

# Empirical Study on Implementing Outcome-Based Education in Branding Courses: Evidence from an Application-Oriented University

Jiasheng Hou

Sino-German Faculty of Branding, Zhejiang Wanli University, Ningbo, 315100, China

---

**Abstract:** Outcome-Based Education (OBE) has been widely advocated as a framework for improving teaching quality and learning transparency in higher education. However, empirical evidence on its course-level implementation in branding-related courses remains limited, particularly in application-oriented universities. This study examines how OBE can be operationalized at the course level through an empirical case study of a “Digital Branding” course. An OBE-oriented course learning outcomes (CLO) framework was developed, and teaching activities and assessment methods were aligned with these outcomes using reverse curriculum design. Learning outcome attainment was evaluated using multiple sources of evidence, including student questionnaire data ( $n = 43$ ), teacher evaluations, project outcomes, and external validation from competitions and enterprise feedback. The results show relatively high attainment across key learning outcomes, with professional communication and teamwork demonstrating the strongest performance. In contrast, problem prioritization and innovative strategy development emerged as areas requiring further instructional support. The findings indicate that project-based and interdisciplinary learning provide effective pathways for implementing OBE in branding education, while targeted pedagogical scaffolding is necessary to support higher-order analytical and creative competencies.

**Keywords:** Outcome-Based Education, Branding Education, Course Learning Outcomes, Project-Based Learning, Teaching Quality Assurance.

---

## 1. Introduction

With the rapid development of the digital economy, branding has become a critical component of contemporary business practice. Correspondingly, higher education institutions are increasingly expected to cultivate graduates who not only understand branding theories but also possess the ability to analyze branding problems and develop practical solutions in digital environments. Branding-related courses, particularly those focusing on digital branding and digital marketing, therefore play a vital role in applied talent cultivation.

In application-oriented universities, which emphasize industry relevance and practical competence, branding courses commonly adopt project-based learning, case analysis, and interdisciplinary collaboration. Although these teaching approaches enhance student engagement and authenticity of learning tasks, they also expose a persistent challenge: learning outcomes are often broadly defined, and assessment practices tend to rely on overall project performance or final grades rather than clearly articulated and measurable learning achievements. As a result, it becomes difficult to demonstrate what students have actually learned and how course objectives are aligned with broader talent cultivation goals. This challenge is particularly evident in teaching quality assurance and instructional supervision, where evidence-based evaluation of course effectiveness is increasingly required.

Outcome-Based Education (OBE) has been widely proposed as an effective framework for addressing such challenges. The core idea of OBE is to define explicit learning outcomes, align teaching activities and assessment methods with those outcomes, and continuously improve teaching based on evidence of student achievement. OBE has been

extensively applied in engineering and medical education, where learning outcomes are relatively standardized and competency-oriented. However, its application in branding-related courses remains underexplored, especially at the course level. Branding education involves complex analytical, creative, and communicative abilities that are difficult to operationalize and assess using traditional evaluation methods. Consequently, while many branding courses claim to adopt OBE principles, their implementation often remains conceptual rather than evidence-based.

Existing research on OBE in business and marketing education mainly focuses on curriculum reform at the program or institutional level. Fewer studies examine how OBE can be practically implemented within a single course, particularly in terms of defining course learning outcomes (CLOs), aligning instructional activities, and empirically evaluating outcome attainment. This lack of course-level evidence limits the practical value of OBE for teaching quality assurance, as effective monitoring and continuous improvement ultimately depend on what occurs within specific courses.

Against this background, this study examines the course-level implementation of Outcome-Based Education in branding education through an empirical case study. Using the “Digital Branding” course at an application-oriented university in mainland China as the research context, the study focuses on three key aspects: the construction of an OBE-oriented course learning outcomes framework; the alignment between learning outcomes, teaching activities, and assessment methods; and the empirical evaluation of learning outcome attainment based on multiple sources of evidence.

Accordingly, the study addresses the following research questions:

(1) How can learning outcomes in a branding-related course be clearly defined under the OBE framework?

(2) How can teaching activities and assessment methods be aligned with these learning outcomes at the course level?

(3) To what extent are the intended learning outcomes achieved by students, as supported by empirical data?

By responding to these questions, this study contributes to the literature in several ways. It offers a concrete course-level example of OBE implementation in branding education, proposes an outcome-oriented assessment framework that translates abstract branding competencies into measurable learning outcomes, and demonstrates how course-level empirical evidence can support teaching quality assurance and continuous improvement in application-oriented universities.

## **2. Literature Review and Theoretical Background**

### **2.1. Outcome-Based Education in Higher Education**

Within higher education research, Outcome-Based Education (OBE) has been widely discussed as an approach that reorients teaching and evaluation from instructional inputs toward demonstrable learning outcomes. Rather than focusing on what instructors deliver or how curricula are structured, OBE emphasizes what students are able to achieve upon completing a course or program. From this perspective, educational quality is assessed through observable learning achievements, and curriculum design follows a reverse logic in which learning outcomes guide teaching activities and assessment practices.

