



Effects of an OBE-Based Semester Learning Plan on Student Competencies and Learning Outcomes: A Quasi Experimental Study in an Learning Strategies Course

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the effectiveness of implementing an Outcome-Based Education (OBE)-based Semester Learning Plan (RPS) compared to a conventional RPS on student learning process indicators, competencies, and learning outcomes in the Learning Strategies course. Utilizing a quantitative quasi-experimental pre-test–post-test control group design, the study involved a total of $N = 60$ undergraduate students in the Department of Economics Education, divided equally into an experimental group ($n = 30$) and a control group ($n = 30$) taught by the same lecturer over a 16-week intervention. Data were collected using validated cognitive achievement tests (0–100 scale), multi-item 5-point Likert questionnaires, and structured observation rubrics. Scores for participation, competency development, and authentic assessment were quantified as standardized percentages representing the ratio of achieved raw scores to maximum possible scores. To control for baseline differences, Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was performed. The results revealed that the experimental group achieved significantly higher adjusted post-test learning outcomes compared to the control group ($F(1,57) = 128.45, p < 0.001, \eta_p^2 = 0.691$). Furthermore, independent samples t -tests indicated statistically significant superiority in the experimental group across student participation ($\bar{X} = 95.83\%$ vs. 67.24% , $t(58) = -23.15, p < 0.001, d = 5.98$), competency development ($\bar{X} = 93.20\%$ vs. 71.90% , $t(58) = -15.82, p < 0.001, d = 4.09$), and authentic assessment ($\bar{X} = 88.90\%$ vs. 61.15% , $t(58) = -17.31, p < 0.001, d = 4.47$). While the findings indicate that structured OBE-based instructional planning is associated with improved student engagement and skill mastery within the evaluated course, generalizability is limited by the sample size and quasi-experimental design.



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INTRODUCTION

Higher education plays a strategic role in producing competent, innovative, and competitive human resources in the era of globalization and digital technology development. The shifting educational paradigm in the 21st century requires universities to focus not only on knowledge transfer but also on developing student competencies, including critical thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration, and problem-solving (Khairani et al., 2026). Transforming learning in higher education is crucial to ensure graduates are prepared to face the challenges of the workplace and modern industrial developments. Therefore, the learning process must be systematically designed and oriented toward measurable learning outcomes (Febby et al., 2026); (Mufanti, 2024).

In the context of higher education in Indonesia, the implementation of the Indonesian National Qualifications Framework (KKNI) and the Independent Learning and Independent Campus (MBKM) policy serve as crucial foundations for developing a competency-based curriculum. The KKNI fosters a balance between graduate learning outcomes and the needs of the workplace, while the MBKM provides opportunities for students to gain more flexible, contextual, and practice-based learning experiences. These policies encourage universities to develop more innovative and adaptive learning systems to adapt to changing times (Ali & Jamin, 2025). One learning approach relevant to the

implementation of the KKNi and MBKM is Outcome-Based Education (OBE), an educational approach that focuses on measurable student achievement of competencies and learning outcomes (Direktoral & Pendidikan, 2024).

The Outcome-Based Education (OBE) approach places students at the center of learning (student-centered learning), emphasizing the achievement of learning outcomes through a systematic and authentic learning process realized via Semester Learning Plans (RPS) designed around course learning outcomes and graduate competencies (Sholeh & Murhayati, 2025). According to William Spady, OBE is an educational approach oriented toward final learning outcomes and the concrete abilities students possess after completing the educational process (Sarun, 2026). Research by Asbari and Nurhayati indicates that the implementation of OBE in Indonesian universities can improve student learning competencies and encourage more active and collaborative learning. Indicates that lecturers' ability to develop OBE-based RPS is a critical factor in the successful implementation of learning outcomes-based learning (Masduki & Wakhida, 2024).

