

Challenges in Integrating Outcome-Based Education (OBE) in Higher Education Institutions: A Systematic Literature Review

Ernawati Mistamiruddin¹, Nurfaradilla Mohamad Nasri²

¹Faculty of Education, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Malaysia, ²ELITEE Research Group: Enhanced Learning for Inclusive and Transformational Education Experience, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia 43600, Bangi Selangor, MALAYSIA

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Abstract

This systematic literature review investigates the challenges of integrating Outcome-Based Education in higher education institutions. Following PRISMA guidelines, 10 empirical studies published between 2013 and 2024 were analyzed. The review identified seven primary challenges: continuous assessment and feedback (80% of studies), efficient time and resource management (80%), developing teaching and learning resources (70%), mindset and cultural change among educators (70%), redesigning Outcome-Based Education curriculum (60%), enhancing educators' skills as facilitators (60%), and diversifying teaching methods and assessment (30%). These challenges span pedagogical, administrative, and cultural dimensions, highlighting the complex nature of Outcome-Based Education implementation. The findings underscore the need for a multifaceted approach to Outcome-Based Education integration, encompassing professional development, strategic resource allocation, and institutional culture change. This review provides valuable insights for higher education institutions implementing or refining Outcome-Based Education practices, offering recommendations to address these challenges systematically and enhance the effectiveness of Outcome-Based Education implementation.

Keywords: Outcome-Based Education, Higher Education, Curriculum Design, Educational Assessment, Professional Development

Introduction

Achieving holistic educational goals in today's increasingly challenging educational landscape is difficult. The primary focus is not only on students' academic excellence but also on producing individuals who are balanced intellectually, spiritually, emotionally, and physically. Therefore, realizing this aspiration through integrating Outcome-Based Education (OBE) in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) can be considered a worthy initiative. In line with the OBE concept, the teaching and learning approach focuses on determining and measuring student learning outcomes comprehensively according to desired standards, encompassing various aspects such as knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values, and incorporating multiple

pedagogical methods that not only focus on content delivery but make students active and teachers as facilitators in teaching and learning sessions (Akhmadeeva et al., 2013).

Through the implementation of OBE, HEIs can design curricula and learning processes conducive to equipping students with various technical and soft skills relevant to current needs in an ongoing effort to produce graduates who are not only intellectually and physically excellent but also balanced in terms of spirituality and emotional maturity. These aspects are integrated comprehensively through holistic learning experiences. This aligns with the findings of Sathya & Narayanan (2021), who found that through OBE, higher education institutions can ensure graduates master strong academic knowledge and practical skills to succeed in an ever-changing competitive environment and enable institutions to continuously evaluate and improve educational programs to achieve high and relevant learning outcomes to industry and societal needs.

Most developed countries have practiced the OBE approach in their higher education systems for decades. The transition to OBE has been a global trend since the late 1970s in countries like the United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom, spreading in the early 1980s and 1990s (Stroup, 2007; Indiantoro, 2017). This approach has crossed various fields of study with multiple opportunities in teaching and learning at the global education level. Qadir (2020), states that the implementation of OBE became significant, especially in engineering, when the Washington Accord approved it as the main paradigm. Duan (2019), also states that applying for OBE in English language teaching in colleges in China shows the potential to foster self-directed learning and practical knowledge application. In Malaysia, OBE has been encouraged in higher education institutions (HEIs) since the early 2000s through various policies and action plans (Ministry of Higher Education, 2006). Implementing OBE has become a primary focus, especially in engineering education (Mohamad, 2009). It has also been integrated with the Malaysian Institute of Information Technology computer systems to assess course and program outcomes (Zulfadli, 2014).

Recognizing the importance of OBE implementation in producing quality graduates, the Ministry of Health Malaysia Training Institute (Institut Latihan Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia, will be referred to as ILKMM hereafter) has also begun integrating OBE for Paramedical Diploma programs since 2020. This initiative aligns with the global trend of OBE implementation in healthcare education, aiming to enhance the competency and readiness of healthcare professionals. However, there is an information gap about the challenges institutions like ILKMM may face in implementing this OBE approach. Therefore, there is a need to empirically gather evidence about the various challenges that may be faced in OBE integration in higher education institutions, with particular relevance to healthcare education programs.

