

IMPLEMENTATION OF OUTCOME-BASED EDUCATION (OBE) IN AFGHAN UNIVERSITIES: LECTURERS' VOICES

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Abstract

Outcome-Based Education (OBE) as a new teaching approach that concentrates on student-centered learning has recently come into Afghanistan's educational context. This qualitative study aimed to explore the attitudes of ten Afghan instructors towards the implementation of OBE in Afghanistan universities. For collecting the data, a semi-structured interview and observation were designed. After collecting the data, the data were categorized, coded, and then thematically analyzed. Therefore, four major themes were drawn: (a) beliefs regarding the essence of Outcome-Based Education (OBE), b) different interpretations on OBE, c) developing the classes' outcomes based on Bloom's Taxonomy, and d) shifting teaching practices from teacher-centered to student-centered learning approach. The results revealed that instructors' attitudes towards the implementation of OBE in their classrooms are both positive and negative. The findings also revealed that implementing the principles of OBE in classes helps them better design and develop their teaching materials well and set the learning outcomes based on the needs and expectations of students. The instructors reported that OBE is applicable in all different types of classes in which teachers and students get involved in learning and teaching processes purposefully. Creating an interactive classroom, choosing authentic materials, setting clear learning outcomes, understanding the full concept of OBE, and applying its principles and premises through pair work and group-work activities were core issues to help teachers in having a shift from a teacher-centered approach to student-centered learning.

Keywords: *Afghan University; implementation; Outcome-Based Education; OBE; SCL*

Introduction

Outcome-Based Education (OBE) is a teaching approach that focuses more on student-centered methods and helps teachers to leave the traditional teaching approaches and follow the modern ones which provide students with 21st-century skills. To date, thousands of students have been graduated, but they are not ready for the job market because of having no access to the soft skills (i.e., problem-solving, communications, critical thinking, confidence, and leadership) to get benefit in the workplace. Moreover, the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE), as a policymaker for Afghan universities across the country, decided to make some positive changes not only in the curriculum of universities but also to the teaching methodologies of instructors in all universities (MoHE, 2016; HEDP, 2017). The reason for this is that the universities, instead of graduating talented and skillful students, graduate students that are not compatible with the job market. Further, they cannot pass job interviews because of their low confidence and anxiety appeared during speaking to the interviewers for getting jobs (Akramy, 2020).

The Ministry of Higher Education of Afghanistan emphasized in its strategic plan (2016-2020) on empowering all the university instructors with the latest pedagogical and instructional skills that could be modern enough to fill the gaps that teachers of Afghan universities feel in their teaching (HEDP, 2016). To have better career opportunities for students, universities may have to focus on providing professionals with remarkable capabilities to the market and can fulfill the requirements while getting a job in the environment. The current teaching methods in Afghanistan universities do not meet today's demands in the job market and being criticized by the community, teachers, teacher-educators, and policymakers. Moreover, the majority of teachers are currently following the outdated and traditional teaching approaches which are mostly teacher-centered in the classrooms. These methods, indeed, isolate students from opportunities, chances for continuing their higher education, and the skills which are much welcomed in the world of the work environment (HEDP, 2016; Sadat, et al., 2015; World Bank, 2015; Hashemi & SI NA, 2020).

In addition, the OBE module is a helpful teaching approach that influences learning a particular content from the aspect of practicality (Alimyar, 2020). That is, when the students learn something, they have to put it into practice by applying and following a

couple of activities inside and outside the classroom. When OBE is once applied by teachers, the teachers will probably find it useful and informative because in such an approach both teachers and students are completely getting involved in the learning process (HEDP, 2016; Sadat, et al., 2015). This qualitative study is going to be about the implementation of OBE in Afghanistan universities. Besides, every research paper is conducted to look for a solution for a problem raised in a community and suggests that teachers, educators, and policymakers need to seek helpful and effective ways to adapt and revise their teaching approaches. I hope this paper is useful and helpful, particularly teachers from different faculties who are struggling with their methods of teaching in their home institution and I hope to provide a very clear concept of OBE and help you apply this student-centered approach in your teaching context and address the issue more specifically and successfully in Afghanistan educational context.