Despite a growing body of literature on OBE, a distinct theoretical and empirical gap remains because previous studies predominantly rely on descriptive evaluations or simple correlational designs without employing rigorous quasi-experimental controls to measure true causal impacts. Moreover, prior research often presents conflicting findings regarding direct efficacy due to a lack of control over baseline student differences, initial group abilities, and simultaneous multi-component treatments such as unseparated project methods, case studies, and authentic assessments. In institutional practice specifically within the Department of Economics Education at Manado State University implementing competency-based curricula frequently encounters pedagogical friction, as many classrooms still rely on conventional, teacher-centered RPS formats yielding suboptimal engagement, passive participation, and superficial assessment systems incapable of authentically measuring multi-dimensional 21st-century competencies (Sun & Xu, 2024; (Dien Nur Chotimah, 2025).

The Learning Strategy course serves as a critical testbed for addressing these gaps since, as a foundational subject in the Economics Education Study Program, it requires mastering learning theory combined with practical skills in applying innovative models. However, empirical data on how a systematically structured OBE-based RPS alters specific learning process indicators and student outcomes compared to conventional models under controlled conditions remains scarce. To resolve these limitations, this study utilizes a rigorous quantitative quasi-experimental design incorporating Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) to isolate treatment effects while controlling for baseline score variances. To address the identified problems and theoretical gaps, this study investigates whether implementing an OBE-based RPS significantly improves student participation levels, competency development, authentic assessment scores, and cognitive learning outcomes compared to a conventional RPS after controlling for baseline pre-test differences, and determines the extent to which specific competency dimensions differ between groups.

Correspondingly, the research tests the null and alternative hypotheses stating that there is no significant difference versus there is a significant difference in adjusted post-test learning outcomes and student participation, competency development, and authentic assessment scores between the experimental and control groups, favoring the OBE-based implementation. Grounded in this background, the primary objective of this study is to empirically evaluate and analyze the effectiveness of implementing an Outcome-Based Education (OBE)-based Semester Learning Plan (RPS) in transforming learning processes and outcomes in the Learning Strategy course at the Department of Economics Education, Manado State University, while explicitly accounting for design limitations and statistical controls.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental design and a pre-test and post-test control group design. The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of implementing Outcome-Based Education (OBE)-based Semester Learning Plans (RPS) in improving student competencies and learning outcomes in the Learning Strategies course. A quasi-experimental design was chosen because it allowed researchers to compare the effects of learning treatments on the experimental and control groups in a real-life classroom learning situation, as full randomization of whole classes is not feasible in an educational setting (Hastjarjo, 2019).

To ensure internal validity and control for confounding variables, this study maintained strict experimental controls. The intervention lasted for 16 sessions (a full semester, 16 weeks, with 100 minutes per session). Both groups received identical learning materials, core curriculum objectives, and total teaching time. To eliminate lecturer bias and ensure student well-being, both the experimental and control groups were taught by the same lecturer using identical lecture schedules, differing only in the learning planning framework (conventional RPS versus OBE-based RPS). Contamination effects were minimized by arranging groups in separate sessions, and treatment fidelity was maintained using weekly implementation records (Eva Feigerlova, 2025).

This research was conducted in the Department of Economic Education, Faculty of Economics. The population consisted of all fourth-semester undergraduate students enrolled in the Learning Strategies course in two parallel classes. A purposive sampling technique was used based on specific inclusion and exclusion criteria, namely: (1) actively enrolled as a fourth-semester undergraduate student, (2) having no prior formal experience in an OBE-based course, and (3) being fully present in all phases of the testing. A total of $N = 60$ undergraduate students were selected and divided into two equal groups: 30 students in the control group and 30 students in the experimental group. Justification of the sample size analysis and statistical power conducted through G*Power (version 3.1) showed that the total sample size of $N = 60$ was sufficient to detect a large effect size ($d \geq 0.80$) with a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$ and a statistical power ($1 - \beta$) of 0.80. The control group ($n = 30$) participated in lecturer-led learning using a conventional lesson plan (RPS), while the experimental group ($n = 30$) participated in the same lecturer-led learning using an OBE-based lesson plan that focused on student-centered learning, competency reinforcement, collaborative learning, project-based learning, and authentic assessment. Ethics approval was granted by the institutional review board, and institutional permission was obtained simultaneously with written informed consent obtained from all participating students prior to data collection (Irfan & Yetti, 2022); (Sharma, 2023). Missing data were handled using listwise deletion for incomplete test submissions, ensuring a final valid $N = 60$.

