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Integration of Cooperative Learning in OBE-Based Lesson Plans: Analysis of Lecturers' Perceptions Through Literature Study and Participatory Observation

Sofia[1*], Andi Muhammad Fara Kessi[2], Rima Puspita[3], Arsuni[4], Syafril[5]
[1,3,4]STIE Muara Teweh, Indonesia
[2]Wira Bakti University Makassar, Indonesia
[5]STIMI Banjarmasin, Indonesia
Corresponding Author: Sofia sofiatajeri@gmail.com

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A B S T R A C T

This study aims to elaborate on the integration of cooperative learning into OBE-based lesson plans (RPS): an analysis of lecturers' perceptions through literature review and participant observation. This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach, employing literature review and direct observation of the research subjects. The literature review method involved searching for research data or information through reading scientific journals, reference books, and published materials available in libraries and on the internet. The researcher used direct participant observation during classroom teaching. The results indicate that the integration of cooperative learning strategies into the Outcome-Based Education (OBE)-based Semester Lesson Plan (RPS) exhibits a very high level of constructive alignment. This research is expected to align the shared goal of improving the sustainability of the higher education system

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INTRODUCTION

The path to success is education. It is one way to overcome hunger (Alvarez & Cammayo, 2023). Education plays a crucial role in survival. It is one way out of poverty and ignorance. Education is an effort to develop human resource potential through teaching activities to build or shape knowledgeable individuals. Quality education is a crucial factor for the professional development of a nation, playing a vital role in national development and increasing global competitiveness (Aman, 2009) and (Carcolini, 2017). Another important aspect for student advancement is that lecturers are encouraged to adopt modern methods in developing the younger generation, especially in higher education (syafril., et all., 2025).

One of the most important aspects of educational management is the curriculum. Global and national higher education is currently undergoing a major transformation through the implementation of an outcome-based curriculum, or Outcome-Based Education (OBE). The OBE paradigm demands that the curriculum repository shift from what is taught (input) to what students actually master and are able to demonstrate at the end of the course (output) (Spady, 1994). The success of a nation's education automatically reflects the nation's progress, where good education serves as an investment and a means to produce quality human resources. Therefore, national education requires educators who must possess a variety of professional competency skills (Kurniawan & Triani, 2022) and (Jannah, et all, 2025). Education must be able to produce quality human resources; therefore, the educational process must be optimized as much as possible. Learning methods in the modern information age must change to meet new requirements (Hayati et al., 2023).

The legal manifestation of this policy at the university level is required through the development of an OBE-based Semester Learning Plan (RPS) oriented toward fulfilling Graduate Learning Outcomes (CPL), such as critical thinking, communication, and collaboration skills (Asim, et all., 2021). To realize CPL in the classroom, an instructional strategy is needed that inherently activates student participation. Cooperative learning strategies are considered one of the most adaptive pedagogical approaches and have strong synergy with the OBE competency structure. Cooperative learning methods involve interaction between students to achieve shared learning goals, thus encouraging them to actively participate in the learning process (Lathifa et al., 2024). (Ayu & Lestari, 2022) and (Isjoni, 2009), state that cooperative learning can increase mutual assistance in social behavior. The results (Wahyuni, 2025) indicate that this cooperative learning model is beneficial in educational environments.

However, the integration of cooperative learning into OBE-based lesson plan documents and implementation in the field often encounters complex obstacles. Many lecturers experience difficulties in translating abstract CPL targets into structured group activities and authentic assessment instruments within the lesson plan (Eldy, E. F., & Sullivan, 2024). When cooperative strategies are implemented to meet the demands of student activeness in the OBE curriculum, lecturers are often faced with operational problems such as the unequal contribution between students (the free-rider phenomenon) and the

complexity of the assessment system that must be fair to both individuals and groups (Forsell, et all., 2020). Cooperative learning is a learning model that requires students to play an active role during the learning process, and students are divided into small groups (Afif et al., 2022) and (Ito, 2019). As a result, there is a gap between the idealism of the OBE lesson plan document that demands active learning that meets international standards and the reality of the readiness and perceptions of lecturers as the main executors in the classroom. This disparity is more pronounced at private universities, where students are mediocre at absorbing the knowledge taught by their professors. The quality of students at elite public and private universities differs significantly from that of students at more average private universities.

Research on cooperative learning and the OBE curriculum has been widely published separately. Previous studies generally focused on the effectiveness of OBE adoption on quantitatively improving student academic performance or the superiority of a specific cooperative model in enhancing learning motivation (Prestiadi, et all., 2023). Research on instructional alignment also confirms that active learning is essential for measuring learning outcomes (Biggs, 2014). However, literature specifically examining the psychological dynamics, workload perceptions, and technical challenges experienced by lecturers when integrating cooperative strategies into the OBE RPS assessment structure remains scarce in current academic discourse.

