

## Outcome Based Education at the Tertiary Level in Bangladesh: Principles and Practices

Gopal Chandra Saha<sup>1</sup>, PhD and Kazi Latifur Reza<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Associate Professor, Department of Business Administration, R. P. Shaha University, Bangladesh

<sup>2</sup>Associate Professor, Department of Law and Human Rights, R. P. Shaha University, Bangladesh

**Corresponding Author:** Gopal Chandra Saha, gopalsaha\_ru@yahoo.com

### Abstract

*This study delves into Outcome Based Education (OBE) principles and practices at the tertiary level in Bangladesh. OBE is a student-centric approach that emphasizes defining clear learning outcomes and aligning educational processes to achieve those outcomes. The study explores the evolution of OBE, its theoretical framework, and implementation. It also offers a detailed analysis of OBE adoption and development within Bangladesh, considering its alignment with national goals and its impact on curriculum design, assessment strategies, and faculty development. Furthermore, the study examines fundamental principles and best practices guiding OBE in Bangladesh, emphasizing clarity in learning outcomes, learner-centred approaches, assessment diversity, transparency, quality assurance, faculty development, and stakeholder engagement. The study proposes policy recommendations for a comprehensive national framework and institutional-level enhancements, emphasizing ongoing faculty development and infrastructure investment. The findings contribute to the continuing discourse on OBE in Bangladesh and provide a foundation for future research directions, including longitudinal impact studies and technology integration, offering insights for the continuous improvement of OBE practices in Bangladesh's tertiary education landscape.*

**Keywords:** Outcome Based Education, Course Learning Outcome, Continuous Quality Improvement, Tertiary Level, Higher Education.

### I. Introduction

Outcome Based Education (OBE) has emerged as a transformative force in higher education worldwide, redefining the traditional teaching and learning paradigms. In Bangladesh, a nation aspiring to keep pace with the evolving demands of the globalized job market and knowledge-driven society, OBE implementation at the tertiary level represents a significant shift in educational philosophy. This study delves into the principles and practices of Outcome Based Education in Bangladesh, offering a comprehensive exploration of its evolution, key components, challenges, and successes. By shedding light on the intricate tapestry of OBE principles and their practical application within the unique educational landscape of Bangladesh, this study seeks to provide valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and stakeholders invested in enhancing the quality and relevance of higher education in the country. As we embark on this journey through the heart of OBE in Bangladesh, the study aims to uncover the transformative potential at the intersection of theory and practice, illuminating a path toward a more dynamic and responsive tertiary education system.

### II. Methodology of the Study

The research methodology employed in this study follows a quantitative research design with a cross-sectional approach to gather numerical data and analyze statistical patterns. The population consists of faculty members from selected tertiary institutions, employing a purposive sampling method to choose institutions with established Outcome Based Education (OBE) practices. Structured questionnaires serve as the primary data collection instrument, featuring close-ended questions categorized into sections addressing various aspects of OBE practices. The survey is administered electronically, ensuring efficiency and timely data collection, with ethical considerations such as confidentiality and voluntary participation strictly adhered to. Key variables, including university-wide and departmental adoption of OBE, teachers' training, adherence to course outlines, and perceptions of OBE's impact on ethical values and analytical capacities, are analyzed using descriptive statistics and cross-tabulations. The research methodology accounts for potential limitations, emphasizing sample representativeness and addressing biases through clear communication. Validity and reliability are ensured through questionnaire design based on established OBE principles, pilot testing, and consistency checks. The findings will be presented through tables, charts, and narrative summaries, comprehensively analyzing OBE practices in tertiary institutions and offering valuable insights into their implementation, challenges, and perspectives.

### **III. Objectives of the Study**

To investigate the existing phenomenon of Outcome Based education at the tertiary level for analyzing principles and practices of OBE in Bangladesh

### **IV. Background and Context of OBE in Bangladesh**

Like many others, Bangladesh's higher education system has encountered the pressing need to evolve in response to the challenges of a rapidly changing world. Adopting OBE principles has been a significant step towards addressing these challenges. OBE centres around the explicit definition of learning outcomes, emphasizing student-centric learning experiences and the acquisition of practical skills. Its integration into Bangladesh's higher education system aligns with the National Education Policy of 2010, which recognized the importance of producing graduates who can meet the demands of a dynamic job market and contribute to national development. (Ministry of Education, 2010)

### **V. Significance of Studying OBE at the Tertiary Level**

The significance of studying OBE at the tertiary level in Bangladesh cannot be overstated. Higher education plays a pivotal role in shaping the future workforce and leaders of the nation. OBE offers a structured framework to produce graduates who not only possess academic knowledge but also practical competencies. This study is particularly pertinent in Bangladesh, where higher education institutions have progressively integrated OBE principles (Uddin, 2017). Investigating the significance of OBE at this level offers valuable insights into the alignment of educational goals with societal needs, fostering enhanced employability and competitiveness for graduates in a rapidly changing global landscape.