The main objective of this systematic literature review is to identify the primary challenges higher education institutions face in their efforts to integrate the OBE approach based on findings from previous studies. By focusing on this single objective, this study can fully concentrate on collecting, examining, and synthesizing evidence from various past studies to identify the main challenges faced when implementing OBE at the Higher Education level. The findings of this systematic literature review will provide a clear picture of the main challenges in OBE implementation as identified in previous studies. Subsequently, it can help ILKMM

management to plan and implement appropriate improvement measures to overcome these challenges. Thus, efforts to prepare graduates with various soft and technical skills needed by the country's healthcare sector can be achieved more effectively.

Methodology

This section elucidates the methodological approach to procuring and analyzing literature pertinent to integrating OBE in higher education institutions. The systematic review process followed the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analyses) guidelines, ensuring a rigorous and transparent methodological framework.

Review Protocol (PRISMA)

The PRISMA guidelines were utilized as the cornerstone for this systematic review, providing a robust framework for enhancing the review protocol's transparency, accuracy, completeness, and replicability. These guidelines are instrumental in mitigating arbitrary decision-making and reducing redundancy in research efforts (Shamseer et al., 2015). The recently updated PRISMA 2020 guidelines reflect contemporary advancements in systematic review methodology, facilitating more nuanced and precise reporting of systematic reviews (Page et al., 2021).

Data Sources

The study drew upon two preeminent bibliographic databases: Web of Science (WoS) and Scopus. These databases are recognized as authoritative sources for citation indexing and academic literature across diverse scholarly domains (Vijayan & Tang, 2021). While WoS, an integral component of the Web of Knowledge, predominantly focuses on pure sciences, Scopus, developed from Elsevier's extensive database, encompasses a broader spectrum of academic disciplines (Fingerman, 2006).

Systematic Search Strategy

The systematic search strategy was executed in three principal phases

Identification

The identification phase of this systematic review focused on developing a comprehensive search strategy to locate relevant literature on OBE challenges in higher education. The process involved expanding key concepts using synonyms and related terms, employing Boolean operators (AND, OR), phrase searching (""), and truncation (*) to enhance search sensitivity and capture term variations. The search string (e.g., ("outcome-based education" OR OBE) AND (challenge* OR barrier* OR issue*) AND ("higher education" OR university OR college)) was constructed based on previous studies and online thesauri. Two major bibliographic databases, Scopus and Web of Science, were selected for their comprehensive coverage and advanced search capabilities in educational research, yielding 167 and 86 articles respectively.

Table 1

Presents the Database-Specific Search Strings, Ensuring a Systematic and Replicable Literature Identification Process Crucial to the Review's Methodological Rigor

Database	Search String
Web of Science	TS=("outcome based education" OR OBE) AND TS=(challenge* OR barrier* OR issue*) AND TS=("higher education" OR university OR college)
Scopus	TITLE-ABS-KEY("outcome based education" OR obe AND challenge* OR barrier* OR issue* AND "higher education" OR university OR college)

Note:

TS = Topic Search field in Web of Science TITLE-ABS-KEY = Title, Abstract, and Keywords fields in Scopus

- = Truncation wildcard to capture variations of terms AND, OR = Boolean operators for query construction

Screening

The screening phase thoroughly examined the identified articles from both databases. This process was guided by predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria and applied systematically to all 253 articles. The temporal scope was confined to publications between 2013 and 2024, ensuring the currency and relevance of the findings. Only empirical studies published in peer-reviewed journals in English were considered. This meticulous screening process resulted in the elimination of 55 duplicate articles and the exclusion of 101 articles that did not align with the established criteria.

