

# Implementation of Outcome-Based Education (OBE) among Chinese-Medium Students at New Era University College

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## Abstract

Research on Outcome-Based Education (OBE) has gained increasing importance as this approach focuses on clearly defined and measurable learning outcomes in higher education. OBE plays a crucial role in improving the quality of education by aligning the curriculum, teaching, and assessment with specific learning objectives. In the context of Chinese-medium students at New Era University College (NEUC), the implementation of OBE presents unique challenges, particularly in the delivery and understanding of this concept in a language other than English. This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of OBE implementation among Chinese-medium students and to assess their awareness and acceptance of this approach. A quantitative descriptive methodology was used, with questionnaires distributed to 100 NEUC students to collect data on their perceptions of OBE in Chinese-taught classes. Data were analyzed using SPSS version 25.0, and ANOVA identified differences based on demographic factors like gender, faculty, and year of study. The relationship between OBE awareness and satisfaction with Chinese as the medium of instruction was evaluated using Pearson correlation. The findings indicate that students have a high level of awareness of OBE, with an average score of 3.82 (SD = 0.354). However, satisfaction with the use of Chinese as a medium of instruction was moderate, with a score of 2.89 (SD = 0.109). The analysis also revealed a significant positive correlation between students' awareness of OBE and the effectiveness of using Chinese in teaching ( $r = 0.67, p < .01$ ). This suggests that while students recognize the importance of OBE, there are still challenges in terms of acceptance of the medium of instruction. This study proposes that further research is needed to improve the delivery strategies of OBE in the context of Chinese-medium education and to examine the effectiveness of OBE in enhancing student achievement in other multilingual educational institutions.

**Keywords:** Outcome Based Education (OBE), New Era University College (NEUC), Chinese-Medium Students, Teaching and Learning

## **Introduction**

Based on the Education Act 1996, several qualities described in the National Education Philosophy (NEP) can be achieved in our country if efforts in education are continued. Education is an unending collaborative effort. The desired outcomes of a good education system include producing Malaysians who are knowledgeable, skilled, morally upstanding, and committed, capable of personal prosperity, and able to promote internal well-being and family happiness, alongside societal and national development (Education Act, 1996).

Former Education Minister Dato Seri Idris Jusoh stated that the government aspires to implement Transformation and the New Economic Model, emphasizing high income for citizens and aiming to create a High-Income Economy in Malaysia. The Outcome-Based Education (OBE) system requires restructuring school curricula and reviewing educational guidelines.

OBE aims to create programs offered in universities where students can achieve high learning levels throughout their studies, right until graduation. The OBE system focuses on the cognitive domain—evaluating students' final assessments and learning outcomes across various subjects, as well as the psychomotor and affective domains throughout the Teaching and Learning (PdP) process. OBE improves the learning process by incorporating qualitative elements (Aravind et al., 2008). OBE also emphasizes the role of educators in training students to think critically, rather than spoon-feeding them answers without activating their thinking skills. This aligns with the seventh feature required by the Ministry of Education Malaysia's (KPM) 2001 module.

Furthermore, OBE is increasingly replacing traditional student-centered learning systems, as it allows students' learning abilities to be measured, providing evidence of their understanding. The curriculum will be redesigned to meet targets that help students achieve the standards set by the government. Students' preparation before learning and their achievements after following established guidelines is a significant advantage of OBE, focusing on the quality expectations for students during their tertiary education. The key aspects emphasized by OBE include:

- a) Clearly define learning objectives so that students understand what they need to achieve.
- b) Designing activities aligned with learning objectives that all students can engage in.
- c) Conducting detailed assessments based on predefined guidelines.

The Teaching and Learning (PdP) process involves four stages: planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. Previously, learning focused on delivering information. However, OBE shifts the focus to learning objectives (Program Educational Objectives) and learning outcomes (Program Learning Outcomes), aligned with the skills required in the workforce after university graduation.