Building on this foundation, empirical studies have examined the role of OBE in curriculum reform and teaching improvement. Early discussions highlight that clearly articulated learning outcomes can enhance curriculum transparency and provide a shared reference point for teaching and assessment [11]. Subsequent research suggests that OBE supports stronger alignment between instructional activities and assessment practices and promotes learner-centered teaching, particularly in professional and applied fields where learning outcomes are closely linked to competency development [7]. At the institutional level, OBE has also been associated with accountability and quality assurance initiatives.

More recent studies extend this discussion by examining OBE implementation across diverse higher education contexts. Program-level evidence indicates that systematic integration of learning outcomes can improve coherence in curriculum design and assessment [1][10]. At the same time, systematic reviews identify persistent challenges, including vague outcome formulation, weak alignment between outcomes and assessment, and limited faculty preparedness, which may constrain the effectiveness of OBE in practice [9]. Notably, much of this literature remains focused on institutional or program-level reform, leaving course-level implementation comparatively underexamined.

### **2.2. Course-Level Implementation of OBE and Learning Outcomes Assessment**

Recent research increasingly emphasizes the importance of implementing OBE at the course level, where learning outcomes are most directly experienced by students. As the basic unit of teaching and learning, courses represent the point

at which outcome-based reform is translated into concrete instructional practice. Accordingly, the effectiveness of OBE depends not only on institutional policy but also on how learning outcomes are defined, enacted, and assessed within individual courses.

At the course level, effective OBE implementation relies on coherent alignment among course learning outcomes, teaching and learning activities, and assessment methods. This relationship is commonly conceptualized through the framework proposed by Biggs of constructive alignment [2], which positions intended learning outcomes as the reference point for both instructional design and assessment. Empirical studies suggest that when learning outcomes are explicitly articulated and systematically assessed, course-level OBE can enhance learning transparency and assessment validity [14].

With regard to assessment, scholars increasingly advocate rubric-based and multi-source evidence approaches to capture complex learning outcomes. Frameworks such as the VALUE rubrics provide structured tools for evaluating competencies that extend beyond content knowledge, including communication, critical thinking, and teamwork. From a quality assurance perspective, course-level assessment is most meaningful when evidence of learning outcome attainment is used to inform instructional refinement rather than serving as an end in itself. Despite these developments, empirical studies that systematically examine learning outcome attainment within individual courses remain relatively limited, especially in disciplines involving integrative and creative competencies.

### **2.3. OBE and Branding-Related Courses**

Branding-related courses present distinctive challenges for outcome-based curriculum design and assessment due to the integrative and context-dependent nature of branding competencies. Unlike disciplines with standardized technical skills, branding education emphasizes analytical judgment, strategic thinking, creativity, communication, and teamwork, which are typically demonstrated through project-based performance rather than traditional examinations. Consequently, experiential and project-based learning has become a dominant instructional approach in branding and marketing education.

Research on live projects and real-world branding tasks shows that such approaches enable students to translate abstract branding concepts into observable outputs while developing professional skills relevant to digital environments [5][12]. However, existing studies also indicate that active learning alone does not ensure clear evidence of learning outcome attainment. Research on outcome-based marketing curricula emphasizes that branding projects need to be embedded within explicit learning outcome frameworks and aligned assessment practices in order to make student learning visible and evaluable [4].

In addition, the collaborative nature of branding practice has drawn attention to teamwork and communication as essential learning outcomes. Studies in marketing education highlight that team-based projects support the development of these competencies only when collaboration and communication are explicitly articulated as learning outcomes and incorporated into assessment criteria [8]. Despite these insights, empirical research examining course-level OBE implementation in branding-related contexts remains limited, particularly within digitally oriented and application-focused programs.

## 2.4. OBE, Applied Universities, and Teaching Quality Assurance

In application-oriented universities, teaching quality assurance increasingly focuses on whether courses effectively support students' practical competence and readiness for professional contexts. Within this setting, OBE has been discussed as a framework that aligns quality evaluation with evidence of student learning rather than instructional inputs. Early OBE theory emphasizes that educational quality should be judged by what students are able to demonstrate at the end of the learning process [13], providing a rationale for outcome-oriented approaches to quality evaluation.

From a course design perspective, learning outcomes serve as a key link between institutional quality goals and classroom practice. Research on constructive alignment suggests that meaningful quality assurance depends on the coherence among intended learning outcomes, teaching activities, and assessment practices [3]. Empirical studies further indicate that outcomes-based quality assessment can enhance transparency and credibility in teaching evaluation when course-level evidence is systematically collected and analyzed [15].

