private universities, as well as schools, regarding their prior awareness of the Outcome-Based Education approach and the impact of their current teaching methods on their courses. Through these endeavors, a more comprehensive understanding of the subject can be achieved.

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