Muhammad (2007), indicated that higher education institutions now prioritize the quality of teaching and learning provided. Baharun (2003), explained that European countries have continuously upgraded their education systems since the 1990s to maintain international

standards. This is crucial because higher education institutions need to adhere to quality standards for their PdP processes (Malaysian Qualifications Agency, 2011).

The learning system in higher education institutions must constantly be improved to attract the interest of the public, particularly students (Takriff et al., 2006). The Deputy Director of the Ministry of Higher Education emphasizes the importance of youth engaging in and undergoing a quality learning process to ensure they acquire substantial knowledge. Indirectly, this transforms higher education institutions into reliable centers for producing capable and competent young graduates (Kementerian Pengajian Tinggi Negara, 2007). Therefore, educators in tertiary education institutions require considerable effort and unwavering collaboration to realize the goal of delivering high-quality education.

In line with this, Syed Jaafar (2002), stated that educators in higher education institutions must remain aware and alert regarding current issues. Sharudin (2008), agrees that lecturers or educators should deliver a learning process that is practical and applicable for students, ensuring they are not left behind when entering the workforce, especially in sectors such as industry. Abdul Kassim (2005), found in his study that the majority of lecturers in higher education institutions employ Teacher-Centered Learning for their students.

This method results in passive and weak students during the learning process, as their cognitive skills are not honed through higher-order and creative thinking, nor are their psychomotor skills, such as hand-eye coordination, sufficiently developed (Mok, 2000). The Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education (2003), has found that many local and international sources have expressed concern that many graduates lack the necessary quality. This issue is largely voiced by stakeholders in industries, such as employers and industry associations.

They argue that university graduates do not possess sufficient skills in their chosen fields and lack soft skills (Vaithiligam & Rajkumar, 2011). According to the Prime Minister's Department (2010), the soft skills required include communication skills, leadership, critical thinking, teamwork, and professional morals—all characteristics that determine the employability of graduates. Hoong, the Chairman of the Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers (FMM), pointed out that graduates from technical institutes lack the quality demanded by industries. He noted a gap between the skills required for jobs and the workforce produced (Hoong, 1989). This issue has persisted since the 1980s when educational institutions still employed traditional teaching methods.

Ibrahim (2003), agreed with Hoong (1989), argument that the learning process in higher education institutions needs to incorporate elements that are aligned with industry needs—efficiency in required fields so that Malaysia's job market is filled with professionals. Therefore, educational programs offered to students must be visionary, competitive, and of international standards.

In addition, a study conducted by Abu & Tasir (2008), stated that academic achievement alone is insufficient for helping graduates secure jobs due to the intense competition for employment. Mohd Puad Zarkashi, the former Deputy Minister of Higher Education, also urged authorities to reassess existing academic programs so that Malaysian graduates become more desirable to industries.

The Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education (2007), must balance students' academic and non-academic strengths in the curriculum to benefit not only from the knowledge delivered but also from practical application in accordance with their abilities. Tertiary institutions worldwide have seen rapid development, and various methods, criteria, and learning theories need to be studied more deeply (Bowman et al., 1995; Chi & Brown, 1996). According to Berberoglu & Hei (2003), student-centered curricula are now a new approach often used in global curriculum reform.

In this context, Mat Saad (2011), suggests that the existing curriculum should be restructured, as it has a significant positive impact, especially on the country. Zaharim et al. (2011) proposed that grading systems in teaching and learning processes be replaced with outcome-based systems. This outcome-based evaluation system would focus more on general knowledge and problem-solving skills (Abdul Kassim, 2005). Thus, the education system and curriculum must be integrated to ensure students can meet learning objectives and produce high-quality graduates (Basri et al., 2004).