### **VI. Literature Review**

The evolution and theoretical framework of OBE trace back to the mid-20th century, with roots in educational psychology and curriculum design. OBE gained prominence through the works of educators such as Ralph Tyler and Benjamin Bloom, who emphasized the importance of defining clear educational objectives and aligning instructional practices with those objectives (Bloom, 1956) (Tyler R. W., 1949). This theoretical foundation evolved further with the contributions of educational theorists like Robert Mager and Ralph W. Tyler, who emphasized the need for precise learning outcomes and assessment criteria (Mager, 1962), (Tyler R. W., 1978.). Additionally, OBE was significantly influenced by the works of educational psychologist Benjamin Bloom, particularly his taxonomy of educational objectives (Bloom, 1956), which categorized learning objectives into cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. These theoretical underpinnings have provided the basis for the development and implementation of OBE in various educational settings, including higher education. Understanding the evolution and theoretical framework of OBE is essential for its effective application and assessment in different contexts.

OBE has gained recognition and implementation in various international contexts, contributing to educational reform, and enhancing the quality of learning outcomes. Countries such as the United States, Australia, and South Africa have adopted OBE principles and practices in their education systems. In the United States, OBE was integrated into K-12 education through initiatives like the "Goals 2000: Educate America Act," emphasizing clear learning outcomes and standards (Education., 1994). In Australia, OBE was adopted in higher education institutions to promote graduate attributes and employability (Barrie, 2004). South Africa also embraced OBE to address issues of equity and access to education (Badat, 2003). These international implementations of OBE highlight its adaptability and effectiveness in diverse educational settings, serving as valuable case studies for countries like Bangladesh looking to enhance their educational practices.

On the other hand, OBE has witnessed significant adoption and development in Bangladesh's educational landscape over the past few decades. This transformative journey has been driven by the country's recognition of the need to align higher education with the evolving demands of the job market and society. Notably, the National Education Policy of 2010 emphasized the incorporation of OBE principles to enhance the quality and relevance of education in Bangladesh (Ministry of Education, 2010) Subsequently, initiatives like the Higher Education Quality Enhancement Project (HEQEP) have played a pivotal role in promoting OBE practices and faculty development within higher education institutions (UGC, 2021). As a result, OBE has become an integral part of the tertiary education system in Bangladesh, reflecting the country's commitment to producing graduates equipped with both subject knowledge and practical competencies, in line with international educational trends.

In Bangladesh, the implementation of OBE is guided by key principles and best practices aimed at enhancing the quality and relevance of tertiary education. Central to these principles is the clear definition of learning outcomes, which serve as the foundation of curriculum development and assessment strategies (Uddin, 2017). Curriculum design in OBE is characterized by a learner-centred approach, ensuring that educational programs are aligned with defined outcomes and foster critical thinking, problem-solving, and practical skills (Begum & Ahmed, 2014). Assessment practices have evolved to include a diverse range of methods, such as project-based assessments, portfolios, and authentic tasks, allowing for a comprehensive evaluation of students' achievement of outcomes (Begum, 2014). Faculty development programs have been instrumental in equipping educators with the pedagogical skills necessary to implement OBE effectively (Uddin, 2017). Additionally, stakeholder engagement through partnerships with industries and employers has been emphasized to ensure that the learning outcomes align with real-world needs (Uddin, 2017). In this study, our objective is to assess the implementation of Outcome Based Education (OBE) principles and practices at the tertiary level in Bangladesh, gauging the extent to which these contribute to the successful execution of OBE in the country's tertiary education system.

## **VII. Outcome Based Education in Bangladesh: An Overview**

The journey of OBE in Bangladesh can be traced back to the early 2000s, driven by the nation's recognition of the need for a paradigm shift in its tertiary education system. This historical development aligns with the National Education Policy of 2010, (Ministry of Education, 2010). This policy framework provided the impetus for higher education institutions in Bangladesh to embark on a transformative journey towards adopting OBE as a guiding philosophy.