In Afghanistan educational context, only one research, (Alimyar, 2020), has been carried out to explore the effectiveness of Outcome-Based Education (OBE) training workshops on Afghan EFL instructors' knowledge, skills, and attitudes towards implementing OBE in their language classrooms. Furthermore, this study only explored the attitudes of EFL instructors. The attitudes of instructors from other disciplines were not included whether they have favorable preferences to Outcome-Based Education (OBE) in their teaching contexts. Therefore, this qualitative paper seeks the effects of OBE on teachers' teaching methods. It also attempts to explore the attitudes of teachers from different disciplines towards the implementation of Outcome-Based Education in their classrooms. I know the topic of OBE is crucial for all educational sectors, particularly in Afghanistan schools and universities. A large number of teachers across Afghanistan have more problems while teaching their students because they follow methods that are no longer helpful for both teachers and students. It would also provide teachers the chance of realizing the perceptions and values of the OBE approach in their classrooms and renew their teaching techniques until the needs and expectations of their students are met.

This qualitative study seeks to investigate to what extent Afghan instructors from other disciplines (i.e., Theology, Education, Engineering, Economics, Law and Political Sciences, Agriculture, and Literature) other than EFL faculties are accepting or adopting the envisioned education approach (outcome-based) or what perceptions they may show

towards modern teaching and learning approach to be applied in their teaching classrooms. It specifically: (1) describes the demographics of university instructors in terms of age, gender, highest educational attainment, academic rank, and teaching experience; (2) determines the attitudes and perceptions of Afghanistan universities instructors in terms of knowledge, beliefs, feelings, thoughts, and their level of acceptance towards OBE; and (3) find out the relationship between instructors' demographics and their attitudes and perceptions towards Outcome-Based Education (OBE) in the classrooms considering their fields.

Literature review

Outcome-based education (OBE)

Outcome-Based Education (OBE) is an educational process that attempts to reach certain specified outcomes as the result of getting students involved in the learning process. That is, students are given more independence to decide about their lessons themselves. Furthermore, the students are part of the learning and may have to be given more importance to set the outcomes based on their expectations (Willis and Kissane, 1995; Spady, 1993; Stone, 2005). Similarly, Malan (2000) highlighted that OBE emphasizes setting clear outcomes for the separated session in specific classes in a specific discipline by which students' performance is empirically measured. OBE also promotes educational revitalization and addresses the questions of what do instructors want their students to learn? Why do they want students to learn? How do they help students learn a related issue in their classes (Kennedy, 2009; Killen, 2000; Mokhaba, 2015)?

Outcome-Based Education (OBE) goes back to the 1980s and is known as a way of reforming the educational sectors. It has also been promoted widely and internationally as outcome-Based Education (OBE) in countries, such as the United States, Australia, and South Africa to facilitate renewal in traditional teaching methods (Malan, 2000; Kennedy, 2009). To be responsive to the challenges of the 21st century, higher education had been transformed from the preserve of the few to more broadly based education systems, with a profound change in quality assurance mechanisms. Stone (2005) further pointed out that until recently there had been much tendency of assessing quality primarily in terms of inputs and processes, but now the focus has been changed from inputs to outputs (i.e., goals and outcomes). That is, OBE has always emphasized what the

learners get and learn matters rather than the outcomes teacher expects and desires to achieve at the end of a program (Lui & Shum, 2010; Stone, 2005).

In addition, Outcome-Based Education (OBE) has been considered as an important approach that requires instructors and learners to concentrate on their attention on the desired results, i.e. outcomes of learning, and the instructive and learning process that will instruct to reach the already set outcomes of their classrooms (van der Horst & McDonald, 1997; Olivier, 2002; Orfan, 2021). In OBE, learning is successfully transferred to learners through the outcomes which are set for a particular session. Furthermore, OBE reflects the notion that the best possible way to get where the learners want to be, is to first determine what they want to achieve (Olivier, 2002). The probable implication is that when instructors plan and get preparation for their learning activities in OBE, they may have to first think about the outcomes of their classes and then step into further to help their learners achieve the desired and expected outcomes (Spady, 1993; van der Horst & MacDonald, 1997; Orfan, 2021).

A Shift from Traditional Teaching Approach to Outcome-Based Education

The traditional teaching approach is often known as teacher-centered, lectures, curriculum-centered by which students are not autonomous enough to make decisions about their learning process (Wilkins, 1976). That is to say, it could be a formal education process that transmits information from the teacher to the student. Furthermore, it provides the learner with knowledge or skills, or both, but they are not coupled to a particular context – so that the learning takes place in a vacuum and may not be regarded as outcomes-based learning. It is probably considered as input which is part of the learning process, but it does not meet the needs and expectations of students (Freire & Ramos, 2009; Sadat, et al., 2015).