OBE can be achieved by institutions if all criteria such as infrastructure, curriculum, courses, assessment processes, and teaching and learning procedures are aligned with OBE objectives (Mohd Nor et al., 2005). Mohd Nor also stated that graduates need to be systematically monitored by tertiary institutions to measure their progress. First, the institution must assess the extent to which a student can advance and achieve set targets, followed by any necessary transformations, including curriculum restructuring, to accurately evaluate whether the student has met the required level (Spady, 1994). According to Zainol Abidin (2009), there are three theories in OBE: teaching methods (1), information acquisition processes (2), and procedures for assessing desired objectives (3). In brief, students who follow OBE procedures will be systematically evaluated on the skills they are able to achieve. Nakkeeran et al. (2018) described OBE as encompassing competency-based learning standards and quality assurance monitoring based on student outcomes. OBE is recognized as a critical component of education in knowledge-based economies. OBE is designed to achieve predetermined learning outcomes (Nakkeeran et al., 2018). OBE is student-centered learning that can change how students understand their lessons and how they think about the contemporary world (Malcolm, 1997). His statement clearly shows that OBE is a system focused on students in its curriculum.

Because OBE emphasizes student outcomes, it indirectly fosters healthy competition among peers to meet curriculum requirements (Kraak, 1999). It is clear that students can significantly influence academic development (Berberoglu & Hei, 2003). Furthermore, Yuh (2005), believes that students play a pivotal role in creating a high caliber learning process. Educators also have an essential role in helping students achieve their goals, even though each student has their own learning style (Killen, 2000). Therefore, higher education institutions in Malaysia must understand that excellent graduates can be produced through quality education.

In the curriculum of New Era University College (NEUC), whether for Bachelor's, Diploma, or Certificate programs, the inclusion of Chinese language subjects offers graduates a competitive edge. According to Mohd Nor et al (2005), institutions in Malaysia, including NEUC, face several challenges in implementing OBE, including scaling the process up and doing so in a short time frame. Additionally, educational institutions and academia must

overcome several obstacles in realizing the OBE program (Abu et al., 2007). Educators need to carefully plan and provide the best approaches for delivering information during teaching sessions. If this is not carefully examined, it could lead to serious problems for the institution (Mohd Nor et al., 2005; Mohd Amin & Saud, 2008; Yaman et al., 2011).

However, the challenge in implementing OBE is not limited to delivery methods. According to Sepikun & Kamarolzaman (2011), there has also been a significant transformation in the work system. This change includes aspects of measurement and assessment (Mohd Ghazali et al., 2008). Grading students after tests is a traditional method still used by most public and private higher education institutions in Malaysia, including NEUC. Tucker (2004) in her study suggested that traditional teaching and learning systems (PdP) should be replaced with OBE methods because traditional PdP evaluates students solely based on exam grades (Lorrie & Shepard, 2000).

### **Research Objective**

The objective of this study is to assess students' awareness and understanding of OBE, as well as to examine its implementation in the context of Chinese as the medium of instruction.

### **Literature Review**

#### *The Concept of OBE*

The Outcome-Based Education (OBE) system began in medieval Europe almost 500 years ago. Initially, the primary focus of this system was to produce individuals capable in various fields of importance at that time. However, it gradually evolved into a system within educational institutions (Spady, 1994). Over time, the system has seen significant improvements in its application (Malan, 2000).

According to the Ministry of Education in Western Australia, Outcome-Based Teaching is a system where students are required to achieve predetermined objectives during the learning process. This includes the restructuring of curricula, assessments, and guidelines within the education system to ensure high-quality student achievement. There are two objectives in applying this system. Firstly, it aims to equip students with broad knowledge, high skills, and quality characteristics to make their transition into the workforce smoother. Secondly, this system helps educational institutions clarify their objectives, ensuring that students can achieve these targets.

Moreover, the OBE system focuses on three key aspects: structured educational planning, educational concepts, and how to apply it within the learning system (Killen, 2000). The implementation of Outcome-Based Learning prioritizes the process of student information acquisition rather than the teaching itself. This aligns with efforts to enhance student knowledge at higher education levels.

Furthermore, the system facilitates large-scale observation and simplifies the process of upgrading the system to be more organized and systematic for future use. McDaniel et al. (2000) emphasized its importance in producing students who are competitive in this era of globalization. OBE focuses on the student learning process through the following methods:

- a) Clearly explaining learning objectives to students so they understand the goals they need to achieve.
- b) Planning effective training exercises that can encourage students to meet the set objectives.
- c) Assessing students' abilities according to established guidelines to ensure accuracy and detail.