Eligibility

The eligibility phase entailed a comprehensive analysis of the remaining 97 articles. This stage involved a thorough examination of titles, abstracts, and full texts to ascertain their alignment with the study's objectives and adherence to the inclusion criteria. This meticulous process led to the exclusion of 87 articles due to their lack of empirical data or irrelevance to the specific context of OBE challenges. Consequently, 10 articles were deemed eligible for in-depth analysis and inclusion in the final review.

Data Extraction and Analysis

Data extraction was conducted using a standardized form to ensure consistency. The extracted information included study characteristics, methodological approaches, identified challenges, and key findings. Thematic analysis was employed to synthesize the data and identify recurring themes and patterns across the selected studies.

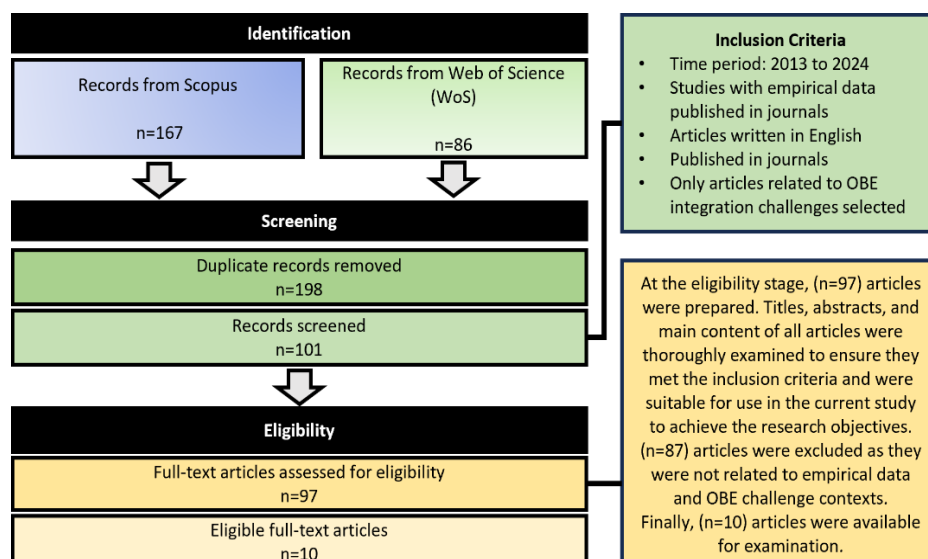


Figure 1 Provides a detailed visual representation of the PRISMA flow diagram, illustrating the systematic review process from initial identification to final inclusion.

This methodological approach ensures a comprehensive, systematic, and transparent process for identifying and analyzing relevant literature on the challenges of OBE integration in higher education. The rigorous application of inclusion and exclusion criteria and the use of prestigious academic databases provide a solid foundation for the subsequent analysis and synthesis of findings.

Findings

Overview of Selected Literature

The systematic review process yielded 10 articles of high relevance to the challenges of integrating OBE in higher education. The findings have been systematically synthesized and are presented herein.

Distribution of Reviewed Articles by Journal

Table 2

Distribution of Reviewed Articles by Journal and Publication Year

JOURNAL	2013	2017	2020	2021	2023	2024
<i>Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences</i>	1	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Canadian Engineering Education Association</i>	1	0	0	0	0	0
<i>International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences</i>	0	1	0	1	0	0
<i>Malaysian Journal of Learning and Instruction Heliyon</i>	0	0	1	0	0	0
<i>International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education</i>	0	0	0	1	0	0
<i>International Journal of Engineering and Advanced Sciences</i>	0	0	0	0	1	0
<i>International Journal of Advanced and Applied Sciences</i>	0	0	0	0	1	0
<i>Social Sciences and Humanities Open</i>	0	0	0	0	0	1
TOTAL	2	1	1	3	2	1

The distribution of publications across various journals from 2013 to 2024 reveals interesting patterns in the scholarly attention given to OBE integration challenges. The majority of journals recorded either one or no publications in specific years. Notably, the International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences demonstrated a higher frequency, with publications in both 2017 and 2021.