In Afghanistan, the higher education system, Outcome-Based Education (OBE) has been seen as an important and helpful teaching approach to enter all Afghanistan universities instead of the traditional teaching practices which are no longer helping learners have access to the twenty-first-century skills (i.e., communication, presentation, problem-solving, and decision making) until they can be given jobs in national and international sectors (HEDP, 2016; HEDP, 2015; Sadat, et al., 2015). Furthermore, the Afghanistan Ministry of Higher Education has worked on OBE and trained hundreds of

university instructors to apply the OBE principles and premises in their teaching classroom to better enable their learners to be much skillful not only in terms of input but also output and outcomes that are designed and set for a particular session or the course. In OBE, the instructors are following the learner-centered methods and they act as a facilitator to facilitate the learning path for the learners. More specifically, in OBE the learners' ability building and skills development are important not the content (HEDP, 2016; Sadat, et al., 2015; World Bank, 2015; World Bank, 2016; World Bank, 2017).

Implementation of OBE in Developing Countries

Afghanistan and other developing countries, such as Botswana, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia have also implemented OBE in their teaching classrooms. Botswana adaption of OBE has been the result of the concerns and complaints by university instructors that there was much concentration on the content and traditional teaching practices for mastering the content which was no longer enough and helpful to students, particularly for their real-life and work after graduation in the 21st century (Adedoyin, 2010). Furthermore, leaving the traditional-based education resulted in a policy shift to challenge the ways that educational settings could measure the learning outcomes and skills gotten by learners through Outcome-Based Education (OBE). At present, the Botswana 2017 version for education is that Outcome-Based Education (OBE) can provide a balance between the class inputs and learning outcomes to meet the needs and expectations of the community (Adedoyin, 2013). To implement OBE, the Botswana government aimed at providing extra infrastructure, upgrading teachers' qualifications through holding capacity development workshops, enriching relevant curriculum materials to be used in the schools and universities (Avalos 2015).

There have been found two evident problems concerning the implementation of OBE in developing countries. First, the majority of teachers are not trained well and are not familiar with the premises and principles of OBE to implement in their classrooms. As Avalos (1998) pointed out, teacher education in the developing countries requires renewal in order to bring positive reforms in the education systems or if OBE is a choice to adapt and employed in the formation of the education system as a helpful education approach (UNESCO, 2017; Avalos, 2013; UNESCO, 2015). Second, small classes containing a large number of students with noise and much crowd is another obstacle for

both stakeholders and teachers to apply the modern teaching approaches in their classrooms because these types of classes provide less chance for the teachers to individually meet their students and aid them to be active in the learning process (Jansen, 1998; UNESCO, 1998). Similarly, such problems are felt in Afghanistan educational centers which can be probably impossible to implement OBE in crowded classrooms.

In Afghan universities, the traditional education system is followed in all private and public universities, but over time it has not had any advantages for both learners and teachers. The teachers are always in front of their classes giving lectures without applying a variety of activities that have the aspects of practicality. Since 2016, the Afghanistan Ministry of Higher Education has worked hard to send hundreds of university instructors to get training and workshops on Outcome-Based Education (OBE) in Malaysia and come back to their country to empower other lecturers with the knowledge and skills they have learned from Malaysia under master trainers of OBE. OBE has been very successful around the world because the students while taking education under the shadow of OBE, could reach many remarkable achievements, such as communication, active learners, critical thinking, entrepreneurial skills, and many other soft abilities. After graduation, they had been able to get jobs and created jobs for others (HEDP, 2016; HEDP, 2017; HEDP, 2018; World Bank, 2015; Sadat et al., 2015; UNESCO, 2017; Alimyar, 2020).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

Two different research techniques have been followed in this qualitative paper during the data collection process. The participants in this study have been limited and the results that emerged from this qualitative study have not been based on numbers, but on Afghan university instructors' beliefs about their understanding of Outcome-Based Education (OBE). Qualitative research describes people's individual and collective social behaviors, thoughts, attitudes, and perceptions (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). When collecting data, the researcher attempted to determine Afghan university instructors' attitudes and perceptions about OBE and its implementation in classrooms. During observations, it could easily be inferred how they taught and assessed their learners in their teaching classroom. Researchers interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people

bring to them (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001). After the research finished collecting data, the data analysis was based on what the participants think and believe about OBE.