At the same time, scholars caution that learning outcomes assessment should function primarily as a tool for instructional improvement rather than procedural compliance. Research on higher education assessment emphasizes that the value of outcomes-based evaluation lies in its capacity to inform teaching refinement and curriculum development [6]. For application-oriented universities, this implies that course-level OBE implementation is most effective when learning outcome evidence is used to support continuous improvement in courses oriented toward authentic or practice-based learning.

## 2.5. Summary and Research Gap

Taken together, existing literature establishes Outcome-Based Education as an influential framework for enhancing curriculum alignment, learning transparency, and teaching quality assurance in higher education. Prior research demonstrates that OBE is most effective when learning outcomes are clearly defined, aligned with instructional activities and assessment practices, and supported by systematic evidence of student achievement. At the same time, studies consistently identify challenges related to outcome formulation, assessment alignment, and practical implementation, particularly at the course level.

While growing attention has been paid to course-level OBE implementation and learning outcomes assessment, empirical research remains unevenly distributed across disciplines. Branding-related courses, characterized by integrative, creative, and collaborative competencies, present particular difficulties for operationalizing learning outcomes and generating assessment evidence. Although experiential and project-based learning is widely adopted in branding education, fewer studies examine how such approaches can be embedded within outcome-based frameworks and evaluated using systematic course-level evidence.

Moreover, in application-oriented universities, where teaching quality assurance increasingly emphasizes practical competence and employability, there is a need for empirical studies that connect course-level learning outcomes with quality evaluation and continuous improvement mechanisms. Existing research rarely integrates OBE-oriented course

design, learning outcomes assessment, and teaching quality assurance within a single empirical framework.

To address these gaps, the present study conducts a course-level empirical investigation of OBE implementation in a digital branding course at an application-oriented university. By examining the design of course learning outcomes, the alignment of teaching activities and assessment methods, and the attainment of learning outcomes based on multiple sources of evidence, the study aims to contribute practical insights into how OBE can be effectively operationalized and evaluated in branding education.

## 3. Research Design and Methods

### 3.1. Research Context and Course Description

This study adopts a course-level empirical research design to examine the implementation of Outcome-Based Education (OBE) in branding education. The research context is the "Digital Branding" course offered at an application-oriented university in mainland China. The course is a compulsory undergraduate module for junior students majoring in Brand Communication and Brand Management. The course focuses on key topics such as digital branding concepts, consumer behavior in digital environments, digital communication strategies, and integrated branding planning throughout theoretical instruction with practice-oriented learning activities. In terms of instructional approach, the course emphasizes project-based learning and interdisciplinary collaboration. Students work in groups to complete branding analysis and develop comprehensive digital branding or digital marketing proposals based on real or simulated brand cases. This course structure makes it suitable for examining the operationalization of OBE at the course level, as learning outcomes are closely linked to observable student performance and project outputs.

### 3.2. OBE-Oriented Course Learning Outcomes Design

Following the principles of Outcome-Based Education, this study treats course learning outcomes (CLOs) as the core unit of analysis. Based on the characteristics of branding education and the talent cultivation goals of application-oriented universities, the course learning outcomes were designed to cover knowledge understanding, analytical ability, practical competence, communication skills, and professional awareness. Among all learning outcomes, three core CLOs were selected as the focus of empirical analysis due to their central role in branding education and their suitability for measurement:

- CLO2 (Brand Analysis and Problem Diagnosis Ability),
- CLO3 (Branding Strategy Planning and Integrated Practice Ability), and
- CLO4 (Professional Communication and Teamwork Ability).

Each CLO was operationalized through specific teaching activities and assessment methods. Project-based learning, group discussions, interim presentations, and final project submissions were systematically aligned with these learning outcomes to ensure that teaching implementation followed the reverse design logic advocated by OBE.

### 3.3. Data Sources and Instruments

To comprehensively evaluate learning outcome attainment, this study employed multiple data sources, forming a

triangulated evidence framework.

First, student questionnaire data were collected at the end of the course. The questionnaire was designed based on the CLO framework and adopted a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). A total of 43 valid responses were obtained. The questionnaire items were grouped according to CLOs: items Q4–Q7 measured CLO2, items Q8–Q12 measured CLO3, and items Q13–Q15 measured CLO4. For each CLO, the mean score of its corresponding items was calculated to reflect the overall level of learning outcome attainment.

Second, teacher evaluation data were drawn from existing course assessment records. These included formative assessments such as feedback on interim presentations and classroom performance, as well as summative assessments such as final project evaluations. In addition to the course instructor, interdisciplinary teachers and industry mentors participating in the course provided qualitative evaluation comments during project guidance and presentations.

Third, external validation data were incorporated to enhance the credibility of the findings. Some student projects developed in the course were submitted to national-level design competitions and enterprise branding projects, receiving awards and positive feedback from external reviewers and industry representatives. These outcomes served as supplementary evidence of students' practical competence and application ability.