Geographical Distribution of Articles

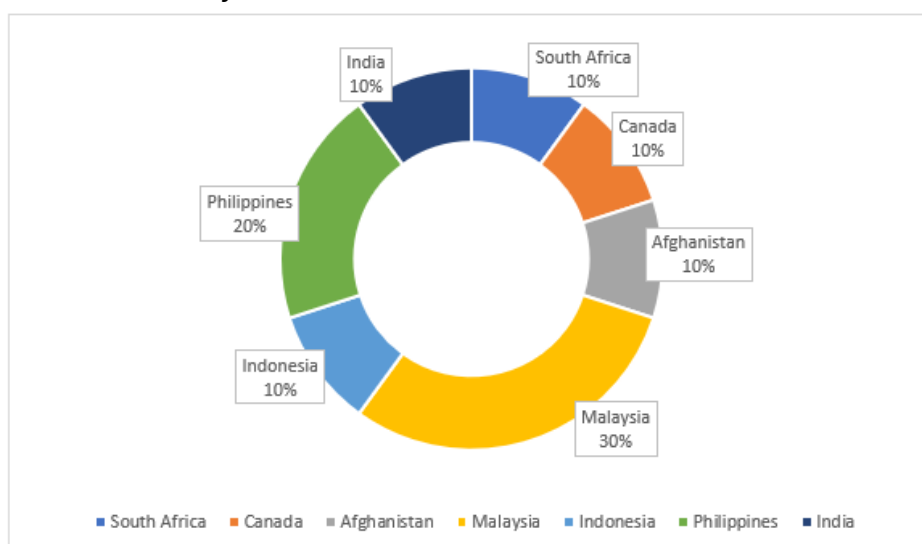


Figure 2 Distribution of Articles by Country of Origin

The geographical distribution of the reviewed articles reveals a diverse international representation in the discourse on OBE integration challenges. Malaysia is the most prolific contributor, accounting for 30% of the selected articles (n=3). This is followed by the

Philippines, contributing 20% of the articles ($n=2$). The remaining 50% of the articles are evenly distributed among Afghanistan, Canada, India, South Africa, and Indonesia, each contributing 10% ($n=1$) to the corpus of literature under review.

Chronological Analysis of Publications

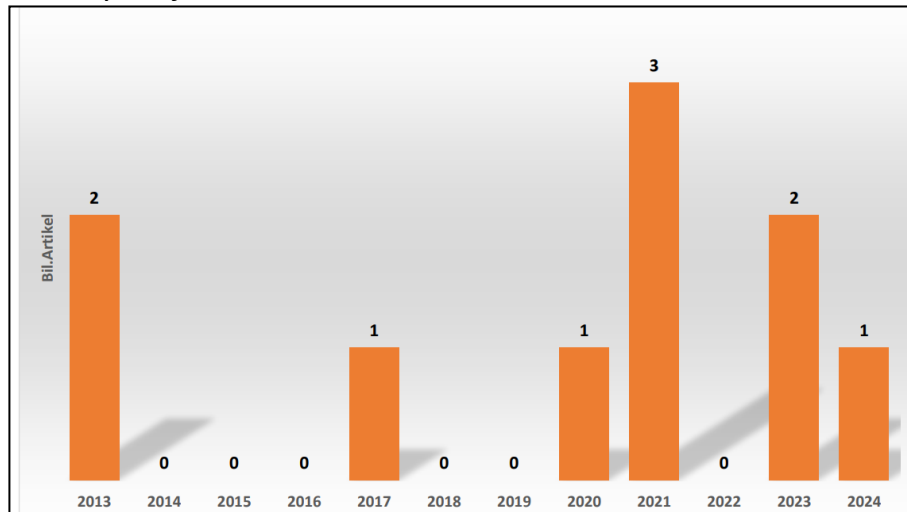


Figure 3 Distribution of Articles by Publication Year

The chronological analysis of the selected articles reveals interesting patterns in the scholarly attention given to OBE integration challenges over the past decade. The distribution is characterized by fluctuations, with certain years showing heightened research activity.