Every student assessment is reviewed to evaluate their achievement level. Assessment is a critical effort in determining students' potential. The Key Performance Indicator (KPI) is a benchmark for measuring student achievement levels. If students do not meet the objectives after assessment, a system called Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) will be implemented to enhance the evaluation for future use. Every academic subject using the Outcome-Based Education (OBE) system must be scrutinized to ensure it includes Programme Educational Objectives (PEO). Reports from each program must meet comprehension aspects and be applicable by students. They must also address all seven criteria of soft skills.

The Key Performance Indicator (KPI) acts as a guideline to determine whether the PEO objectives have been achieved. Typically, graduates who have completed their studies for approximately five years will be assessed to measure their success. The outcomes of the Program Learning Outcome (PLO) system are thoroughly examined to ensure alignment with the Programme Educational Objectives (PEO).

The PLO must explicitly outline the criteria that graduates should meet. In summary, every academic subject requires the nine (9) criteria set by the PLO, including:

1. Knowledge.
2. Practical Expertise.
3. Soft Skill 1: Communication skills.
4. Soft Skill 2: Higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills.
5. (v) Soft Skill 3: Teamwork skills.
6. Soft Skill 4: Lifelong learning.
7. Soft Skill 5: Entrepreneurial skills.
8. Soft Skill 6: Professional ethics, moral values, and social responsibility.
9. Soft Skill 7: Leadership competence.

Coordination of PLO skills between the Ministry of Higher Education (KPT), the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA), and other relevant organizations must be aligned during the formulation of PLO. Once again, the KPI acts as a benchmark to determine whether the set objectives have been met. Unlike the PEO, the PLO is assessed after students graduate from their respective educational institutions.

The OBE-oriented course analysis and system design focuses heavily on course content design and evaluation based on outstanding competencies. Generally, the outcome-based course design consists of three stages: the purpose of course establishment, the process of teaching and learning implementation (PdP), and course outcomes. Simultaneously, course platform teaching is used to manage learning outcomes and assessment results, with monitoring mechanisms and improvement processes conducted through surveys, quality checks, and learning evaluation assessments. From the formation of course objectives to graduation



requirements, through course research and analysis, course competency indexes are established, and course teaching objectives are determined. In other words, by clarifying course competency indexes and objectives, teaching content must be defined, teaching methods determined, and course requirements and assessment criteria planned for a 5-year period. A thorough plan for course content and staged evaluation methods must be developed.

During the course implementation phase, continuous assessments and process monitoring are meticulously carried out each semester, and feedback from each course is reviewed (Bin Sun & Yueli Dong, 2020). According to Bin Sun & Yueli Dong (2020), lecturers should continuously encourage students to enhance their learning outcomes. At the same time, it becomes easier for lecturers to monitor study outcomes, and course assessment standards, teaching goals, content, and evaluation methods can be adjusted and improved.

At the course outcome stage, learning outcomes are managed through course assignments and project management platforms. Course evaluation results, particularly formative assessments, can be consolidated and managed within a specific period to facilitate a systematic formative assessment process. The OBE-oriented course design is illustrated in Figure 2.1.