### 3.4. Data Analysis Methods

This study primarily employed descriptive statistical analysis and qualitative synthesis. For student questionnaire data, mean scores were calculated at the CLO level to assess overall learning outcome attainment. This CLO-based aggregation approach aligns with the OBE principle of evaluating outcomes rather than isolated learning activities.

Teacher evaluation data and project outcomes were analyzed through content categorization and comparative interpretation. Evaluation comments were mapped onto the corresponding CLOs to identify common patterns in student performance, strengths, and areas for improvement. External competition results and enterprise feedback were analyzed as outcome-based evidence supporting or supplementing internal assessment findings.

By integrating quantitative and qualitative data, the study aimed to provide a comprehensive and evidence-based evaluation of learning outcomes under the OBE framework.

### 3.5. Research Design Summary

Overall, this study adopts a course-level case study design with an empirical orientation. By combining CLO-based questionnaire analysis, teacher evaluations, and external outcome evidence, the research seeks to examine whether OBE principles can be effectively implemented and evaluated in branding-related courses. This design not only supports the validity of the findings but also reflects the practical realities of teaching quality assurance in application-oriented higher education contexts.

## 4. Construction of the OBE-Oriented Course Learning Outcomes and Assessment Framework

### 4.1. Principles for Designing OBE-Oriented Course Learning Outcomes

In Outcome-Based Education, clearly defined and assessable learning outcomes constitute the foundation of curriculum design, teaching implementation, and quality assurance. For branding-related courses, however, learning outcomes are often expressed in abstract terms, such as “enhancing branding awareness” or “improving creative ability,” which makes systematic evaluation difficult. To address this issue, this study adopts OBE principles to redesign course learning outcomes (CLOs) for the “Digital Branding” course, with an emphasis on clarity, observability, and assessability.

The design of CLOs in this study follows four key principles. First, learning outcomes are aligned with the talent cultivation goals of application-oriented universities, which emphasize practical competence, problem-solving ability, and professional readiness. Second, learning outcomes are articulated in terms of what students are able to do upon completion of the course, rather than what content is covered. Third, learning outcomes are designed to be observable through specific learning activities and project outputs. Fourth, learning outcomes are formulated in a way that allows them to be evaluated using multiple forms of evidence, including student self-assessment, teacher evaluation, and external validation.

By applying these principles, the study aims to transform abstract branding competencies into concrete learning outcomes that can serve as effective anchors for teaching design and assessment.

### 4.2. Structure of the Course Learning Outcomes Framework

Based on the above principles and the characteristics of branding education, the course learning outcomes framework was constructed around three dimensions: analytical ability, integrated practice ability, and communication and collaboration ability. These dimensions reflect core competencies required in digital branding practice and correspond to higher-order learning objectives emphasized in OBE.

Specifically, the framework includes the following core CLOs:

**CLO2: Brand Analysis and Problem Diagnosis Ability**, referring to students' ability to apply branding theories and analytical tools to understand digital branding contexts, analyze consumer behavior and brand environments, and identify key branding problems.

**CLO3: Branding Strategy Planning and Integrated Practice Ability**, referring to students' ability to develop coherent, feasible, and context-sensitive digital branding or digital marketing strategies through project-based work, integrating knowledge from branding, communication, design, and technology.

**CLO4: Professional Communication and Teamwork Ability**, referring to students' ability to communicate branding ideas clearly and professionally, collaborate effectively within project teams, and respond constructively to feedback from different disciplinary perspectives.

These CLOs are not treated as isolated objectives. Instead, they are designed to form a progressive structure, in which analytical ability supports strategic planning, and both are reinforced through communication and collaboration in authentic project contexts.

### **4.3. Alignment between Learning Outcomes, Teaching Activities, and Assessment Methods**

A core requirement of OBE is the alignment between learning outcomes, teaching activities, and assessment methods. In this study, such alignment was achieved through reverse curriculum design. Starting from the defined CLOs, teaching activities and assessment tasks were systematically planned to ensure that each learning outcome was supported by appropriate instructional processes and evaluated through relevant evidence. For CLO2, teaching activities focused on guided case analysis, theoretical instruction, and problem-oriented discussions. Students were required to apply branding models and analytical frameworks to specific digital branding cases. Assessment evidence for CLO2 was primarily drawn from interim project reports, analytical tasks, and questionnaire items measuring students' perceived ability to analyze branding problems. For CLO3, project-based learning served as the primary instructional strategy. Students worked in groups to complete comprehensive digital branding proposals, progressing from analysis to strategy formulation and execution planning. Cross-disciplinary input from instructors and industry mentors was incorporated to enhance realism and complexity. Assessment evidence included final project outputs, teacher evaluations, and questionnaire items capturing students' perceived competence in strategy planning and practical integration. For CLO4, teaching activities emphasized presentations, peer discussions, and collaborative project work. Students participated in multiple rounds of presentations and feedback sessions, requiring them to articulate ideas clearly and coordinate effectively within teams. Assessment evidence included presentation performance, teacher observations of teamwork processes, and questionnaire items related to communication and collaboration. Through this alignment design, learning outcomes were embedded throughout the teaching process rather than assessed only at the end of the course.