The year 2013 marks the beginning of our review period with two significant publications, focusing on educators' experiences and obstacles in implementing OBE. Following this, there was a noticeable gap in publications for three years (2014-2016), suggesting a temporary lull in research focus on this topic.

A resurgence of interest is observed from 2017 onwards, with at least one publication per year. The year 2021 stands out as the most prolific, with three articles published, addressing OBE implementation in diverse contexts including Afghan public universities, Malaysian vocational colleges, and a Philippine state university.

Thematic Analysis of Challenges

Table 3

Thematic Analysis of OBE Implementation Challenges

No	Article	Challenges in OBE Implementation						
		Mindset and cultural change among educators	Redesigning OBE curriculum	Diversifying teaching methods and outcomes assessment	Developing teaching and learning resources	Enhancing educators' skills and knowledge as facilitators	Efficient time and resource management	Continuous assessment and feedback
1	<i>Mogashoa (2013)</i>			X	X	X		X
2	<i>Akhmadeeva et al. (2013)</i>	X	X	X	X		X	X
3	<i>Yusof et al. (2017)</i>	X	X		X	X	X	X
4	<i>Sun & Lee (2020)</i>	X				X	X	X
5	<i>Katawazai (2021)</i>	X	X		X		X	X
6	<i>Damit et al. (2021)</i>	X	X			X	X	X
7	<i>Tungpalan & Antalan, (2021)</i>				X	X		
8	<i>Kavitha & Karthika (2023)</i>	X	X		X		X	X
9	<i>Hapinat (2023)</i>						X	
10	<i>Mufanti et al. (2024)</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Frequency	7/10	6/10	3/10	7/10	6/10	8/10	8/10

The thematic analysis of the selected literature reveals a complex landscape of challenges associated with the implementation of OBE in higher education institutions. Seven primary themes emerged from the analysis, each representing a significant area of concern in OBE integration. The challenges, ranked by their prevalence in the reviewed literature, are as follows:

1. Continuous assessment and feedback (80%)
2. Efficient time and resource management (80%)
3. Developing teaching and learning resources (70%)
4. Mindset and cultural change among educators (70%)
5. Redesigning OBE curriculum (60%)

6. Enhancing educators' skills and knowledge as facilitators (60%)
7. Diversifying teaching methods and outcome assessment (30%)

Elaboration on identified challenges

Continuous assessment and feedback (80%): This challenge involves the need for ongoing evaluation of student progress and providing timely feedback. It requires a shift from traditional summative assessments to more frequent, formative assessments that align with OBE principles.

Efficient time and resource management (80%): Implementing OBE often requires significant time and resources for curriculum redesign, staff training, and development of new teaching materials. Institutions struggle to balance these demands with existing workloads and budgetary constraints.

Developing teaching and learning resources (70%): OBE implementation necessitates the creation of new, aligned teaching materials and learning resources. This challenge involves not only the development of these resources but also ensuring their effectiveness in achieving desired learning outcomes.

Mindset and cultural change among educators (70%): Transitioning to OBE requires a significant shift in teaching philosophy and practice. Educators must adapt to new roles as facilitators of learning, which can be challenging for those accustomed to traditional teaching methods.

Redesigning OBE curriculum (60%): This involves restructuring existing curricula to align with OBE principles, including defining clear learning outcomes and ensuring that course content, teaching methods, and assessments are coherently aligned with these outcomes.

Enhancing educators' skills and knowledge as facilitators (60%): OBE implementation requires educators to develop new competencies in areas such as student-centered teaching, authentic assessment, and curriculum design. This challenge involves providing adequate professional development opportunities.

Diversifying teaching methods and outcome assessment (30%): While less frequently mentioned, this challenge involves moving beyond traditional lecture-based teaching and exam-centric assessments to incorporate various instructional strategies and assessment techniques aligned with OBE principles. In conclusion, these challenges highlight the multifaceted nature of OBE implementation in higher education, spanning pedagogical, administrative, and cultural dimensions.