Instrument

The research questions with fourteen items were designed to conduct a semi-structured interview with participants. The questions of the interview were divided into three parts. The first part is about teachers' profile and their teaching background. The second part is related to exploring the attitudes of teachers on the implementation of OBE in their classes while the last part is asking teachers to have their recommendations to the present research study, higher education, and teaching.

Table1. Summary of the Criteria used during observing the teacher and students' participation

No	What should be known?	Questions asked?	What was to be achieved?
1	Number of students in the class	How many learners are there in a classroom?	To determine the students 'ratio, the impact that has on OBE implementation in the class
2	Classroom seating arrangement	How do students take seats or are seated?	To determine whether their seating arrangement is proper and help to have friendly and conducive learning participation.
3	Teaching strategies followed by the teacher	Which teaching strategies are applied in the classroom?	To determine whether the teacher follows different teaching strategies and acts as a facilitator in the classroom
4	Assessment strategies followed by the teacher	Which assessment strategies do teachers follow while assessing students' understanding?	To determine how teacher assesses students' performance and whether they follow multiple strategies while assessing students' work
5	Learners participation	What is the level of learners' participation in the classroom?	To determine whether teachers still dominate in the teaching-learning situation
6	Incorporation of OBE premises and principles in the lesson	Do the teachers incorporate OBE premises and principles in classroom activities?	To determine whether the teachers accommodate the OBE premises and principles in classroom practices

The interview questions were taken from a couple of research studies conducted by (Siebörger, 2004; Spady, 1994; Acharya, 2003; Spady, 1993; Northern Province Department of Education Policy Document, 2000; Lorenzen, 2002). The table below is prepared to help the researcher observe the teachers' classes:

Furthermore, an observation was also designed to be conducted by the researcher to determine whether the Afghan University instructors' views corresponded with their practices and how OBE influenced their classroom assessment practices. To take an observation properly, a summary of the criteria used during the observation of teachers' teaching practices and students' participation in the learning process.

The researcher has chosen the semi-structured design as there may be some follow-up questions and probes in order to find out more about participants' views regarding the Outcome-Based Education approach along with its application and how they incorporated the premises and principles in their classes.

In addition to employing the semi-structured interview for data collection, observation is an aid to determine whether participants incorporated OBE premises and principles in their teaching. The researcher was a participant observation to have the chance of identifying unanticipated outcomes from participants. The Observation itself is helpful and it is a natural, unstructured, and flexible setting to determine how the participants of this study taught and assessed their learners in the classroom. Tuckman (1994) asserted that what should be observed is the event or phenomenon in action. He further reported that in qualitative studies this mostly means unobtrusively sitting in a particular classroom and watching participants deliver the knowledge about a specific topic to students successfully. Moreover, the researcher used this kind of research technique until it confirms or disapproves the researcher's interpretations of participants' opinions and beliefs about the topic.

In a qualitative study, if the researcher combines the semi-structured interview with observation, he or she will have the chance of understanding the meanings people hold for their daily activities. It is observations that allow the researcher to whether determine participants' classroom practices relate to the premises and principles of Outcome-Based Education (Tuckman, 1994).

Sampling Techniques

A purposeful sampling technique was employed to collect data from ten Afghan instructors in the faculties of Theology, Law and Political sciences, Education (i.e., Math, and Geography), Literature, Economics, and Agriculture. The study aimed at collecting data from those participants who have taken workshops on OBE before because they are well equipped with the knowledge and skills in order to practice OBE in their classes. Morrison (2000) stated that selecting the participants of the study purposefully involves the nearest individuals to serve as respondents. This kind of sampling was the most appropriate technique in this qualitative paper because it gives the researcher the chance of getting connected with the participants in the study very well. The purposeful sampling technique was also helpful to the researcher to investigate adequately because the participants of the study are deemed to be knowledgeable and informative about OBE implementation. Moreover, this study has been conducted to gather data from ten Afghan instructors at Takhar University in different faculties. The table below briefly demonstrates the demographic information of the participants from Takhar University.