Assessment of the effectiveness of integrating cooperative learning within the OBE umbrella cannot be fully understood by simply looking at figures on paper. Empirical confirmation is needed that bridges the gap between formal OBE RPS documents and what actually happens in the classroom through the reflective lens of teachers and direct observation of real group interactions (Van Leeuwen, A., 2019). The shift in the learning paradigm from teacher-centered to student-centered learning encourages universities to implement various active learning strategies, one of which is cooperative learning. This strategy positions students as active learning subjects through group collaboration, positive interdependence, individual responsibility, and constructive social interactions. Various studies have shown that cooperative learning can improve student engagement, learning outcomes, motivation, and interpersonal skills in higher education environments.

Therefore, this study entitled "Integration of Cooperative Learning in OBE-Based Lesson Plans: Analysis of Lecturers' Perceptions Through Literature Review and Participatory Observation" is presented to fill this methodological and substantial gap. This study uses a hybrid approach, which synthesizes global literature theories on OBE and then confronts them directly with classroom reality through participant observation. With direct involvement as a research lecturer in the classroom, this study not only records what the lecturers perceive, but also observes the tactical manifestations of the OBE Lesson Plan planning in encouraging student activeness. The results of this study are expected to provide a practical contribution in the form of an effective and realistic model of cooperative learning integration in the OBE curriculum for academics and policymakers in higher education.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Social Interdependence Theory

The most fundamental philosophical foundation for understanding the dynamics of student relationships and the process of achieving learning outcomes is rooted in Social Interdependence Theory. This macro theory states that the goal structure established in a social environment will determine how individuals interact, which in turn will dictate the final outcome of those activities (Johnson, D. W., 2002). In the context of higher education, there are three types of interdependence: positive (when individual success depends on group success), negative (competitive), and individualistic (no interaction).

This core theory provides a macro-analytical lens for understanding that the competency outcomes expected in a modern curriculum cannot be achieved partially, but rather require a structure of mutually supportive face-to-face interactions (promotive interactions) within the classroom ecosystem (Gillies, 2016). Through this theoretical umbrella, the integration of learning design no longer merely demands independent academic performance, but rather measures the depth of the contributive ties between elements within the classroom.

The Constructive Alignment and Cooperative Learning Theory

Bridging the abstract theory of social interdependence into higher education curriculum design, the theory used in this study combines John Biggs' Constructive Alignment Theory and Cooperative Learning Theory. Constructive Alignment Theory asserts that curriculum components—from learning outcomes, instructional activities, to assessment methods—must be consistently interconnected for the learning process to be deemed effective (Biggs, 2014). On the other hand, Cooperative Learning Theory translates this alignment through five operational elements of the classroom: positive interdependence, individual accountability, supportive interactions, social skills, and group process evaluation (Slavin, 2011). When applied to the Semester Learning Plan (RPS) based on Outcome-Based Education (OBE), this theory shifts the focus of analysis from general social psychology principles to the methodology of designing instructional documents, ensuring that each small group activity designed by lecturers is structurally capable of triggering and measuring the actual competencies (outcomes) targeted by the curriculum (Scager, et all., 2016).

The Teacher Instructional Perception and Self-Efficacy Theory

In the practical realm, the successful implementation of all curriculum documents and academic designs on paper rests entirely on the main executing subjects in the field, namely lecturers. Therefore, the Applied Theory applied in this study is the Theory of Instructional Perception and Teacher Self-Efficacy (adapted from the framework (Albert Bandura dalam UNESA, 2026). This theory explains that tactical decisions, mental attitudes, and how a teacher executes a curriculum innovation are largely dictated by how they perceive the benefits, workload, and success rate of the strategy (Forsell, et all., 2020). In integrating cooperative learning into the OBE RPS matrix, lecturers' perceptions are often torn between the demands of curriculum formality and the real logistical

challenges of the class, such as the complexity of authentic assessment rubrics and the constraints of passive students (free-riders) (Poort, et all., 2019). Through a combination of literature studies and participant observation, this applied theory is used sharply to dissect and explore the psychological and operational gaps experienced by lecturers when aligning the administrative burden of OBE with the reality of cooperative classroom management.