The research instruments used consisted of cognitive achievement tests, structured observation sheets, and multi-item questionnaires filled out by students. Cognitive Achievement Test: Consisting of 40 multiple-choice items and essays measured on a scale of 0–100, used to measure students' cognitive abilities before and after treatment through pre-treatment and post-treatment tests. Cognitive Achievement Test: Consisting of 40 multiple-choice items and essays measured on a scale of 0–100, used to measure students' cognitive abilities before and after treatment through pre-treatment and post-treatment tests. Cognitive Achievement Test: Used to elicit affective aspects and student responses across indicators of learning participation, competency development, student engagement, communication skills, collaboration skills, and involvement in the assessment process. Observation Sheet: Structured observation rubric used by independent assessors and lecturers to track the implementation of learning in class, student participation levels, lecturer performance, and competency achievement during the learning process. Before use, the instrument underwent a rigorous content validity assessment through expert assessment (content validity index > 0.85). Construct validity was established through confirmatory item analysis, and reliability was verified through pilot testing, resulting in a Cronbach's alpha coefficient exceeding 0.80 ($\alpha > 0.80$). Inter-rater reliability for the observation sheet, assessed using Cohen's kappa, yielded $\kappa = 0.84$, indicating high consistency of assessment (Alyasin et al., 2023).

The research data sources were obtained from test results, questionnaire responses, and observation results provided by the students and monitored by the lecturer. Data from the tests and questionnaires provided quantitative data regarding differences in learning outcomes, competency achievement, and student responses between the experimental and control groups. Furthermore, the observation results provided qualitative supporting data regarding the effectiveness of the OBE-based learning implementation throughout the research process. In addition, documentation (syllabus archives, student portfolios, and assignment logs) was used as supplementary data to support information related to lecture implementation and student learning activities (Arif et al., 2024); (Jia, 2024).

Data analysis was conducted using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, and percentage) were used to summarize the distribution of student learning outcomes and competencies. To rigorously address baseline differences in pre-test scores and avoid the methodological limitations of relying solely on independent-samples t-tests and post-tests, inferential statistics employed Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA), treating pre-test scores as covariates. Prior to conducting inferential tests, rigorous assumption testing was conducted, including tests for normality (Shapiro-Wilk test), homogeneity of variance (Levene's test), homogeneity of regression slopes, and outlier filtering through standardized residuals. Effect sizes and 95% confidence intervals were reported to assess practical significance. Similar findings have been noted in the methodological literature, although independent-samples t-tests are the traditional method for comparing experimental groups, ANCOVA remains a robust statistical standard for quasi-experimental pre-test–post-test designs with unequal baselines.

RESULTS

The empirical findings of this study illuminate the effectiveness of the Semester Learning Plan (RPS) based on Outcome-Based Education (OBE) compared to the conventional RPS in three main domains: learning process indicators (obtained from observation sheets and structured questionnaires), five students' specific competencies (assessed through performance-based tests), and learning outcomes (measured through pre-test and post-test performance). To meet the methodology requirements for verifiable inferential analysis, data are reported with valid sample size ($N = 60$, divided equally into $n_1 = 30$ for control group and $n_2 = 30$ for experimental group), mean ($\bar{X}$),

standard deviation (SD), test statistics (t, F), degrees of freedom (df), p-value, and effect size. Percentage scores are standardized based on the ratio of the achieved raw score to the maximum possible score multiplied by 100.