The current status of OBE adoption in Bangladesh reflects a significant shift in educational practices. Many higher education institutions have embraced OBE principles and are actively incorporating them into their programs and curricula. This includes a clear definition of learning outcomes, learner-centred approaches, diversified assessment methods, and a focus on aligning education with real-world needs (Uddin, 2017). The Higher Education Quality Enhancement Project (HEQEP), initiated by the government, has played a pivotal role in promoting OBE practices and faculty development within higher education institutions (UGC, 2021). This concerted effort underscores the extent to which OBE has become an integral part of the tertiary education landscape in Bangladesh.

While OBE has made substantial progress in Bangladesh, it is not without its challenges. One of the primary challenges lies in overcoming resistance to change, as many educators and institutions are accustomed to traditional teaching methods (Uddin, 2017). Resource constraints, including funding and faculty development, also pose significant obstacles to effective OBE implementation (Farhana, 2018). Furthermore, ensuring consistent quality and transparency in OBE practices remains a continuous challenge (Farhana, 2018).

However, these challenges are accompanied by significant opportunities. OBE allows for a more responsive and learner-centric educational approach, fostering the development of critical thinking, problem-solving, and practical skills among students (Ahmed, 2019). Collaboration with external stakeholders, including industries and employers, presents opportunities to align learning outcomes with real-world needs and enhance graduates' employability (Ahmed, 2019). Through ongoing monitoring, feedback mechanisms, and a commitment to enhancing educational quality, Bangladesh has the potential to further leverage OBE to meet the evolving demands of its tertiary education landscape. In our study, we concentrate on identifying the existing gaps in the practice to implementation of Outcome Based Education (OBE) principles and the improvement of educational quality at the tertiary level in Bangladesh. Through precise investigation targeting these practical gaps of practice in OBE implementation, our goal is to establish a robust foundation for optimizing the potential of OBE, efficiently addressing the evolving demands of the country's tertiary education landscape.

## **VIII. Principles of OBE Implementation**

The implementation of OBE in Bangladesh is guided by a set of fundamental principles that underpin its application and impact in the context of higher education in the country. These principles are essential for shaping curriculum design, assessment strategies, and overall pedagogical approaches.

**Clear and Explicit Learning Outcomes:** At the heart of OBE in Bangladesh is the establishment of clear and explicit learning outcomes for each program and course. These outcomes define what students should know and be able to do upon completion, providing a precise roadmap for curriculum development (Farhana, 2018).

**Alignment with National Goals:** OBE in Bangladesh is closely aligned with national educational goals and priorities. It seeks to produce graduates who not only possess subject-specific knowledge but also the skills and competencies required for national development and global competitiveness (Uddin, 2017) .

**Learner-Centered Education:** OBE promotes a learner-centered approach, emphasizing student engagement and active participation in the learning process. This principle encourages educators to consider students' individual needs, backgrounds, and learning styles (Ahmed, 2019).

**Assessment for Learning and Improvement:** Assessment in OBE is viewed as a tool for learning and continuous improvement. Bangladesh has transitioned from traditional exam-centric assessment methods to diverse approaches, including project-based assessments and portfolios, enabling a comprehensive evaluation of student achievement (Uddin, 2017).

**Transparency and Accountability:** Transparency is paramount in OBE implementation in Bangladesh. Educational institutions are accountable for demonstrating that graduates have attained the specified learning outcomes. This includes transparent communication of assessment criteria and performance expectations (Ahmed, 2019).

**Quality Assurance:** OBE aligns with a robust quality assurance framework. This includes continuous monitoring, feedback mechanisms, and a commitment to enhancing educational quality through evidence-based practices (Farhana, 2018).

**Professional Development:** To effectively implement OBE, faculty members in Bangladesh undergo comprehensive professional development programs. These initiatives aim to equip educators with the pedagogical skills necessary to design effective assessment strategies and implement learner-centred practices (Uddin, 2017).

**Stakeholder Engagement:** Collaboration with external stakeholders, including industries and employers, is actively promoted. This engagement ensures that the learning outcomes are in harmony with real-world needs and enhances graduates' employability (Ahmed, 2019).