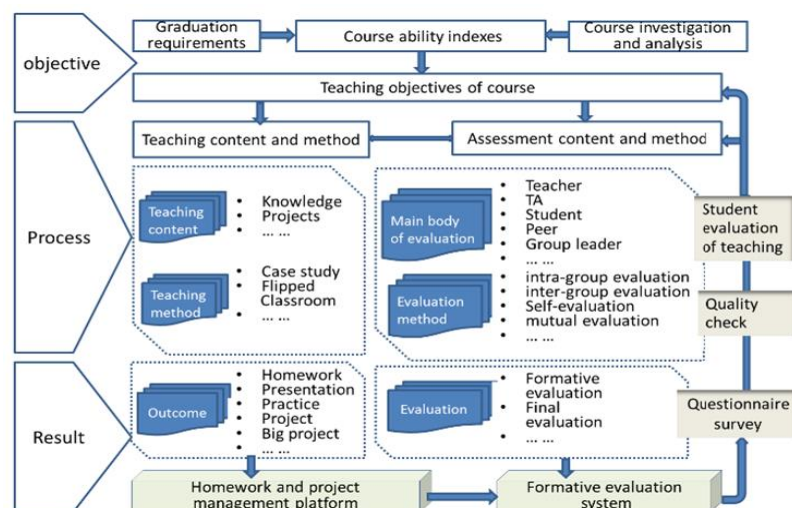


Figure 2.1: OBE-oriented course design (Bin Sun & Yueli Dong, 2020).

### Implementation of OBE in Malaysia

In Malaysia, the implementation of Outcome-Based Education (OBE) is emphasized at all levels of education. The Ministry of Higher Education's (KPTM) Quality Assurance Department (now known as the Malaysian Qualifications Agency or MQA) was established in 2007 to accredit courses offered by educational institutions. Initially, OBE was introduced in the engineering education sector as a critical requirement for Malaysia's full membership in the multinational Washington Accord. This was supported by the strong long-term commitment demonstrated by the engineering education system to ensure quality assurance in producing engineers ready for international industrial training (Abdul Karim & Khoo, 2013). In the OBE system, three learning domains—cognitive, psychomotor, and affective—are determined by the MQA. Additionally, eight learning outcome domains are defined, including knowledge; practical skills, social skills and responsibilities, values, attitudes, and

professionalism; communication skills; leadership and teamwork; problem-solving and scientific skills; information management and lifelong learning skills; and management and entrepreneurial skills.

All these domains are crucial for maintaining the quality and standards of the education system in Malaysia. In summary, the OBE approach must clearly define the outcomes that students are expected to achieve, and the efforts required to reach each outcome. Teachers must thoroughly explain the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that students need to develop to achieve the desired learning outcomes (Killen, 2000). Following this, the prerequisites for students should be explicitly stated before they embark on the development of their knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

In relation to the application of the OBE approach in Malaysia, several scholars have conducted analytical studies on student learning outcomes. For example, a study by Mohd Ghazali et al (2008), was carried out at Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) to assess the extent to which the eight learning outcomes set by the Ministry have been achieved. This study involved lecturers teaching diploma and degree programs at UPM. A questionnaire instrument was developed, focusing on two main domains: the taxonomy of teaching and learning (cognitive, psychomotor, and affective) and learning outcomes.

The levels and descriptions for each domain were based on Bloom's Taxonomy. The results revealed that the cognitive domain was at level four, the psychomotor domain at level four, and the affective domain at level three. The highest scores were given to the imparting of knowledge to students. The least achieved learning outcome was management and entrepreneurial skills. These findings also indicated a lack of soft skills among students. The study further revealed that the use of the psychomotor domain was well-spread through directive forms.

Some students still needed instructor guidance in their psychomotor activities, while a significant portion had gained the confidence of their teachers to engage in independent learning processes. In a study conducted by Mansor et al (2008), at the Faculty of Electrical Engineering, Universiti Teknologi MARA, a mini project was assessed to evaluate student performance in achieving the program outcomes. The mini project was one of the non-examinable courses included in the OBE approach.

The study by Abdul Latif and Lajiman (2011), involved a sample set of 65 students enrolled in a design and instructional technology course for the second semester of 2009/2010 at Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI), Malaysia. This course had six learning outcomes, each with its own specific learning experiences. To achieve these outcomes, an integrated teaching method was chosen as the planning approach. The selected students were asked to write reflections on their learning experiences, referring to the various methods employed during the course.

The findings indicated that students had a positive attitude toward their learning experiences during the course. They agreed that the teaching and learning activities conducted contributed to their acquisition of knowledge and skills. There was a high level of acceptance



from respondents regarding these activities. The study also found a significant relationship between the level of acceptance of the activities and students' final grades.