Discussion

The systematic literature review on the challenges of integrating OBE in higher education institutions has revealed a complex landscape of interrelated issues. This section will critically examine the seven primary challenges identified, contextualizing them within the broader framework of educational reform and discussing their implications for the successful implementation of OBE.

Continuous Assessment and Feedback

The challenge of implementing continuous assessment and feedback mechanisms was prominent in 80% of the reviewed studies, highlighting its critical role in OBE. This finding underscores the shift from traditional summative assessments to more dynamic, formative evaluation processes. The primary challenge lies in developing and implementing assessment tools that accurately measure students' achievement of specified learning outcomes.

As noted by Sun & Lee (2020), effective assessment of learning outcomes may take years to implement fully. This requires a departure from conventional testing methods towards more authentic, performance-based assessments. Moreover, Gibbs & Simpson (2004) emphasize that assessment should be meaningful and supportive of students' learning experiences. This necessitates a shift towards assessment practices that measure achievement and promote learning and skill development.

Efficient Time and Resource Management

The challenge of managing time and resources efficiently was prominent in the literature, mentioned in 80% of the reviewed studies. This high prevalence underscores the resource-intensive nature of OBE implementation. Sun & Lee (2020), noted that significant time and effort are required to establish and maintain an effective OBE system. This observation is corroborated by several studies (Damit et al., 2021; Erdem, 2019; Rahman et al., 2015; Senaratne & Gunarathne, 2019) which found that OBE implementation often results in increased workload for educators, potentially impacting their commitment to the new system.

The challenge of resource management extends beyond time considerations to encompass financial resources, human capital, and physical infrastructure. Damit et al (2021), highlighted instances where a lack of administrative support, particularly in terms of financial allocation, hindered OBE implementation in vocational colleges.

Developing Teaching and Learning Resources

OBE implementation necessitates the creation of new, aligned teaching materials and learning resources. This challenge was highlighted in 70% of the reviewed studies. The development of appropriate teaching and learning resources tailored to OBE principles is identified as a significant challenge. This involves creating materials that support student-centered learning, facilitate the achievement of specific learning outcomes, and accommodate diverse learning styles.

Damit et al (2021), noted that inadequate resources often result in students being unable to effectively engage with the material, leading to suboptimal learning experiences. This observation is particularly pertinent in practical or laboratory-based courses where equipment shortages can significantly hinder hands-on learning opportunities. The challenge extends beyond the mere availability of resources to encompass the need for materials that actively support the achievement of specified learning outcomes.

Mindset and Cultural Change Among Educators

This study found that 70 percent of the reviewed articles discussed the implementation of OBE demanding a change in mindset and culture among educators as one of the challenges in

implementing OBE integration. Such a change in roles and approach requires continuous effort by educators to alter the old 'mindset' that has been deeply ingrained in them. This aligns with several studies showing that OBE implementation demands a profound paradigm shift among educators (Mufanti et al., 2024; Baguio, 2019; Al-Saqqaf, 2023).

This change involves a transition from the role of a traditional knowledge transmitter to a more dynamic learning facilitator. The study also found that this issue arises because most educators have long been accustomed to conventional teaching approaches and must adapt to new student-centered approaches. As noted by Sun & Lee (2020), many academics, particularly those with extensive experience, may find it challenging to accept constructive criticism or adapt to new pedagogical approaches. This resistance is often rooted in deeply ingrained teaching philosophies and a sense of expertise in their subject areas.

To address this issue, institutions must foster a culture of continuous professional development and provide robust support systems for educators. This may include workshops, mentoring programs, and communities of practice that allow educators to collaboratively explore and adapt to OBE principles.

Redesigning OBE Curriculum

Restructuring curricula to align with OBE principles is identified as a substantial challenge by 60% of the reviewed studies. This involves redefining learning outcomes and ensuring that course content, teaching methodologies, and assessment strategies are coherently aligned with these outcomes. The process often requires extensive collaboration among faculty members and a comprehensive understanding of OBE principles.