These principles collectively guide the implementation of OBE in Bangladesh, reflecting the country's commitment to producing graduates who are not only academically proficient but also equipped with practical skills and competencies essential for national and global success.

## IX. OBE Practices in Tertiary Institutions

### A. Case studies of OBE implementation in selected institutions

The practice OBE in the University:

**Do your university follow OBE practice?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid YES	100	100.0	100.0	100.0

For our sample 100% respondents said their university follows OBE practice.

The practice OBE at the department:

**Do your department start to follow OBE practice?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid YES	100	100.0	100.0	100.0

For our sample 100% of respondents said their departments start to follow OBE practice.

### B. Analysis of curriculum changes and learning outcomes

Teachers training or workshop on OBE curricula:

**Do your teachers get any training on OBE?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid YES	100	100.0	100.0	100.0

For our sample 100% respondents said their teachers get training on OBE.

Teachers follow Course Outline:

**Do your teachers follow the course outline?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid YES	100	100.0	100.0	100.0

For our sample 100% of respondents said their teachers follow the course outline.

Course contents correspond with CLO:

**Do you think course contents correspond with CLO?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid YES	100	100.0	100.0	100.0

For our sample 100% of respondents think their course contents correspond with CLO.

**C. Evaluation of assessment methods and student performance**

OBE ensures best learning approach:

**Do you think OBE ensures best learning approach?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid YES	100	100.0	100.0	100.0

For our sample 100% respondents thinks OBE ensures best learning approach

OBE used as bridge between academic career and professional performance:

**Do you think OBE creates a bridge between academic career and professional performance?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid YES	100	100.0	100.0	100.0

For our sample 100% of respondents think OBE creates a bridge between academic career and professional performance.

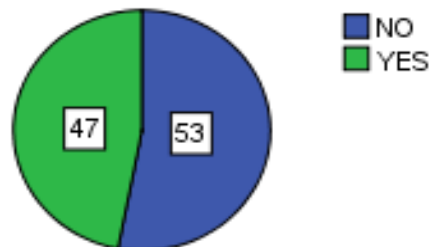
**D.** Faculty perspectives and experiences:

Available resources to maintain OBE:

**Do you think universities have available resources to maintain OBE?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid NO	53	53.0	53.0	53.0
YES	47	47.0	47.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

**Do you think universities have available resources to maintain OBE**



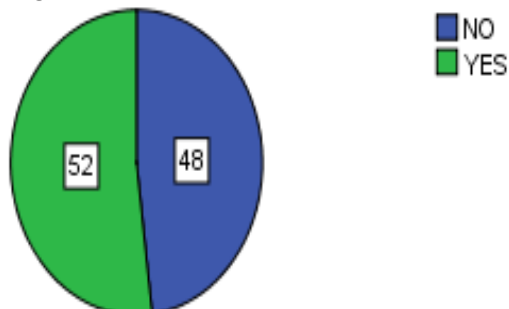
Here 47% respondents said that universities have available resources to maintain OBE whereas 53% do not think that universities have available resources to maintain OBE. There is not too much difference between the two agreements.

Adequate time to prepare OBE curriculum:

**Does your university allow adequate time to prepare for the OBE curriculum?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid NO	48	48.0	48.0	48.0
YES	52	52.0	52.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

**Does your university allow adequate time to prepare for the OBE curriculum**

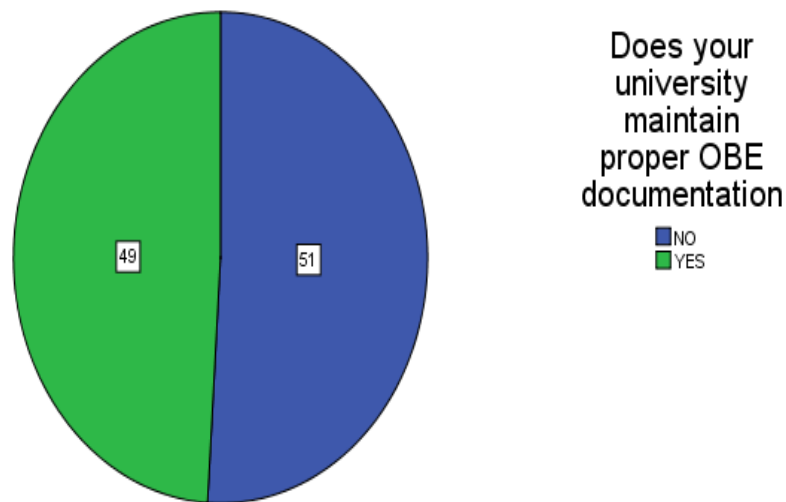


For the topic on Does your university allow adequate time to prepare for the OBE 52% respondents said that university allow adequate time to prepare for the OBE whereas 48% do not think that university allow adequate time to prepare for the OBE. There is not too much difference between the two agreements.