### **Language of Instruction and Education**

China's rapid transformation from a developing country into a major global economic power has been remarkable. Currently, China is the largest source of imports worldwide, the largest trading partner of the United States, and the third-largest export market (Jafri et al., 2020). The rise of China as one of the world's economic superpowers has created a growing need to learn Mandarin (Ye, 2011). The ability to speak Mandarin, particularly in the economic sector, is essential for individuals to compete and thrive in an ever-changing, dynamic world. According to a study by Abro et al., (2014), Mandarin is expected to become one of the top languages in the world by 2050 due to China's increasing global importance both economically and culturally. Mandarin is the official language of the People's Republic of China (David, 2006). Over the past three decades, the number of students learning Mandarin as a second language or foreign language has increased significantly. Based on statistical data from Hanban, there were more than forty million students learning Mandarin as a second language in 2017 (Han, 2017)

From the international stage to the national context, the importance of Mandarin cannot be disputed. Previously, the President of the People's Justice Party of Malaysia (PKR), Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, urged young Malays to master Mandarin, as it is a crucial regional economic language during the seminar "Visions and Aspirations for a New Malaysia" (Malaysiakini, 2018). The vast "China tsunami" has propelled Mandarin to become a new second language (Spencer, 2015). According to statistical data on the most spoken languages globally, Mandarin tops the list with more than 1.3 billion speakers, surpassing languages such as Spanish, Arabic, and Russian (McCarthy, 2018).

Mandarin is known to be one of the most challenging languages to learn. In another study, one of the most difficult aspects of acquiring Mandarin is reading Chinese characters (Dong et al., 2013). However, this has not discouraged language learners from studying the language. In the context of using Mandarin as a medium of instruction, Malaysia is one of the non-majority Chinese countries that continues to use Mandarin as a medium of teaching and learning in educational institutions.

This is due to the unique education system in Malaysia, where a multicultural society allows for three commonly used languages of instruction in the national education system—Malay, Mandarin, and Tamil. Although the curriculum cannot be altered, the use of Mandarin can still be maintained in the teaching system, such as in Chinese independent secondary schools. At the same time, this also allows teachers from national-type secondary schools to communicate with native Chinese educators from Taiwan and China (Jafri et al., 2020).

In Singapore, there are three Chinese language courses at the primary level and five at the secondary level, aimed at guiding students in developing good human qualities, language proficiency (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), and collaborative abilities (Goh, 2016). At the secondary level, the two main goals of Chinese language education in Singapore are to enhance students' language proficiency through the development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in Chinese.

This study examines the use of Mandarin by NEUC educators in teaching and learning classrooms, focusing on its impact on the implementation of OBE.

### Methodology

This study employed a descriptive quantitative research design. The survey method was chosen because it was the most suitable approach to answer the research questions and objectives. A sample of 100 Chinese-medium students from NEUC was selected for this study. A structured questionnaire adapted from previous studies was used as the primary data collection tool. The data included field study results such as questionnaires, interviews, sampling, and research procedures that encompassed data collection, data analysis, and research planning. The questionnaire was distributed to NEUC students, with each item rated on a 5-point Likert scale: "Strongly Disagree," "Disagree," "Not Sure," "Agree," and "Strongly Agree." Structured interviews were conducted to obtain additional information to support the study findings, especially focusing on the role of educators in OBE-based teaching and learning. Statistical analysis was carried out using SPSS version 25.0, while ANOVA testing was conducted to assess differences in OBE awareness levels, educator commitment to OBE implementation, and OBE teaching and learning across student demographic factors such as gender, age, education level, and faculty. Pearson correlation analysis was also performed to test the relationship between using Chinese as the medium of instruction and the implementation of OBE by NEUC lecturers.