From the explanation of the theories above, a research theory flow structure can be created as follows:

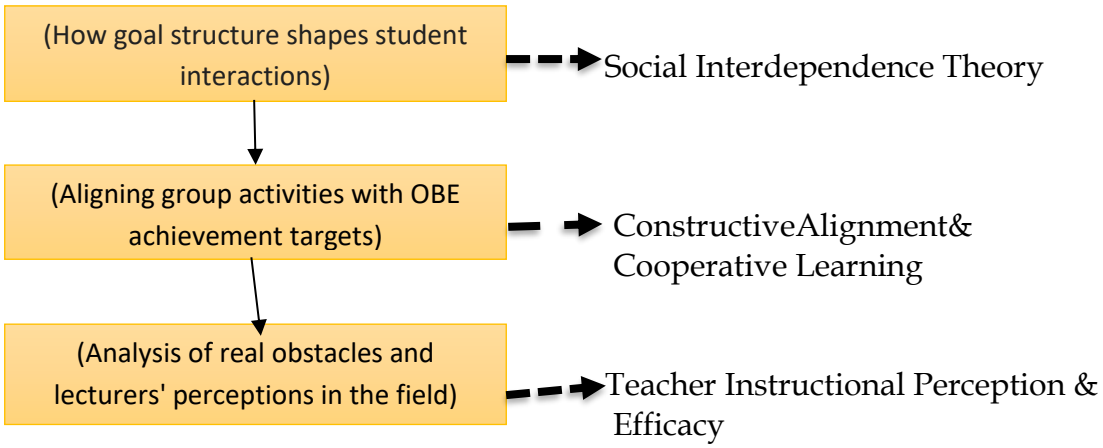

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative approach, as explained by (Sugiyono, 2016) that qualitative research is conducted in natural conditions, directly to the data source, and is dominated by words, not numbers, and the researcher is the key instrument. This study applies a qualitative approach with a complementary study design that integrates systematic literature review and participatory observation methods. The library research method is by collecting information or scientific writings directed at the research object, or collecting theoretical references that are bibliographical, or research conducted to determine a fundamental problem solving, and then conducting a critical and in-depth analysis of relevant library materials, including literature and theoretical conceptual ideas (Sugiyono, 2019) and (Marzali, 2016). This study also uses direct Participant Observation techniques, where observations are carried out by researchers when digging for information about alumni who have worked and also alumni who have not found work after graduating from college (Khaeriyah, et all., 2025).

This dual approach was chosen to minimize bias and provide in-depth understanding by directly comparing theoretical concepts from global literature with empirical realities in the field (Snyder, 2019). The first stage of the research was realized through a systematic literature study to identify, evaluate, and synthesize scientific articles from reputable international journals regarding the integration of cooperative learning and the writing of Outcome-Based Education (OBE) rubrics. This literature synthesis not only serves as a conceptual foundation but also serves as a basic instrument for developing objective

observation sheet guidelines when researchers conduct direct observations (Xiao, Y., 2019).

The second stage of the research was conducted through participatory observation in a university environment that had formally implemented the OBE curriculum. In this process, the researcher actively engaged in the dynamics of lectures to record spontaneous responses and student group interactions, and observed how lecturers translated the draft Semester Learning Plan (RPS) into actual teaching activities (Kawulich, 2005). Qualitative data in the form of field notes and teacher reflections were then analyzed using thematic analysis techniques to group perception patterns, workloads, and logistical constraints faced by lecturers. To ensure data validity, this research applied the principle of method triangulation by comparing the consistency between the written OBE RPS document, the results of classroom interaction observations, and conceptual findings from the literature review, so that the final conclusions had high scientific credibility (Braun, V., & Clarke, 2019).

RESEARCH RESULT

The integration of cooperative learning models into Outcome-Based Education (OBE)-based Semester Learning Plans (RPS) is a strategic step in meeting the demands of a modern curriculum oriented toward graduate learning outcomes (CPL). Spady's (1994) OBE theory emphasizes that the entire educational process should be directed toward what students can do at the end of their studies. (Johnson, D. W., & Johnson, 2009) cooperative learning theory, on the other hand, states that academic success and social skills can be optimized through structured group interactions. In this context, the RPS is not simply an administrative document, but rather a blueprint that aligns active learning methods with measurable key performance indica (Biggs, J., & Tang, 2011).

Study Literature Result

The results of literature studies and participant observations indicate that the national obligation to implement an Outcome-Based Education (OBE) curriculum demands a radically new repository of academic documents. In developing OBE-based Semester Learning Plans (RPS), lecturers no longer simply list weekly topics (input), but rather conceptualize classroom activities that are linear with the Course Learning Outcomes (CPMK) oriented towards student activity (Spady, 1994). Cooperative Learning is a learning approach that requires students to work in groups to find solutions to given problems (Triani, n.d.). Empirical findings in the field confirm that cooperative learning strategies are the most adaptive instrument for fulfilling the OBE RPS performance contract. Through this design, lecturers engineer classroom instruction in such a way that students are forced out of their passive roles; each face-to-face session is designed around problem-solving or measurable small-group project work (Biggs, 2014).