Maintaining proper documentation:

**Does your university maintain proper OBE documentation?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	NO	51	51.0	51.0	51.0
	YES	49	49.0	49.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	



Here 49% respondents said that university maintains proper OBE documentation whereas 51% do not think that university maintain proper OBE documentation. There is not too much difference between the two agreements.

Assessment procedure meeting course objectives:

**Do you think the assessment procedure meets the course objectives?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	YES	100	100.0	100.0	100.0

For our sample 100% of respondents said their assessment procedure meets the course objectives.

OBE curriculum developing student's ethical values:

**Does OBE develop student's ethical values?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	YES	100	100.0	100.0	100.0

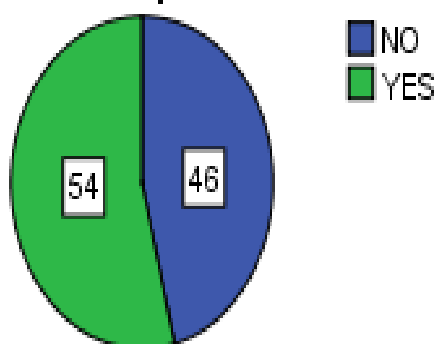
For our sample 100% of respondents think that OBE develops student's ethical values.

OBE curriculum for improving student's analytical capacities:

**Does OBE improve student's analytical capacities?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	NO	46	46.0	46.0	46.0
	YES	54	54.0	54.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

**Does OBE improve student's analytical capacities**



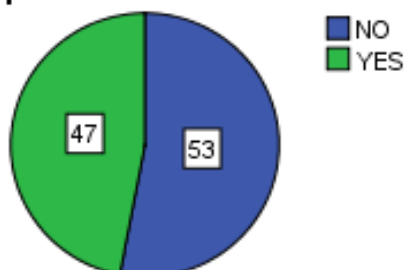
Coming to the question, does OBE improve student's analytical capacities, 54% thinks that, yes OBE improve student's analytical capacities. On the other hand, 46% of respondents think that OBE does not improve student's analytical capacities. Here also the difference between the two categories is very low.

OBE review and update at time to time:

**Does your university updates OBE time to time?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	NO	53	53.0	53.0	53.0
	YES	47	47.0	47.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

**Does your university updates OBE time to time**



Here 53% respondents said that university updates OBE time to time. On the other hand, 53% do not think that university updates OBE time to time. Here also we cannot find too much difference between the two agreements.



## **X. Findings of the study**

The survey findings provide a comprehensive overview of the prevalent sentiments regarding the implementation of Outcome Based Education (OBE) practices in tertiary institutions. The unanimous agreement among respondents, with a 100% consensus at both the university and department levels, reflects a widespread acceptance and adoption of OBE methodologies. This resounding affirmation suggests a collective commitment to reshaping educational approaches to focus on defined learning outcomes. The positive trend extends to faculty development, with all surveyed participants indicating that teachers undergo training on OBE curricula. The uniform agreement on crucial components, such as teachers consistently adhering to course outlines, alignment of course contents with Course Learning Outcomes (CLO), and the effectiveness of assessment procedures in meeting course objectives, underscores a high level of consistency and dedication to OBE principles.

However, amidst the overall positive atmosphere, the survey reveals nuanced perspectives on certain critical elements. Notably, there is a division of opinions regarding the availability of resources for maintaining OBE practices. While 47% of respondents believe that universities have adequate resources, 53% express reservations. This discrepancy signals a need for institutions to conduct further assessments and address potential resource gaps to ensure a more equitable OBE implementation. Similarly, the survey highlights a split in opinions regarding whether universities allow adequate time for curriculum preparation. With 52% affirming sufficient time allocation and 48% expressing the contrary view, a careful evaluation of time management practices is recommended to optimize the preparation phase for OBE curricula.