### Research Findings

#### *Levels of Awareness towards OBE*

The findings show the distribution of means and standard deviations for each dimension in the questionnaire. Section B had the highest mean and standard deviation, 3.82 (SD = 0.354). According to the scoring scale, the mean score for awareness of OBE implementation by lecturers was high. This was followed by Section C, which recorded a high mean score of 3.78 (SD = 0.320) for lecturer commitment to OBE implementation. Section D recorded a mean score of 3.71 (SD = 0.306), indicating a high level of student perception towards the OBE teaching and learning process by lecturers. Section E, which focused on the use of Chinese as the medium of instruction, recorded the lowest mean of 2.89 (SD = 0.109), indicating moderate student satisfaction with Chinese as the medium of instruction in lecture sessions.

Table 1

#### *Distribution of means and standard deviations*

|           | Means | Standard deviations |
|-----------|-------|---------------------|
| Section B | 3.82  | 0.354               |
| Section C | 3.78  | 0.320               |
| Section D | 3.71  | 0.306               |
| Section E | 2.89  | 0.109               |

#### *Relationship between Lecturer Commitment and OBE Implementation*

The first null hypothesis, stating that there is no significant difference in the awareness level of OBE based on gender, was tested using ANOVA. The results showed that Ho1 was accepted, and the alternative was rejected, as shown in Table 2. At a significance level of 0.05 and a degree of freedom of 115, the calculated t-value (-0.310) was less than the critical t-

value (1.960). Therefore, there was no significant difference between lecturer commitment and OBE awareness levels, lecturer commitment to OBE implementation, and the OBE teaching and learning process based on student gender.

Table 2  
*ANOVA analysis based on gender*

| Variations | n  | x    | SD   | df  | t-value | Critical t-value | D <0.5                    |
|------------|----|------|------|-----|---------|------------------|---------------------------|
| Male       | 50 | 2.44 | 1.49 | 115 | -0.310  | 1.960            | No significant difference |
| Female     | 65 | 2.60 | 1.58 |     |         |                  |                           |

#### *Correlation between Chinese as Medium of Instruction and OBE Implementation*

Pearson correlation was used to examine the relationship between the independent variable (IV) and the dependent variable (DV). There was a strong positive and significant correlation between awareness of OBE and the use of Chinese as the medium of instruction ( $r = 0.67, p < .01$ ). There was also a significant and positive correlation between commitment to OBE implementation and Chinese as the medium of instruction ( $r = 0.66, p < .01$ ). Furthermore, a significant and positive relationship was found between the OBE teaching and learning process and the use of Chinese as the medium of instruction ( $r = 0.79, p < .01$ ).

Table 3  
*Pearson Correlation Analysis*

|                                       |  | Dependent Variable<br>Chinese as the medium of instruction |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| Awareness towards OBE                 | Pearson Correlation Significant (2-tailed) | 0.67**<br>0.000  |
| Commitment towards OBE implementation | Pearson Correlation Significant (2-tailed) | 0.66**<br>0.000  |
| Teaching and learning of OBE          | Pearson Correlation Significant (2-tailed) | 0.79**<br>0.000  |

#### **Discussion**

In the OBE approach, educators play a crucial role as reflective practitioners. This means understanding the origins of their teaching methods, why certain teaching approaches are chosen, and developing the habit of continually reviewing their practices as educators to improve the quality and effectiveness of their teaching. More importantly, OBE is an approach where educators collaborate with students to enhance learning outcomes.

In general, students showed a high level of agreement with all statements in Section B, with the overall mean score being 3.82. However, the lowest average score (2.75) was for the statement related to the briefing on OBE during Orientation Week. Heads of Departments (HoS) and Program Coordinators (PC) play a critical role in ensuring that briefings on OBE are conducted during Orientation Week, particularly during sessions with new students. These briefings provide explanations and guidance on OBE to help students understand the system

better, which in turn aids them when they begin their classes under OBE-based teaching and learning.

Students also had positive perceptions of the lecturers' commitment to implementing OBE, as reflected in the high mean score for Section C (3.78). According to students, lecturers made efforts to use methodologies or teaching methods that they believed would enhance students' skills, such as self-directed learning and critical thinking skills. However, upper management must also show commitment by supporting the efforts of lecturers to implement OBE. This can be done by ensuring that lecturers are continually exposed to the latest knowledge about OBE through seminars and related programs, organized in collaboration with responsible bodies such as the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA). This will ensure that educators have sufficient knowledge when implementing OBE in their daily teaching and learning with students.