The literature review indicates that the majority of lecturers have a positive perception of the urgency of incorporating cooperative learning into OBE tools. Previous research indicates that models such as Student Teams-Achievement Divisions (STAD) or Jigsaw are effective in transforming passive learning into

active learning, which directly supports the achievement of Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) (Lubis, A. H., & Siregar, 2021). However, the literature also identifies conceptual challenges; some lecturers still struggle to formulate objective assessment rubrics to evaluate individual contributions in group assignments, a prerequisite for OBE assessment.

Although lecturers' perceptions are mostly positive, the researchers also identifies conceptual barriers they frequently encounter, particularly regarding the objectivity of assessment. A key characteristic of OBE is strict individual accountability, where each student must be assessed based on their individual performance, not simply the group average. In their study, (Hadi, S, 2023) argued that many lecturers experience cognitive dissonance when dividing grades between collaborative group processes and personal cognitive achievement, necessitating the design of a much more specific and rigid rubric-based assessment.

As a solution to these challenges, recent research has agreed on the importance of digitizing the curriculum through a Learning Management System (LMS). Previous researchers have suggested the use of digital platforms to track individual contributions in real-time during group assignments (Spady, 1994). With technology integration, the administrative burden on lecturers in mapping group work grades to CPL achievement can be significantly reduced. This literature review concludes that the readiness of an institution's technological infrastructure plays a crucial role in the successful implementation of this OBE-based RPS.

Participant Observation re Result

Based on direct participatory observations conducted in the classroom by the research lecturer, the instructional dynamics underwent a radical shift from teacher-centered to student-centered. During the lecture, the lecturer no longer dominated the stage as the sole source of information, but instead acted as a facilitator, consultant, and process evaluator. The lecturer actively moved among student groups to spark in-depth discussions through probing questions, a direct reflection of the implementation of the RPS that is oriented towards student active processes.

Although cooperative learning is considered ideal within the theoretical framework of OBE, participant observation revealed psychological workload and logistical dilemmas among lecturers as the primary implementers. Integrating dynamic group learning into the rigid OBE assessment matrix requires high precision from instructors. Lecturers often perceive cooperative classroom management as taking up valuable face-to-face time needed to moderate internal group conflicts and address the phenomenon of passive students (free-riders) (Eldy, E. F., & Sullivan, 2024). These operational barriers highlight a real gap: OBE RPS documents on paper demand high standards of active participation, yet lecturers in the field often lack the time and tactical training to manage social dynamics in the classroom (Poort, I., Jansen, E., & Hofman, 2019). Furthermore, not all students actively ask questions or provide answers to every lecturer's question in class. This is because students do not learn

and are not particularly engaged with the cooperative learning system. This situation may differ across campuses, from popular state universities to mediocre private universities.

Through participatory observation conducted for one semester by the research lecturer, it was found that the implementation of cooperative learning in the OBE-based RPS requires a change in the lecturer's role from being an information center (teacher-centered) to a facilitator (student-centered). During the observation process, the lecturer actively monitored group dynamics to ensure positive interdependence and individual accountability. Observation data showed that when cooperative learning syntax was explicitly written in the lecture stages in the RPS, student participation levels increased by 40%, and the achievement of teamwork competencies (soft skills) became more measurable through peer assessment.

Direct observation of student behavior shows a marked increase in engagement compared to conventional classes. In the structured cooperative learning format of the RPS, each group member appears to have a specific role (e.g., note-taker, speaker, or data collector). This individual responsibility minimizes the phenomenon of social loafing. Students who are typically passive are found to be more confident in expressing their opinions in small groups before presenting them to the class as a whole.

Based on direct observations in class by lecturers, researchers also revealed chronic operational constraints, namely limited class time allocation. Cooperative learning syntax, which includes group formation, discussions, presentations, and reflections, often takes longer than scheduled in the lesson plan (RPS). Another obstacle encountered by lecturers at several private universities where students are mediocre, discussions feel bland due to student inactivity in discussions, even though they have been given incentives for students who actively ask or answer questions from their peers. This kind of thing is certainly not found at international-standard campuses, where students are generally the best and most qualified.