Furthermore, the survey brings attention to the issue of regular review and updating of OBE practices, with 53% of respondents indicating that their universities do not consistently update OBE. This finding emphasizes the importance of establishing mechanisms for continuous improvement, ensuring that OBE practices remain responsive to the evolving needs of both academia and industry. In ending, while the survey underscores the overall success and acceptance of OBE practices, it also provides valuable insights into areas where refinement and attention are warranted, guiding institutions toward a more universally positive and effective OBE implementation.

## **XI. Recommendations**

In-depth Exploration of Resource Allocation:

**i.** Conduct a detailed investigation into the adequacy of resources allocated to support Outcome Based Education at the tertiary level. Explore the correlation between resource availability and the effectiveness of OBE implementation, considering both financial and technological aspects.

**ii.** Temporal Analysis of Time Allocation:  
Undertake a temporal analysis to examine the perceptions and realities of time allocation for OBE curriculum preparation. This research should delve into the factors influencing time constraints and assess how they impact the quality of OBE curriculum design and delivery.

**iii.** Qualitative Examination of Documentation Practices:  
Perform a qualitative examination of documentation practices related to Outcome Based Education. Explore the nature and adequacy of documentation, considering the perspectives of stakeholders, to identify areas for improvement and establish best practices.

**iv.** Exploration of Faculty Perspectives on OBE Sustainability:  
Explore faculty perspectives on the sustainability of Outcome Based Education practices. Investigate their views on available resources, time allocation, and documentation practices to discern factors influencing the long-term viability of OBE in tertiary institutions.

**v.** Student-Centric Assessment Methods Investigation:  
Investigate student-centric assessment methods within the context of Outcome Based Education. Assess the alignment of assessment strategies with student needs and preferences, aiming to enhance the fairness, validity, and effectiveness of evaluation practices.

**vi. Analysis of Technology Integration in OBE:**

Conduct a comprehensive analysis of the integration of technology in Outcome Based Education practices. Examine the extent to which technology supports OBE delivery and explore opportunities for technological advancements to further enhance student engagement and learning outcomes.

**vii. Comparative Analysis of OBE Implementation Across Departments:**

Undertake a comparative analysis of Outcome Based Education implementation across various departments within tertiary institutions. Identify disciplinary variations in the adoption and success of OBE practices, providing insights into subject-specific challenges and opportunities.

**viii. Investigation into the Impact on Analytical Capacities:**

Explore in-depth the impact of Outcome Based Education on students' analytical capacities. Investigate the pedagogical approaches and assessment methods that contribute most effectively to the development of analytical skills within the OBE framework.

**ix. Continuous Review of OBE Updates:**

Establish a systematic mechanism for the continuous review of Outcome Based Education updates. Investigate the frequency and effectiveness of updates to the OBE system, considering their impact on curriculum relevance and responsiveness to changing educational needs.

**x. Qualitative Study on OBE's Ethical Values Development:**

Conduct a qualitative study on the development of ethical values through Outcome Based Education. Explore how OBE contributes to ethical education and the cultivation of values among students, providing a nuanced understanding of the ethical dimensions of OBE practices.

These recommendations aim to guide research efforts in Outcome Based Education at the tertiary level in Bangladesh, promoting a comprehensive understanding of the principles and practices that influence its successful implementation.

## **XII. Conclusion**

In conclusion, the findings from the survey on Outcome Based Education (OBE) practices at the tertiary level in Bangladesh present a positive outlook with widespread acceptance and implementation of OBE methodologies. The unanimous agreement among respondents on adopting OBE at university and department levels underscores a commitment to transforming educational practices toward defined learning outcomes. While the survey indicates a high level of satisfaction among participants regarding various aspects of OBE, including teacher training, curriculum adherence, and alignment with course objectives, there are noteworthy areas of concern. Divergent opinions on resource availability, time allocation, and documentation practices highlight potential challenges in sustaining and optimizing OBE practices. The policy recommendations suggest a need for a comprehensive national framework, teacher training programs, and continuous policy reviews to support and enhance OBE at the national level. Institutional-level recommendations emphasize ongoing faculty development, infrastructure investment, industry collaboration, and regular program assessments to ensure effective OBE implementation. Future research directions should focus on longitudinal impact studies, discipline-specific investigations, and technology integration, offering valuable insights for continuously improving OBE principles and practices in the unique context of Bangladesh's tertiary education landscape. Overall, this survey provides a foundation for further exploration and refinement of OBE, contributing to the ongoing evolution of educational practices in Bangladesh.

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