In Section D, which focused on teaching and learning, students agreed with all statements. The total mean score of 3.71 indicated that students had positive perceptions of the teaching and learning activities. They believed that understanding the course learning outcomes helped them perform better in assessments, and they also felt more prepared to face the assessments as they were familiar with the learning outcomes for each program. This indirectly increased their interest in continuing their learning without difficulties.

Students understood the relationship between assessments and the achievement of learning outcomes, which ranked second. Third place related to students' awareness of the assessment criteria used by educators to evaluate them. Previous studies by Caguimbal et al (2013), concluded that well-defined and clear assessment criteria for both educators and students are a key strength of OBE.

However, the methods of teaching and learning related to improving students' communication skills and expressing and debating their interpretations ranked lowest, at seventh and eighth positions, respectively. Therefore, more activities should be incorporated into the teaching and learning sessions to improve students' communication and thinking skills. Educators should place greater emphasis on these skills to encourage students to communicate and think critically during lessons. This would help students feel more confident in mastering both communication and critical thinking skills after participating in the teaching and learning process.

For Section E, focusing on the use of Chinese as the medium of instruction, the mean score was 2.89, indicating that students' satisfaction with using Chinese in teaching and learning was moderate. Students only saw slight improvements in their listening, speaking, writing, and reading skills after undergoing lessons conducted in Chinese. These findings are consistent with the study by Guo et al (2018), which showed that students in colleges where Chinese is the medium of instruction did not experience a learning deficit; in fact, they showed improvements in learning skills.

The ANOVA test results found no significant relationship between OBE awareness, educator commitment to OBE implementation, the OBE teaching and learning approach, and the use of Chinese as the medium of instruction. This is consistent with Civan and Coskun (2016)

findings, which stated that the language used does not have a significant impact on students' ability to follow classroom teaching and learning.

Overall, students have a high level of awareness and agreement with all statements related to the awareness and implementation of OBE at NEUC. The students strongly agree with the educators' efforts to ensure the achievement of learning outcomes. An action plan will be outlined to address key issues related to increasing awareness and improving implementation. Training highly competent and skilled professionals in their respective fields is the fundamental responsibility of colleges and universities, and teaching is the central link in talent cultivation. Based on the OBE teaching concept, traditional teaching methods are now combined with OBE teaching approaches to restructure and plan teaching content.

The integration of OBE methods in teaching not only enhances learning efficiency and improves teaching quality but also strengthens students' ability to independently analyze and solve problems. This is conducive to nurturing applied professional and technical talents, especially in the context of language studies, particularly in Chinese language instruction across all faculties.

### **Conclusion**

Enhancing Chinese language instruction guided by OBE concepts greatly enriches the teaching content and methods, increasing students' interest and participation. This shift transforms students' attitudes from "I want to learn" to "I desire to learn," fostering a strong appetite for knowledge, encouraging autonomous learning, and improving their practical abilities.

At the same time, curriculum reform adheres to the principles of integrating diagnostic, process, and summative assessments into teaching evaluation. A multi-dimensional, comprehensive process-based evaluation method is applied to assess student learning outcomes, with continuous improvements made based on feedback.

In summary, curriculum reform offers specific reference values for teaching practical courses, but gradual improvements are needed in the training process to enhance the effectiveness of the teaching outcomes.

From this study, it is clear that NEUC students have a high level of awareness of OBE, which helps to facilitate its effective implementation at NEUC. Additionally, the accessibility of information about OBE provided by NEUC also contributes to students' positive perceptions of OBE in the institution's education system and among educators. Future recommendations include using the study's findings to develop models or strategies to help students at other colleges or universities understand OBE better.

Further analysis can be conducted using correlation analysis, such as Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation, to examine significant relationships between commitment and awareness levels. Additional analysis can also be conducted to explore the relationship between OBE awareness and different stages of study or semesters. Future research will focus on studying OBE knowledge and practices among educators.

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