### **4.4. Development of an Outcome-Oriented Assessment Framework**

To operationalize the evaluation of learning outcomes, an outcome-oriented assessment framework was developed based on the CLO structure. Instead of relying on single assessment tasks or overall course grades, the framework integrates multiple sources of evidence corresponding to each CLO. At the quantitative level, CLO attainment was measured using student questionnaire data, in which multiple items were mapped to each CLO. Mean scores were calculated at the CLO level to reflect students' overall perceived attainment of each learning outcome. This approach aligns with OBE's emphasis on outcome-level evaluation rather than isolated task performance. At the qualitative level, teacher evaluation records and project outcomes were analyzed to complement student self-assessment. Teachers' formative and summative evaluations provided insights into students' actual performance in analytical reasoning, strategic planning, and professional communication. External competition results and enterprise

feedback further enriched the assessment framework by offering independent evidence of students' practical competence. By combining quantitative and qualitative evidence, the assessment framework supports a more comprehensive and credible evaluation of learning outcomes.

### **4.5. Framework Summary**

Overall, the OBE-oriented CLO and assessment framework developed in this study translates abstract branding competencies into structured, observable, and assessable learning outcomes. Through systematic alignment between learning outcomes, teaching activities, and assessment methods, the framework provides a practical model for implementing OBE at the course level in branding education. This framework not only supports empirical evaluation of learning outcomes but also serves as a foundation for continuous improvement and teaching quality assurance.

## **5. Results: Learning Outcomes Attainment**

This section presents the empirical results of learning outcome attainment in the "Digital Branding" course under the Outcome-Based Education (OBE) framework. Based on the research design described above, learning outcomes were evaluated at the course learning outcome (CLO) level rather than at the level of individual questionnaire items. Student questionnaire data, teacher evaluations, and external outcome evidence were integrated to provide a comprehensive assessment of learning outcome attainment.

### **5.1. Overview of Student Questionnaire Results**

Student questionnaire data were collected at the end of the course, yielding 43 valid responses. All questionnaire items adopted a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). To align with OBE principles, questionnaire items were grouped according to the corresponding CLOs, and mean scores were calculated at the CLO level. Specifically, CLO2 was measured by items Q4–Q7, CLO3 by items Q8–Q12, and CLO4 by items Q13–Q15. Overall, the results indicate a relatively high level of learning outcome attainment across all three CLOs. The mean scores suggest that students generally perceived themselves as having achieved the intended learning outcomes, with some variation across different dimensions. The following subsections present detailed results for each CLO.

### **5.2. Attainment of CLO2: Brand Analysis and Problem Diagnosis Ability**

CLO2 focuses on students' ability to apply branding theories and analytical tools to understand digital branding contexts and identify key branding problems. This learning outcome was measured using four questionnaire items (Q4–Q7), and the aggregated mean score for CLO2 was 4.07, indicating a consistently high level of perceived attainment.

At the item level, students reported strong confidence in applying branding theories and analytical models to practical cases. The mean score for Q4 (the application of branding and digital marketing theories) was relatively high, suggesting that students were able to transfer theoretical knowledge into analytical practice. Similarly, Q5, which measured students' ability to conduct multi-dimensional analysis from

perspectives such as consumers, brand positioning, and digital environments, also received a high mean score. These results reflect the effectiveness of guided case analysis and project-based learning activities in supporting analytical skill development.

However, comparatively lower scores were observed for Q6, which focused on identifying core branding problems in complex digital contexts. Although the mean score for this item still exceeded the neutral midpoint, it was lower than those for theory application and multi-angle analysis. This pattern suggests that while students were able to conduct systematic analyses, extracting and prioritizing key problems remained more challenging. Q7, which assessed the clarity and logical structure of analytical processes, received a moderately high score, indicating that most students were able to present their analyses in a coherent manner.

Taken together, the CLO2 results indicate that the OBE-oriented instructional design effectively supported students' analytical competence at a foundational level. At the same time, the variation among item scores highlights a potential area for improvement, namely strengthening students' ability to synthesize analytical findings and identify core problems in complex branding scenarios.

### **5.3. Attainment of CLO3: Branding Strategy Planning and Integrated Practice Ability**

CLO3 represents the core practical learning outcome of the course, focusing on students' ability to develop coherent, feasible, and integrated digital branding or digital marketing strategies. This CLO was measured using five questionnaire items (Q8–Q12), and the aggregated mean score for CLO3 was 4.04, indicating a high level of perceived attainment.