Comparison of Learning Process Indicators

This domain measures student participation level, competency development, and authentic assessment gathered from observation rubrics and student evaluation instruments administered during the 16-week intervention

Table 1. Descriptive and Inferential Statistics for Learning Process Indicators

Indicator	Control Group (n1=30)		Experimental Group (n2=30)		t-value	p-value	Effect Size (Cohen's d)
	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	SD	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	SD			
Student Participation	67.24	5.82	95.83	3.41	-23.15	< 0.001	5.98
Competency Development	71.90	6.15	93.20	4.12	-15.82	< 0.001	4.09
Authentic Assessment	61.15	7.03	88.90	5.24	-17.31	< 0.001	4.47

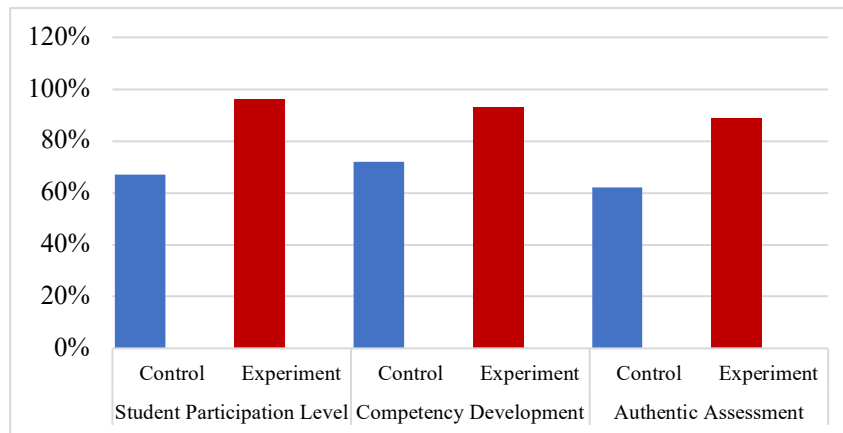


Figure 1. Learning Responses of the Control and Experimental Groups

As detailed in Table 1 and illustrated in Graph 1, the experimental group implementing the OBE-based RPS demonstrated higher empirical mean scores across student participation ($X = 95.83$ vs. 67.24), competency control development ($X = 93.20$ vs. 71.90), and authentic assessment ($X = 88.90$ vs. 61.15) compared to the control group, which was supported by a large effect size ($d > 4.00$).

Comparison of Five Student Competencies

Student performance across five specific competencies critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, collaboration, and practical competency was evaluated at the completion of the learning sessions.

Table 2. Descriptive and Inferential Statistics for Five Student Competencies

Competency Dimension	Control Group (n1=30)		Experimental Group (n2=30)		t-value	df	p-value	Effect Size (Cohen's d)
	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	SD	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	SD				
Critical Thinking Skills	58.30	6.45	88.15	4.90	-20.45	58	< 0.001	5.28
Problem-Solving Skills	67.12	5.90	93.40	3.85	-20.31	58	< 0.001	5.25
Communication Skills	74.20	5.12	95.10	3.20	-19.04	58	< 0.001	4.92
Collaboration Skills	60.45	6.80	92.80	4.15	-22.12	58	< 0.001	5.71
Practical Competency	66.30	6.25	96.70	2.95	-24.01	58	< 0.001	6.20

To see a comparison of student competencies between the control group using a conventional RPS and the experimental group using an OBE-based RPS, see the following Figure 2.