Table 2. Participants' Demographic Information

Participants	Gender	Academic Rank	Faculty	Teaching Experience	Age
R1	Male	Assistant Professor	Economics	3 years	36
R2	Male	Instructor	Geography (Education)	2 years	28
R3	Male	Instructor	Math (Education)	1 year	29
R4	Male	Assistant Professor	Islamic Studies	4 years	34
R5	Male	Assistant Professor	Islamic Studies	5 years	36
R6	Male	Assistant Professor	Law & Political Sciences	3 years	34
R7	Male	Instructor	Agriculture	2 years	30
R8	Male	Associate Professor	Language & Literature	10 years	38
R9	Male	Assistant Professor	Language & Literature	5 years	35
R10	Male	Assistant Professor	Engineering	6 years	35

Procedure

The researcher arranged several questions in the semi-structured interview to ask the participants when they participated in the interview. Furthermore, the researcher provided a consent form and gave to participants whether they are willing to participate in the study. Fortunately, all the participants (ten) who were the target for this study expressed their willingness and confirmed to have their ideas and attitudes towards Outcome-Based Education (OBE). When the researcher talked about the time and days of the interview, the participants decided to appoint a specific time and days themselves for the interview. On the day of the interview, the researcher explained the research study and its purpose to the participants and then started conducting the interview. The interviews were conducted in Dari, which is the lingua franca of the country (Orfan, 2020a) since English is a foreign language in Afghanistan and most people cannot understand English (Orfan, 2020b). During the interview, the researcher also asked the participants some follow-up questions when the answers of some questions were incomplete because he was trying to motivate and encourage the participants to deeply think about the topic and express what they have in mind about OBE to share with the researcher. It took 15 – 20 mins the respondents to answer all the questions of the interview.

Data Analysis

The data were gathered through semi-structured interviews and observation. After the interview, the researcher collected the data from participants and then coded and thematically analyzed it. Following this, the researcher observed two participants among those who took part in the interview in their classrooms. The observation was held to see whether the instructors' views on OBE match with what they are doing in their classes because OBE focuses more on the outcomes of students and it emphasizes that at end of a session students may have to achieve what outcomes they already set for a particular session. Furthermore, the observation was taken to make sure that the researcher collected data the same as the interview.

Ten Afghan instructors from a range of disciplines were selected as participants for this qualitative study at Takhar University. Their teaching experiences ranged from 1 year to 10 years and the majority of them had Master's degrees from the related fields. They taught classes from freshman to senior and the number of students in their classes was over 70. Among these ten instructors who participated in the interview, only two of

them were observed in their classes. The observation lasted for six days and the researcher allocated three days for each instructor in order to observe them. He was responsible to observe the instructors in their classes whether they practice the premises and principles of OBE in their classes or they are just familiar with the theory of OBE. The time of observation was for a whole session (50 minutes) each day to observe the instructors with their students.

Findings and Discussion

This qualitative study has been conducted to explore the attitudes of Afghan University instructors towards the implementation of Outcome-Based Education in the Afghan teaching context. After the semi-structured interview was conducted by the researcher, he categorized the data, then coded it, and finally thematically analyzed it. Four major themes emerged from the data: (a) beliefs regarding the essence of Outcome-Based Education (OBE), b) different interpretations on OBE, c) developing learning outcomes based on Bloom's Taxonomy, and d) Shifting teaching practices from teacher-centered method to the student-centered learning approach.

Results

Interview

For theme one "beliefs regarding the essence of Outcome-Based Education (OBE)", three respondents reported that OBE as a helpful approach provides more learning opportunities. OBE is only for learners to help them have access to some remarkable achievements and does not give time to instructors to play a major role in the teaching-learning processes. OBE is always emphasizing that students may have to think about their high expectations and the only way to reach those expectations is to participate in many classroom activities which concentrate on their learning and understanding. Following are two direct quotes of the participants from the faculties of Engineering and Islamic Studies "Theology":

"I think the effective implementation of OBE requires instructors to concentrate on learning outcomes of the learners because Outcome-Based Education is a teaching and learning strategy that gives to every single learner the goals or objectives of their education." (R1)

“OBE focuses on learners to have high desires for learning and participate in classroom activities which are set and prepared by the instructors. OBE encourages both instructors and learners to work on their teaching and learning process. That is to say, it makes us knowledgeable and skillful because it gives us the chance of seeking new information about a particular issue through searching on the Internet. Overall, it is a great way of teaching and learning and it helps both learners and teachers to reach the expected goals.” (R5)