Students reported positive outcomes in applying theoretical concepts to strategy development. Q8, which measured the application of branding and marketing theories in project work, above the neutral midpoint, suggesting that students were able to connect theoretical knowledge with practical planning tasks. Q9, focusing on the logical coherence of strategy design, achieved one of the highest item-level scores within CLO3. This result reflects that students generally perceived their projects as having clear analytical-to-strategic logic, reflecting the effectiveness of the course's staged project design.

In contrast, Q10, which measured the perceived innovativeness of students' branding strategies, received the lowest mean score within this CLO. Although most students agreed that their projects demonstrated some level of innovation, the relatively lower score suggests that innovation remained a challenging dimension. This finding implies that while the OBE framework and project-based approach effectively supported structural and logical competence, fostering higher levels of creative originality may require additional instructional scaffolding.

Q11 assessed the feasibility of students' proposed strategies, including considerations of platform conditions, resources, and target audiences. The relatively high mean score for this item points to that students were generally able to integrate practical constraints into their strategic planning. Q12, which focused on interdisciplinary integration, also received a high score, reflecting students' positive perceptions of cross-disciplinary collaboration and the integration of branding, communication, design, and technological perspectives.

Overall, the CLO3 results suggest that the OBE-oriented course design was particularly effective in supporting

students' integrated practice ability. Students demonstrated strong competence in logical strategy development and practical feasibility, while innovation emerged as a dimension with room for further enhancement.

### **5.4. Attainment of CLO4: Professional Communication and Teamwork Ability**

CLO4 addresses students' ability to communicate professionally and collaborate effectively in team-based branding projects. This learning outcome was measured using three questionnaire items (Q13–Q15), and the aggregated mean score for CLO4 was 4.14, representing the highest attainment level among the three CLOs. Q13, which measured students' perceived ability to present ideas clearly and professionally during project presentations, received a very high mean score. This result reflects the emphasis placed on presentations, feedback sessions, and iterative refinement throughout the course. Q14, focusing on the organization and structure of presentations, also received a high score, indicating that students were able to structure their communication effectively. Q15 assessed students' participation in teamwork and task coordination. While this item received a slightly lower score than Q13 and Q14, it still indicated a positive overall perception of teamwork competence. The results suggest that most students actively engaged in group collaboration and were able to fulfill their roles within project teams.

The high level of CLO4 attainment highlights the effectiveness of the course's emphasis on collaborative learning and professional communication. The interdisciplinary and project-based nature of the course provided authentic contexts in which communication and teamwork skills could be practiced and assessed.

### **5.5. Supplementary Evidence from Teacher Evaluation and External Outcomes**

To complement student self-reported data, teacher evaluation records and external outcome evidence were examined. Teachers' formative and summative evaluations generally aligned with the questionnaire results, particularly in identifying strong performance in strategy logic, project completeness, and presentation quality. Teachers also noted variation in analytical depth and innovation across student groups, consistent with patterns observed in CLO2 and CLO3 results.

External outcomes provided additional support for learning outcome attainment. Several student projects developed in the course were recognized in national-level design competitions and received positive feedback from enterprise partners. These external evaluations suggest that students' learning outcomes extended beyond self-perception and were validated in authentic professional contexts.

### **5.6. Summary of Results**

In summary, the results demonstrate that the OBE-oriented learning outcomes framework effectively supported learning outcome attainment in the "Digital Branding" course. Among the three CLOs, CLO4 showed the highest level of attainment, followed by CLO2 and CLO3. Students demonstrated strong competence in professional communication and teamwork, solid analytical ability, and high levels of integrated practice competence. At the same time, the results reveal areas for further improvement, particularly in problem prioritization and innovative strategy development. These findings provide

a robust empirical basis for subsequent discussion and interpretation.

## 6. Discussion

This study set out to examine whether Outcome-Based Education (OBE) can be meaningfully implemented at the course level in branding education and, if so, how learning outcomes are manifested in student learning. The findings highlight that when learning outcomes are explicitly defined and systematically aligned with teaching activities and assessment methods, OBE can function as an effective organizing framework for branding-related courses in application-oriented universities.

### 6.1. Effectiveness of Course-Level OBE Implementation in Branding Education

One of the key findings of this study is that OBE principles were successfully translated into course-level teaching practice, despite the abstract and integrative nature of branding education. Students demonstrated strong perceived attainment across analytical, practical, and communicative learning outcomes, suggesting that clearly articulated course learning outcomes (CLOs) can make student learning more visible and assessable even in disciplines that emphasize creativity and judgment. This finding extends previous OBE research, which has largely focused on disciplines with standardized competency frameworks such as engineering and medical education. In contrast, branding education involves context-dependent decision-making, strategic reasoning, and interpretive skills that are difficult to reduce to discrete competencies. The present findings suggest that these challenges do not preclude outcome-based design; rather, they require learning outcomes to be framed in ways that emphasize observable performance and process-based evidence.