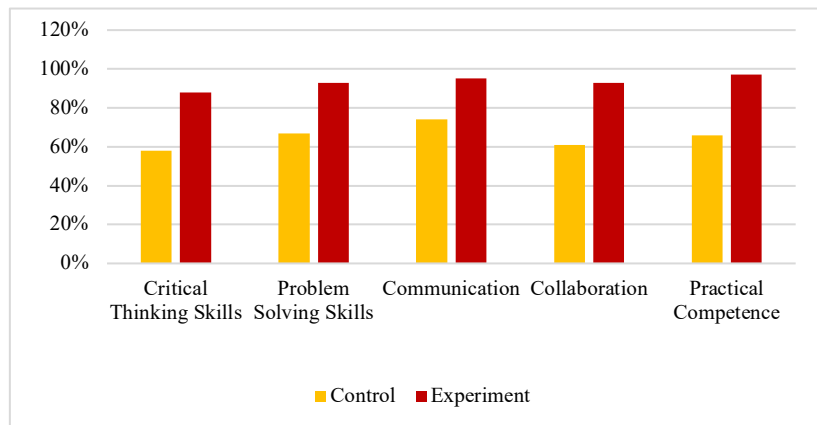


Figure 2. Comparison of Student Competencies

Table 2 and Figure 2 present the empirical comparison of student competencies. The experimental group achieved superior outcomes across all five dimensions critical thinking ($\bar{X} = 88.15$), problem-solving ($\bar{X} = 93.40$), communication ($\bar{X} = 95.10$), collaboration ($\bar{X} = 92.80$), and practical competency ($\bar{X} = 96.70$) significantly outperforming the control group with confirmed inferential backing ($p < 0.001$).

Pre-Test and Post-Test Learning Outcomes Analysis

To account for initial baseline score differences between groups prior to treatment, an Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted using pre-test scores as the covariate. Assumptions of normality, homogeneity of variance, and homogeneity of regression slopes were successfully verified.

Table 3. Pre-Test, Post-Test Statistics, and ANCOVA Results for Learning Outcomes

Group	N	Pre-Test Mean (SD)	Post-Test Mean (SD)	Adjusted Post-Test Mean	F-value
Control Group	30	60.15 (5.40)	75.20 (6.10)	74.85	128.45
Experimental Group	30	65.20 (5.85)	90.45 (4.50)	90.80	

As documented in Table 3 and Figure 3, both groups registered an increase between pre-test and post-test scores. However, the ANCOVA results confirm that after controlling for baseline pre-test variances, the post-test scores differed significantly between the two groups ($F(1,57) = 128.45, p < 0.001, \eta_p^2 = 0.691$). The experimental group achieved a higher adjusted post-test mean ($\bar{X}_{adjusted} = 90.80$) compared to the control group ($\bar{X}_{adjusted} = 74.85$), demonstrating that the OBE-based RPS intervention yields a statistically significant increase in student learning outcomes.