Akhmadeeva et al (2013), observed that while learning outcomes may be nominally incorporated into course objectives, the actual teaching and learning approaches often remain largely unchanged from conventional methods. This highlights the need for a more profound and systemic approach to curriculum redesign. As emphasized by Reich et al. (2019a), and Gunarathne et al (2019), there is a critical need to align curriculum, teaching and learning methodologies, and assessment practices with intended learning outcomes to enhance student performance and learning experiences.

A particular difficulty highlighted in the literature is the formulation of clear, measurable, and relevant learning outcomes. Barradell (2012), advocates for a systematic approach to organizing and integrating curriculum content, while Ali (2018), emphasizes the principle of constructive alignment in curriculum design. To address this challenge, institutions should consider developing comprehensive frameworks and guidelines for curriculum redesign, including strategies for stakeholder engagement and ensuring alignment with industry needs and professional standards.

Enhancing Educators' Skills and Knowledge as Facilitators

The need to enhance educators' skills as facilitators in an OBE environment was emphasized in 60% of the reviewed studies. This challenge is intrinsically linked to the broader issue of mindset change but focuses specifically on the development of new pedagogical competencies. Mufanti et al (2024), identified educators' skills and knowledge as a primary

barrier to effective OBE implementation, particularly in designing and translating OBE-focused curricula into classroom practice.

This finding highlights the complex nature of the facilitator role in OBE, which extends beyond content expertise to include skills in scaffolding learning, promoting critical thinking, and fostering student autonomy. To address this challenge, institutions should consider implementing comprehensive faculty development programs that focus on principles of student-centered learning, facilitation techniques, design and implementation of active learning strategies, development of authentic assessment methods, and effective use of technology to support learning.

Diversifying Teaching Methods and Outcome Assessment

While mentioned less frequently (30% of studies), the diversification of teaching methods and assessment practices represents a critical challenge in OBE implementation. This finding aligns with the observations of Zakaria (2017), who noted that the transition to OBE in higher education necessitates a significant departure from traditional teaching methods. The challenge lies not only in adopting new teaching strategies but also in ensuring that these methods effectively support the achievement of intended learning outcomes.

Assessment practices in OBE must evolve beyond traditional written examinations to include authentic assessment methods that evaluate students' ability to apply knowledge and skills in real-world contexts. This shift requires educators to develop expertise in designing and implementing a variety of assessment tools, including portfolios, project-based assessments, and performance evaluations.

To address this challenge, institutions should invest in comprehensive faculty development programs focused on innovative teaching and assessment methodologies. Collaboration with industry partners can provide valuable insights into authentic assessment practices that align with professional competencies. Additionally, the development of institutional assessment frameworks that balance standardization with flexibility can guide educators in implementing diverse assessment strategies.

In conclusion, the successful implementation of OBE in higher education requires a multifaceted approach that addresses these interconnected challenges. Institutions must foster a culture of continuous improvement, invest in comprehensive faculty development, and allocate resources strategically to support the paradigm shift required by OBE. By addressing these challenges systematically, higher education institutions can enhance the effectiveness of OBE implementation, ultimately leading to improved student learning outcomes and graduate competencies.

Conclusion

This systematic literature review set out to identify the primary challenges faced by higher education institutions in integrating OBE. Through a meticulous analysis of 10 empirical studies published between 2013 and 2024, we have unveiled a complex landscape of interconnected challenges that institutions must navigate to successfully implement OBE.

The review revealed seven primary challenges in OBE implementation, with varying degrees of prevalence across the literature. Continuous assessment and feedback, along with efficient

time and resource management, emerged as the most frequently cited challenges, each appearing in 80% of the reviewed studies. These challenges underscore the need for dynamic, ongoing evaluation processes aligned with OBE principles and the resource-intensive nature of OBE implementation, requiring strategic allocation and utilization of institutional resources. Equally prominent was the challenge of developing teaching and learning resources, cited in 70% of the studies. This highlights the demand for innovative, outcome-aligned educational materials that can effectively support the achievement of specified learning outcomes. The necessity for a paradigm shifts in teaching philosophies and institutional culture was another significant challenge, reflecting the deep-rooted nature of traditional educational approaches and the resistance to change often encountered in academic settings.