### 6.2. Differential Attainment Across Learning Outcomes

The results reveal differentiated patterns of learning outcome attainment. Among the three CLOs, professional communication and teamwork ability (CLO4) showed the highest level of attainment, followed by brand analysis and problem diagnosis ability (CLO2), and branding strategy planning and integrated practice ability (CLO3).

The strong performance in CLO4 can be attributed to the course's emphasis on collaborative project work and iterative presentations. Communication and teamwork were not treated as peripheral skills but were embedded throughout the learning process. This aligns with existing studies suggesting that project-based and collaborative learning environments provide authentic contexts for developing professional communication competencies [8][12]. The findings reinforce the value of interdisciplinary and team-based learning in branding education, particularly in preparing students for real-world professional environments.

In contrast, CLO2 and CLO3 revealed more nuanced challenges. While students demonstrated solid analytical competence and practical strategy planning ability, lower relative scores were observed in problem prioritization (CLO2) and innovation (CLO3). These results suggest that while students are capable of applying theoretical frameworks and developing logically structured strategies, higher-level cognitive processes remain challenging, such as synthesizing

complex information to identify core problems and generating innovative solutions.

This pattern is consistent with prior research indicating that higher-order learning outcomes often require more intensive scaffolding and iterative practice. It also highlights an important pedagogical implication: OBE-aligned course design alone does not automatically guarantee high levels of creativity or critical synthesis. Instead, targeted instructional strategies are needed to support these dimensions.

### 6.3. Implications for Teaching Design in Branding Courses

The findings offer several implications for teaching design in branding education. First, the relatively strong attainment of CLO2 suggests that guided case analysis and structured analytical frameworks are effective in supporting students' analytical development. However, to further enhance problem diagnosis ability, instructors may need to place greater emphasis on problem framing and prioritization, such as by explicitly comparing alternative problem definitions or requiring students to justify their choice of core issues.

Second, the results for CLO3 indicate that project-based learning effectively supports integrated practice ability, particularly in terms of logical coherence and feasibility. Nevertheless, innovation emerged as a weaker dimension. This suggests that future course designs could incorporate dedicated creativity-oriented interventions, such as design thinking workshops, exploratory ideation sessions, or exposure to unconventional branding cases. These interventions could complement the existing OBE framework by strengthening students' capacity for original thinking within structured project contexts.

Third, the high attainment of CLO4 underscores the importance of embedding communication and collaboration within authentic learning tasks. Rather than treating presentation skills or teamwork as separate training components, integrating them into core project activities allows students to develop these competencies organically. This approach aligns well with the expectations of application-oriented universities and industry stakeholders.

### 6.4. Contributions to Course-Level Quality Assurance

Beyond pedagogical implications, this study contributes to discussions on teaching quality assurance in higher education. One of the persistent challenges in quality assurance is the lack of concrete evidence linking teaching practices to student learning outcomes. By adopting CLOs as the basic unit of analysis and evaluating outcome attainment through multiple sources of evidence, this study provides a practical model for course-level quality monitoring.

The integration of student self-assessment, teacher evaluation, and external outcome validation addresses common criticisms of relying on a single data source. This triangulated approach enhances the credibility of learning outcome evaluation and supports data-informed decision-making for course improvement. Importantly, the framework developed in this study can be adapted to other branding or business-related courses, offering a scalable approach to outcome-based quality assurance.

### 6.5. Limitations and Directions for Improvement

While the findings of this study are encouraging, several

limitations should be acknowledged. First, the research is based on a single course in one institutional context, which may limit the generalizability of the results. Second, the primary quantitative data rely on student self-reported perceptions, which may be influenced by subjective factors. Although teacher evaluations and external outcomes were used to supplement these data, future studies could incorporate more objective performance-based measures or longitudinal tracking.

In addition, the descriptive nature of the data analysis limits the ability to draw causal conclusions. Future research could employ comparative designs or experimental approaches to further examine the impact of OBE-oriented course design on learning outcomes.

## 6.6. Key Discussion Insights

Overall, the discussion highlights that OBE can be meaningfully implemented at the course level in branding education when learning outcomes are clearly defined, systematically aligned with teaching activities, and evaluated using multiple forms of evidence. The differentiated attainment patterns observed in this study provide valuable insights into both the strengths and challenges of outcome-based branding education. These insights lay the foundation for continuous course improvement and contribute to the broader discourse on applied teaching reform in higher education.

## 7. Conclusion and Implications

This study investigated the course-level implementation of Outcome-Based Education (OBE) in branding education through an empirical case study of a “Digital Branding” course at an application-oriented university. By constructing an OBE-oriented course learning outcomes (CLO) framework, aligning teaching activities and assessment methods, and evaluating learning outcome attainment using multiple sources of evidence, the study provides practical insights into how OBE can be operationalized in branding-related courses.