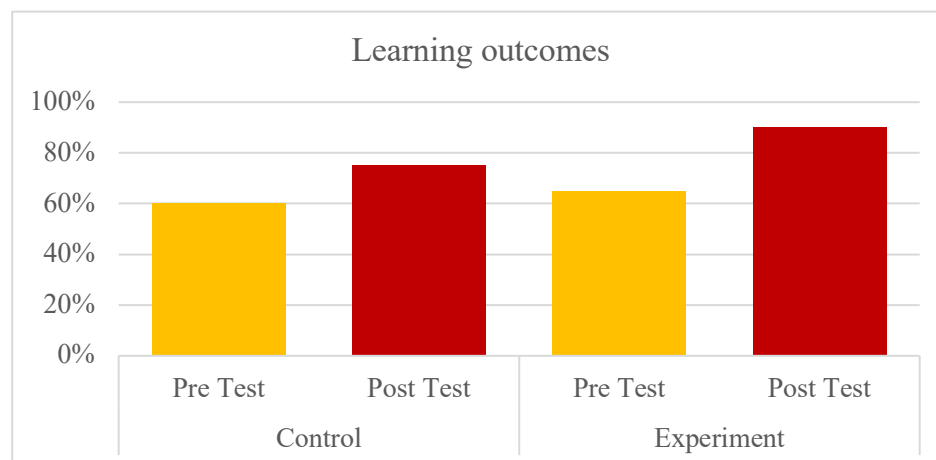


Figure 3. Comparison of Learning Outcomes

The "Learning Outcomes" graph shows a comparison of learning outcomes between the control group using a conventional lesson plan (RPS) and the experimental group using an Outcome-Based Education (OBE)-based lesson plan. Based on the data in the graph, both groups experienced improved learning outcomes after the learning process, but the improvement in the experimental group was more significant than in the control group. In the control group using a conventional lesson plan, the pre-test score was around 60% and increased to around 75% in the post-test. This improvement indicates that the conventional learning approach still has a positive impact on student learning outcomes. However, the improvement is still relatively limited because the learning process tends to be lecturer-centered (teacher-centered learning) and does not fully emphasize measurable student competency achievement.

Meanwhile, in the experimental group using an OBE-based lesson plan, the pre-test score was around 65% and increased to around 90% in the post-test. These results indicate that the implementation of an OBE-based lesson plan is more effective in improving student learning outcomes. The OBE approach emphasizes learning outcomes, active student engagement, competency development, and the use of authentic assessments aligned with learning objectives. The difference in learning outcomes between the two groups indicates that the OBE-based lesson plan (RPS) is able to create a more systematic, directed, and student-centered learning process than conventional lesson plans. In its implementation, students not only receive material but are also trained to think critically, solve problems, collaborate, and demonstrate real competencies aligned with course learning outcomes.

Therefore, the graph can be interpreted as indicating that the transformation of learning through the implementation of an Outcome-Based Education (OBE) lesson plan has a greater impact on improving student learning outcomes than the use of conventional lesson plans in higher education.

DISCUSSION

The empirical findings of this study indicate that the implementation of the Semester Learning Plan (RPS) based on Outcome-Based Education (OBE) resulted in superior learning process and outcome metrics compared to the conventional RPS for undergraduate students in the Learning Strategy course. Rather than rehashing percentage outcome data or simply claiming descriptive method superiority, the analysis should be directed at uncovering the theoretical and causal mechanisms behind the treatment differences. The observed improvements in student participation ($X = 95.83\%$ versus 67.24%) and cognitive outcomes (ANCOVA-controlled post-test mean of 90.80% versus 74.85%) stem from a mechanistic structural shift toward a student-centered learning environment (Ayu et al., 2023); (Mohd Amiruddin Ag Damit, 2021). By explicitly aligning course materials, instructional methods, and evaluation criteria to Course Learning Outcomes (CPMK), the OBE framework forces active, high-level cognitive engagement, rather than merely passive listening (Masduki & Wakhida, 2024); (Desi et al., 2025).

The empirical conditions at the research site, namely the lecture environment of the Economics Education Study Program, also provide a specific context relevant to these outcomes. From an academic sociocultural perspective, undergraduate students in this department are prepared to become future educators and professionals in the field of economics, so the curriculum demands mastery of pedagogy that is adaptive to real-life classroom dynamics. Before the OBE intervention was implemented, the lecture process tended to be dominated by conventional, one-way lecture-based methods that limited student engagement to taking notes on theoretical material. When the OBE-based RPS was implemented by integrating real economic case studies and simulations of teaching strategies, students responded transformatively through increased discussion engagement and argumentative courage, confirmed by a surge in class participation scores. However, there are crucial methodological challenges in isolating the source of this improvement. Because various pedagogical components such as project-based learning, case studies, collaborative group work, and authentic assessment were implemented simultaneously as a single experimental treatment package, the observed improvement effects cannot be completely separated (Ni Nyoman Lisna Handayani, 2024); (Asim, Vaz, Ahmed, & Sadiq, 2021). These performance improvements could stem from factors other than the RPS document format itself, such as the high intensity of classroom activities, the novelty effect of the new method, the dynamic quality of teaching, faculty effects, or differences in the initial conditions of the groups, rather than solely due to the OBE RPS framework. The interaction dynamics in the academically homogeneous economics classroom also triggered the phenomenon of peer contagion, where learning motivation in the experimental group was boosted by the tightly structured group assignment format. These alternative explanations and confounding variables were statistically controlled through ANCOVA analysis (to mitigate the bias of the initial pre-test score difference of 65.20 vs. 60.15), but were still acknowledged as limitations of the research design. Regarding competency development and authentic assessment, high scores on critical thinking ($X = 88.15$) and problem solving ($X = 93.40$) occurred because OBE embedded a

scaffolding framework that connected theoretical concepts with real-world case studies relevant to the modern economic landscape (Rathy et al., 2020; Febby et al., 2026).