With regards to the theme (b) “different interpretations on OBE,” the majority of respondents reported that the only approach to change the passive learners into active ones is OBE and it helps them to actively participate in the learning process. OBE also helps the instructors to think about their learners and provide them useful and authentic materials besides the textbook. The below are some of the participants' excerpts from interviews:

“OBE encourages all the instructors to apply formative assessment in their teaching classrooms in order to have fruitful and considerable achievement and also do let OBE get implemented in their classrooms until the students' needs expectations are met.” (R2)

“Through OBE, there is a wide range of activities in which the students participate actively and communicatively to reflect on their learning.” (R4)

“OBE provides a friendly learning environment where the opinions and views of every learner are respected and heard. It also causes that instructors, instead of giving more lectures, think about the output of students. It is outcomes that OBE gives more importance and value the participation of learners in a high level.” (R6)

A few participants reported some negative interpretations of OBE regardless of the positive ones. They further highlighted that OBE is not applicable in some classrooms, particularly in Math and Law and Political sciences classrooms. Based on their opinions, it is time-consuming to apply the principles and premises of OBE in classrooms because the classes are not equipped enough with chairs, tables for project activities, technological devices, and stationery for keeping their activities forward. Following are three interview scripts of the participants:

“Although OBE is a good teaching approach in which the student-centered method is much emphasized, it takes a lot of time to know its importance and bring it to the class.

Most of the teachers even don't know what OBE is and what are its principles and characteristics? We, first, have to be trained well and then the needs of every class should be met to better implement OBE in classrooms.” (R4)

“Most of the classes that we are teaching are full of students. That means, hundreds of students are taking education in each class and we can't even move the chairs to group students or change their positions to a different one. OBE is very hard to be implemented by the instructors. Moreover, the students are not ready to welcome OBE in their classes as well.” (R7)

The third theme is concerning “setting learning outcomes considering Bloom's Taxonomy”. Regarding this theme, the participants reported that in OBE the instructors are expected to design and set their outcomes based on the needs of students. It means what the students learn and get from class is more important than the teachers' expectations and desires. Furthermore, setting clear outcomes for the classroom or any particular activities guide both the teachers and learners to stick to learning and teaching. Following are the three participants' excerpts from the interview:

“Before joining the workshop of OBE, I was setting my own classes' outcomes for my students in a way that not helpful and measurable. At the end of the session, we could not understand whether the students have achieved the outcomes or not. Now I see a lot of positive changes not only in my teaching but also the learning outcomes of students are set very clear and define what is supposed to be taught.” (R8)

“In the past, most of the teachers and I were focusing on the students' input. After taking OBE's workshop, we are happy to have fruitful classes every day. We not only concentrate on the input of students but also we design and prepare our teaching materials and activities based on three important aspects which are “cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains) in order to have a helpful session for the learners. If we prepare our classroom activities and consider the three important elements, our activities will be communicative and having the aspects of practicality to get students involved.” (R5)

“OBE approach helps me a lot, particularly in the faculty of engineering. If we want to set the learning outcomes, we consider the needs of students first and then provide and develop the outcomes based on Bloom's Taxonomy in order to be measurable. While setting outcomes, we use the verbs which are based on the formula of “SMART” until we can achieve them at the end of the session.” (R9)

In the last theme “Shifting teacher-centered learning to student-centered learning approach”, all the participants confirmed and showed their favorable preferences to work hard in order to implement OBE in their classes. They further highlighted that after the OBE training, we feel that teaching is a sort of responsibility and they have to be responsive to the problems of students. While teaching, they need to apply the OBE principles considering the student-centered learning methods, course and materials design, and communicative and helpful activities which characterize the needs of learners, and the learners after each session may have access to remarkable achievements. The following are outlined two direct quotes of the respondents from the interview:

“Before taking OBE training, I was responsible for everything in terms of giving lectures, materials design, the seating arrangement of classroom and too many others to name here. I learned more things about OBE and happy to gradually leave the teacher-centered approach and follow a student-centered learning approach by which students are much motivated and keen to participate in classroom activities actively. I learned that students may have to be given more independence to make a decision about their learning and to be active learners.” (R3)

“Leaving the traditional teaching approaches is hard and taking much time to apply OBE in our classrooms. However we do not have enough facilities in our classes, we can have OBE principles conducted in classrooms. Both teachers and students are not much active and skillful in the traditional teaching practices. OBE helps both teachers and students to work hard in the learning and teaching processes and let the lessons go smoothly and properly.” (R10)