The task of redesigning curricula to align with OBE principles and articulating clear learning outcomes was identified as a substantial challenge in 60% of the studies. This complex undertaking requires not only a thorough understanding of OBE principles but also the ability to translate these into practical, discipline-specific educational strategies. Closely related to this was the challenge of enhancing educators' skills as facilitators, also mentioned in 60% of the studies. This underscores the need for new pedagogical competencies in student-centered learning environments, moving beyond traditional content expertise to include skills in scaffolding learning and promoting critical thinking.

While less frequently mentioned, the challenge of diversifying teaching methods and outcome assessment was nonetheless significant, appearing in 30% of the studies. This reflects the imperative to adopt varied instructional strategies and authentic assessment techniques that align more closely with OBE principles and real-world skill application.

These challenges are not isolated but form a systemic challenge to OBE implementation. The high prevalence of issues related to assessment, resource management, and pedagogical shifts underscores the comprehensive nature of changes required for successful OBE integration. Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach that encompasses professional development, strategic resource allocation, and institutional culture change. Based on these findings, several recommendations emerge for higher education institutions embarking on or refining their OBE implementation:

1. Invest in comprehensive professional development programs that address not only the technical aspects of OBE but also facilitate the necessary mindset shift among educators.
2. Develop robust assessment frameworks that align with OBE principles, incorporating both formative and summative evaluation methods to provide a holistic view of student achievement.
3. Allocate resources strategically, conducting thorough needs assessments and implementing phased implementation plans to ensure efficient use of time, financial, and human resources.
4. Foster a culture of collaboration, encouraging interdepartmental cooperation and forming communities of practice to share experiences and best practices.
5. Leverage technology to support various aspects of OBE implementation, particularly in assessment, resource development, and learning management.

6. Engage stakeholders, including industry partners, alumni, and students, in curriculum design and review processes to ensure the relevance and effectiveness of learning outcomes.
7. Adopt a gradual approach to OBE implementation, allowing for iterative improvements and adjustments based on feedback and experience.

While this review provides valuable insights, it is important to acknowledge its limitations, including the relatively small number of empirical studies included and the focus on publications from 2013 to 2024. Future research could benefit from longitudinal studies examining the long-term impact of OBE implementation, comparative analyses across different national and cultural contexts, and in-depth case studies of successful OBE implementations. Investigations into the role of emerging technologies in supporting OBE implementation and studies exploring the intersection of OBE with other educational trends could also provide valuable insights.

The integration of OBE in higher education represents a significant paradigm shift that promises to enhance the quality and relevance of education. However, as our review has shown, this transition is fraught with multifaceted challenges that require thoughtful, strategic responses. By addressing these challenges systematically and holistically, higher education institutions can harness the potential of OBE to produce graduates who are not only academically proficient but also equipped with the skills and competencies demanded by an ever-evolving global landscape.

Theoretical and Contextual Contributions

This systematic literature review extends the current understanding of OBE implementation in several novel ways. From a theoretical perspective, while previous research has identified isolated challenges, this study's unique contribution lies in developing an integrated framework that demonstrates how pedagogical, administrative, and cultural dimensions intersect in OBE implementation. The taxonomy of seven interconnected challenges provides a new theoretical lens through which institutions can analyze and address implementation barriers systematically.

In the context of healthcare education, this study breaks new ground by bridging the gap between general OBE implementation theory and the specific demands of paramedical training programs. The findings are particularly significant for institutions like ILKMM as they represent one of the first systematic analyses of OBE implementation challenges specifically relevant to healthcare education in Malaysia. This contextual contribution is valuable as it addresses the unique requirements of competency-based healthcare education while considering local institutional constraints and opportunities.

Beyond its academic contributions, this research provides a practical framework for policy development and institutional transformation. The evidence-based insights offer a foundation for developing targeted interventions in paramedical training programs, while also opening new avenues for future research in healthcare education reform. This work thus serves as a crucial bridge between theoretical understanding and practical application in the specific context of healthcare education transformation.

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