Nevertheless, potential measurement bias such as self-report tendencies in questionnaires or rater bias in observation sheets has been mitigated through expert validation ($CVI > 0.85$), reliability testing ($\alpha > 0.80$), and inter-rater agreement (0.84), although the threat of common method bias still needs to be anticipated. From an instructional planning perspective, this success cannot be separated from the effectiveness of systematic curriculum management by lecturers in the faculty environment (Keo et al., 2025; Santos & Clemente-faustino, 2025; Yunus & Maksum, 2024).

Practically, the characteristics of the classrooms at the research site indicate that the implementation of OBE requires the availability of supporting facilities for group presentations and adequate access to business-education case literature. Therefore, the prerequisites for implementing OBE in a similar context include: (1) readiness of project-based learning infrastructure, (2) intensive training for lecturers in designing standardized authentic assessment rubrics so as not to get caught up in the subjectivity of assignment assessments, and (3) flexibility in allocating lecture hours that accommodate the depth of student discussion. Although the research results show high statistical significance, readers Comments on these findings must take into account anomalies or variations in student responses in the field. A small number of students experienced disorientation in the early stages of OBE implementation due to their familiarity with conventional, passive, teacher-centered instruction (Jalladhttps, 2025). This transitional adjustment requires the active role of lecturers as facilitators who intensively provide guidance (scaffolding) so that the demands of achievement-based performance can be understood well without causing excessive academic anxiety. In closing, all forms of generalization whether related to the macro transformation of higher education, the demands of the global workplace, or graduate competitiveness, (Islamiah et al., 2026); (Ridwan Ali, 2025)

CONCLUSION

Based on the empirical results and controlled Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) inferential analyses ($F(1,57) = 128.45, p < 0.001$, partial eta squared $\eta_p^2 = 0.691$), the implementation of Outcome-Based Education (OBE)-based Semester Learning Plans (RPS) is statistically associated with higher observed scores in student participation, competency development, authentic assessment, and adjusted post-test learning outcomes compared to conventional learning frameworks. The experimental group ($n = 30$) demonstrated superior performance across all measured indicators, supported by large effect sizes ($Cohen's d > 4.00$). In terms of scientific contributions, this study provides empirical evidence on how structured curriculum alignment and student-centered activities foster critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, collaboration, and practical competencies within undergraduate education. Practically, the findings offer actionable implications for educators and curriculum developers to design structured, outcome-oriented RPS frameworks, emphasizing robust authentic assessment rubrics and active instructional strategies. However, several limitations must be noted. The study's generalizability is strictly limited to 60 undergraduate students in the Economics Education Department taking the Learning Strategies course, and causal claims should be interpreted cautiously due to the quasi-experimental design involving intact classes, potential selection bias, and simultaneous multi-component treatments. To address these limitations, future research should recommend multi-site studies, randomized controlled trials or matching techniques, longitudinal tracking of learning retention, and rigorous evaluation of implementation fidelity.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

LP contributed to all stages of the research, including conceptualization, methodology, data collection, analysis, and manuscript writing, and acts as the corresponding author. DS and A contributed to data collection, experimental

analysis, and reviewing the initial draft. All authors were involved in the critical revision of the content and approved the final version for submission.

AI DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

The author used ChatGPT during the preparation of this work for language editing and improving text readability. After using the tool/service, the author thoroughly reviewed and edited the content as needed and takes full responsibility for the content of the publication.

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