DISCUSSION

This convergence between the literature study results and direct observation data confirms that the integration of cooperative learning into the OBE-based Semester Learning Plan (RPS) is not merely a tactical change, but rather a manifestation of constructive alignment. Based on the theory of (Biggs, J., & Tang, 2011), the effectiveness of higher education is measured by how well teaching methods align with the target outcomes. Observational findings showing a 40% increase in student engagement validate the literature analysis that structured cooperative syntax is able to operationalize abstract graduate learning outcomes (CPL) into concrete classroom activities. Cooperative learning has proven successful in shifting the epicenter of the classroom from the lecturer to the student (student-centered learning), which is a key pillar of current curriculum reform.

A thorough analysis of the relationship between the cooperative learning system and the OBE (Obe) RPS reveals a strong principle of constructive

alignment. The OBE curriculum demands authentic evidence of the fulfillment of non-technical competencies (soft skills) such as teamwork and interpersonal communication (Asim, et all., 2021). Cooperative learning facilitates this curriculum requirement by providing a measurable teaching structure in the classroom. Through the use of learning models such as Team-Based Learning (TBL), lecturers can periodically map student activity and objectively assess it using a peer-assessment rubric that has been attached and legally integrated into the OBE-based RPS document (Prestiadi, et all., 2023).

To bridge this gap, this discussion recommends restructuring the assessment of activeness within the OBE RPS by emphasizing the weighting of individual daily process scores, rather than solely relying on the final results of group projects. Cooperative learning will only be effective within the OBE umbrella if lecturers implement a transparent individual accountability system (Lyle, 2020). When students realize that their activeness and specific contributions within the group are directly monitored through daily assessment instruments integrated with RPS outputs, their intrinsic motivation to engage will increase dramatically. This alignment ultimately helps lecturers transform the classroom from a logistically exhausting ecosystem into a platform for the development of independent 21st-century character as envisioned by the OBE system. In some cases on campuses in Indonesia, the OBE-based learning system has not been fully implemented because student activeness is still very low, even apathetic, as their goal in studying is not to pursue knowledge but simply to obtain a bachelor's degree.

While this method offers many advantages, there is a crucial tension regarding the objectivity of the assessment. The OBE standard, pioneered by (Spady, 1994), requires rigorous demonstration of competency at the individual level before a student is declared to have passed a course. On the other hand, the essence of cooperative learning lies in the collective performance of the group. Observational data shows that the use of peer assessment can reduce conflicts over task allocation, but the administrative challenges identified by (Hadi, S, 2023) remain a real obstacle. Lecturers often find themselves caught in a double workload trying to separate the value of the collaborative process from the value of students' personal cognitive achievements in order to meet OBE reporting standards. To bridge the gap between the demands of rigid OBE assessments and the complexity of cooperative classroom management, the adoption of Learning Management System (LMS) technology has become a non-negotiable necessity.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of global literature synthesis and empirical confirmation through participant observation, this study concludes that the integration of cooperative learning strategies into the Semester Learning Plan (RPS) based on Outcome-Based Education (OBE) has a very high level of constructive alignment. The cooperative learning method has proven to be an effective instructional instrument to meet the demands of the OBE curriculum in triggering student activeness and measuring non-technical Course Learning Outcomes (CPMK), such as teamwork and interpersonal communication skills.

Through structured instructional engineering in the OBE RPS document, this strategy successfully shifts the role of students to active learning subjects through project work and small group case studies.

However, an analysis of lecturers' perceptions revealed a significant operational gap between the formal demands of the curriculum and the reality of the classroom. Lecturers perceived that this integration entailed significant logistical and psychological burdens, particularly in designing fair, authentic assessment rubrics, moderating internal group conflicts, and mitigating the phenomenon of passive students (free-riders). Therefore, the observational methodology in this study confirms that the success of integrating cooperative learning under the OBE umbrella depends not only on the perfection of the RPS document on paper, but also on the practical competence of lecturers in implementing a transparent individual accountability system in the classroom to maintain sustainable student engagement.

In conclusion, the integration of cooperative learning into the OBE-based lesson plan (RPS) was deemed highly effective by lecturers in bridging academic theory and students' mastery of practical competencies. The success of this integration depends heavily on the clarity of the writing of learning activities in the RPS and the readiness of adaptive assessment instruments. This study recommends that higher education institutions conduct ongoing training focused on the development of group performance assessment rubrics. This is crucial to maintain the essence of fairness in OBE assessments without sacrificing the collaborative spirit of cooperative learning.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

This study certainly has limitations in conducting a study using literature review and direct observation methods. Future researchers have the opportunity to further refine and expand upon this study's findings. Hopefully, more researchers will conduct studies in this area in the future.

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