The findings indicate that clearly defined and assessable learning outcomes can effectively guide teaching design and make student learning more visible. Students demonstrated relatively high levels of attainment across analytical ability, integrated practice ability, and professional communication and teamwork ability. Among these outcomes, communication and collaboration showed the strongest attainment, while analytical synthesis and innovative strategy development emerged as areas requiring further enhancement. These results suggest that OBE-oriented course design is particularly effective in supporting structured learning and applied competence, while higher-order creativity and problem prioritization may require additional pedagogical scaffolding.

From a theoretical perspective, this study extends existing OBE research by demonstrating its applicability beyond traditionally standardized disciplines such as engineering and medicine. Branding education, characterized by abstract, integrative, and creative competencies, presents unique challenges for outcome definition and assessment. The course-level framework developed in this study illustrates how such competencies can be translated into observable and measurable learning outcomes, contributing to the growing body of literature on outcome-based education in applied business and humanities contexts.

From a practical perspective, the study offers several implications for branding educators and teaching administrators. First, adopting CLOs as the core unit of course design and evaluation helps shift attention from teaching inputs to learning outputs, supporting evidence-based teaching quality assurance. Second, project-based and interdisciplinary learning serve as effective vehicles for implementing OBE in branding courses, particularly in fostering practical competence and professional skills. Third, integrating multiple sources of assessment evidence, i.e., student self-assessment, teacher evaluation, and external validation, enhances the credibility of learning outcome evaluation and provides a robust foundation for continuous course improvement.

Despite these contributions, the study has limitations. The research is based on a single course within one institutional context, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. In addition, the primary quantitative data rely on student self-reported perceptions, which may be influenced by subjective factors. Future research could expand the scope to include multiple courses or institutions, adopt longitudinal designs, or incorporate more objective performance-based measures to further examine the effectiveness of OBE-oriented course design.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that OBE can be meaningfully and effectively implemented at the course level in branding education when learning outcomes are clearly defined, systematically aligned with teaching activities, and empirically evaluated. The proposed framework not only supports student learning and teaching quality assurance but also offers a replicable model for applied course reform in higher education.

## Acknowledgments

Project Name: Investigation and Empirical Study on Implementing the OBE Education Philosophy in Brand-related Course Teaching.

Project Number: 111654032400006.

## References

- [1] Asbari, M., & Novitasari, D. (2024). Outcome-based education model: Its impact and implications for higher education. *International Journal of Social and Management Studies*, 5(1), 45–58.
- [2] Biggs, J. (1996). Enhancing teaching through constructive alignment. *Higher Education*, 32(3), 347–364. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00138871>
- [3] Biggs, J., & Tang, C. (2011). *Teaching for quality learning at university* (4th ed.). Open University Press.
- [4] Borin, N., Metcalf, L., & Tietje, B. (2008). Implementing assessment in an outcome-based marketing curriculum. *Journal of Marketing Education*, 30(2), 144–154. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0273475308317706>
- [5] Craciun, G., & Bober Corrigan, H. (2010). An integrative experiential learning project in the undergraduate branding course: Creating a marketing department brochure. *Journal of Marketing Education*, 32(2), 116–127. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0273475309344808>
- [6] Ewell, P. T. (2009). *Assessment, accountability, and improvement: Revisiting the tension*. National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment.
- [7] Katawazai, R. (2021). Implementing outcome-based education and student-centered learning in higher education. *Education*

- Research International, 1–10.  
<https://doi.org/10.1155/2021/6655946>
- [8] Lindsay, S. (2023). Cultivating effective marketing student teams. *Journal of Marketing Education*, 45(1), 3–15. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02734753221127589>
- [9] Mistamiruddin, E., & Nasri, N. M. (2024). Challenges in integrating outcome-based education in higher education institutions: A systematic literature review. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*, 13(1), 1–18.
- [10] Nguyen, H. C., Nguyen, T. T., & Tran, L. T. (2024). Implementing outcome-based education in higher education programs: Evidence from applied universities. *Vietnam Journal of Education*, 8(2), 15–27.
- [11] Rao, N. J. (2020). Outcome-based education: An outline. *Higher Education for the Future*, 7(1), 5–21. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2347631119886418>
- [12] Rohm, A. J., Stefl, M., & Ward, N. (2021). Future proof and real-world ready: The role of live project-based learning in students' skill development. *Journal of Marketing Education*, 43(2), 204–215. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02734753211001409>
- [13] Spady, W. G. (1994). Outcome-based education: Critical issues and answers. American Association of School Administrators.
- [14] Sun, P. H., & Lee, S. Y. (2020). The importance and challenges of outcome-based education: A case study in a private higher education institution. *Malaysian Journal of Learning and Instruction*, 17(2), 253–278.
- [15] Tam, M. (2014). Outcomes-based approach to quality assessment and curriculum improvement in higher education. *Quality Assurance in Education*, 22(2), 158–168. <https://doi.org/10.1108/QAE-09-2011-0059>