Observation

Based on table 1, it can be concluded that giving lectures by the teacher dominated teaching methods and the content was delivered in two observed classrooms (Islamic studies and Engineering faculties) was in a very authoritarian manner. Facilitation of learning with the students occurred in only one class which was the Engineering faculty and teachers from both classes were not fully prepared for the session which culminated in little learning for students. Although some principles of Outcome-Based Education (OBE) were felt and the teacher was trying to implement OBE, sort of reluctance to use the teaching materials failed to follow a particular approach for the stage of any activi-

ties prepared for students. On a positive point, teachers from both classes were very active while putting the students into groups of five to six students and they followed the student-centered approach to comfortably select the students for the groups. The way to select the students into groups by teachers was the jigsaw method which is now very common among teachers of educational centers. Moreover, the teachers were both very friendly while cooperating with their students and responded to every question raised among students in the classrooms.

The observation also described that the activities performed by the students during the lesson in both classes were fruitful and relevant to the topic. Students were able to answer the questions being asked by the teacher. They appeared clever to complete activities and learn although they had little chance for answering the teachers' questions. The majority of students were also afraid of their teachers that they might be authoritative. The sessions for lessons delivered by both teachers were not much attractive because some students were not given more chances of participating in classroom activities and expressed their feelings towards a particular issue. Teachers were calling upon only those students who already learned their names and they did not know the names of some other students. It is also worth mentioning that the teachers were very active, prepared, and trying to make the lesson as attractive as they could convince the students. The students were also engaged in the lesson and probably enjoyed it much.

To sum up, it was inferred from the observation that teachers of both classes were trying to apply the OBE approach in which the student-centered learning is highly emphasized in the classroom and some of the OBE principles were implemented by the teachers (i.e., the learning outcomes were designed based on Blooms Taxonomy). For instance, the classroom activities had three important aspects which are cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains to make students act helpfully and purposefully. Students in each activity wanted to have active participation and overall enjoyed an interactive session in the class.

Conclusion

This qualitative study explored the attitudes of Afghanistan university instructors towards implementation of Outcome-Based Education (OBE) from the faculties of Engineering, Literature, Education (i.e., Math and Geography), Economics, Theology, and

Law and Political Sciences in their classrooms. The effects of OBE on instructors' teaching methods, and applying the principles and premises of OBE through observation were investigated in this paper. Moreover, the instructors' recommendations and suggestions regarding the implementation of OBE in Afghanistan universities and its impact on teachers' and students' teaching and learning processes were described in this paper as well.

Implications

In the light of the findings, some recommendations related to teaching, higher education, capacity development of teachers, and research were proposed. While teaching students, the teachers may have to apply the principles of OBE in their classrooms purposefully in order to achieve learning outcomes being set for a particular session. Before holding teaching pieces of training and workshops for teachers and getting them ready for implementing OBE in classes, the policymakers and stakeholders have to make changes in the current curriculum of Afghanistan universities until the teachers have enough impendence to decide choosing materials of teaching to students which are helpful and informative. The students can acquire the knowledge and skills through the materials chosen and developed by their teachers. The teachers may have to, as well as, monitor students by helping them when they need more instructions. Helping students with giving clear instruction and feedback causes that students will reach remarkable achievements in their learning process. Moreover, the teachers before implementing any new methods or teaching approaches, may have to get familiar with the principles of that particular method until they face no challenges in their teaching. As this study explored, the two teachers who were observed by the researcher were not much familiar with the principles and characteristics of OBE because OBE focuses on student-centered learning, but almost all the activities by these two teachers were conducted in the classrooms were in a way in which the teacher-centered method dominated not the student-centered learning approach. For implementing OBE and student-centered learning (SCL) properly, the teachers should be observed once or twice per year by the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) in order to cover their teaching gaps through holding capacity development workshops and pieces of training.

Limitations and Future Studies

Presently, this study was conducted qualitatively and hired a limited number of participants (ten university instructors in semi-structured interview and two instructors for observation). The scope of this study only included the attitudes of instructors on the implementation of OBE from one university. The attitudes and perceptions of teachers from other universities across Afghanistan were not investigated. Therefore, the future study will be wider and include a large number of participants using a variety of research instruments from different contexts. The research study will include the attitudes of teachers from both universities and schools in terms of their prior knowledge on the Outcome-Based Education approach and the effects of their current teaching methods by which they continue their classes as well.

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