

# ARTICULATION OF OUTCOME-BASED EDUCATION IN GRADUATE EDUCATION: A PRACTITIONER- ACTION RESEARCH

Maria Eliza P. Cruz\*, Priscila L. Doctolero

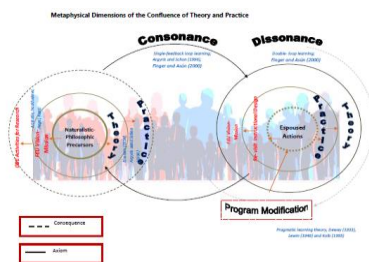
Institute of Education- Graduate Studies Far Eastern University, Manila, Philippines

## Article history

Received  
6 June 2015  
Received in revised form  
27 August 2015  
Accepted  
20 October 2015

\*Corresponding author  
mariaelizapacruz@gmail.com

## Graphical abstract



## Abstract

This paper tested for the goodness-of-fit between Theory and Practice in the Institute of Education- Graduate Studies of the Far Eastern University via Outcome- Based Education using the theoretical frameworks of Hatch and Schultz on organizational identity dynamics and Argyris on scientific feedback loop models. Hatch and Schultz [1] hold the view that organizational identity is an ongoing process that behaves like a conversation between the organizational self (as expressed by its culture) and images held by key stakeholders. This perspective is an extension by analogy of Mead's social identity theory [2] in which he posits that individual identity is born of a conversation between the "I" and the "me". Processes linking organizational identity are positioned with respect to recent concerns about the effects of increased levels of organizational transparency. Issues of concern that were ascertained via this research are the following: (1) Learning outcomes set by the Professor are mostly manifested/ observed in the Graduate Class (2) Some prerequisite research skills are weakly manifested/ observed in the Graduate Class. Hence, using Argyris' scientific feedback loop models for evaluation [3], it is recommended that a double-feedback loop be implemented as it allows identification and modification of weak organizational practices.

**Keywords:** Organizational identity, outcome- based education, graduate education, feedback loop models

© 2015 Penerbit UTM Press. All rights reserved

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Far Eastern University remains to be one of the leading universities in the Philippines as magnified by various local and international survey groups. Founded in 1928 by Dr. Nicanor Reyes Sr., it has been continuously pursuing academic excellence as evidenced by its high percentage of licensure board examination passers while constantly producing skilled graduates ready for the challenges of internationalization.

But as one is not supposed to sit on past and present laurels, the University's topmost priority remains to be to upgrade instructional leadership and ensure that the aforementioned is aligned with its Vision-Mission. Henceforth, this paper is an attempt to establish the confluence between the said vision-mission (theory) with instruction (practice) in the Institute of Education-

Graduate Studies using the researcher's *Methods of Research Class*.

In establishing this confluence between theory (vision and mission) and practice (instruction), it is important to note that the important bridge that links the two are the Graduate Outcomes set by the University and the Learning Outcomes set for each course. Davis [4] defines an outcome as the final demonstration of learning while Spady [5] elucidated that it is what the student is capable of doing after the course.

Outcome- based education, on the other end, can be summed up as "results oriented" thinking [6]. Its implementation is asserted to be successful in the United States and Canada specifically in the areas of medical and higher education [7] but is still questioned in terms of applicability to public education in several other countries such as South Africa and even in the United States [8].

The Philippines, as a move to adhere to the ASEAN Integration 2015 principles, have started to realign its educational institutions to fit into the ASEAN and global academic platform. Such realignment was contextualized via the mandate of the Commission of Higher Education to adopt Outcome- Based Education across all curricular offerings.

In this attempt to contextualize the confluence of theory and practice via Outcome- Based Education approach, these are the null hypotheses that were tested in this research:

Ho<sub>1</sub>: There is dissonance between theory and practice via evaluation of OBE activities for *Methods of Research*

Ho<sub>2</sub>: A double- feedback loop is manifested; there is a necessity to go back and question the interpretation of the governing variables (theory) before crafting mechanisms for practice.

Hatch and Schultz (2001) hold the view that organizational identity is an ongoing process that behaves like a conversation between the organizational self (as expressed by its culture) and images held by key stakeholders.

This perspective is an extension by analogy of Mead's social identity theory (1934) in which he posits that individual identity is born of a conversation between the "I" and the "me". Processes linking organizational identity are positioned with respect to recent concerns about the effects of increased levels of organizational transparency and the effects of transparency are examined as revelatory of two dysfunctions of organizational identity dynamics.

From these related theories on individual and organizational identities, it could be gleaned how individual identities are influenced by the objects outside. This works in reverse: organization identity is the collective whole of individual identities. Objects "outside" could be used to strengthen theory-in- use [9] that magnify projected organizational identity.

The FEU- IE's organizational Identity is that of a Pragmatic and Brave *Guro* (etymology: gu+ ru, meaning—from the dark into the light). As symbolized by the endemic species *Tamaraw*, its internal stakeholders must capture or imbibe this organizational identity of being skilled, academically excellent and brave.

It is even clearly elucidated in the Institute of Education's Intended Graduate Outcomes: A Teacher

Graduate of FEU is (a) value- laden (b) academically excellent and (c) professionally competent [10].

This, the researcher believes, could be achieved through engaging them in OBE- based activities (objects outside) that are intended to flux an individual's (the student) personal identity and attributes with that of the existing organizational culture and image which defines the organizational identity. This is the inspiration behind the researcher-conceived intended learning outcomes for *Methods of Research*. Some of these relevant learning outcomes being: (a) Write a scholarly research on/ about education (b) Perform appropriate statistical tests for conceived research and (c) Present research findings in a public colloquium.

Mirroring of the organizational identity through personal individual (research) skill development will lead to the solid and smooth fusion of these two identities. The effectiveness of this technique is reflected in the following investigations:

Dutton and Dukeric [11] found out that images are related to cultural self- understandings in two ways: First, the processes of mirroring organizational identity in stakeholder images and reflecting on "who we are" describe the influence of stakeholder images on culture. Second, the processes of expressing cultural self- understanding and projecting one's identity to impress others describe the influence of organizational culture on the images other hold.

Aside from the mirroring process (individual identity reflecting organizational identity and vice- versa), this conceived learning outcomes for Research could also be an avenue for self- examination. Gioia, Schultz and Corley [12] suggested:

Image in multiple guises provides a catalyst for members' reflexive examination of their organizational self- definition. Image often acts as a destabilizing force on identity, frequently requiring members to revisit and reconstruct their organizational sense of self.

This reflexivity mentioned is a way to expose the underlying assumptions that reveal organizational culture, an aspect that all organization front liners or leaders must undertake as it is the process by which organizational members understand themselves as an organization, a united whole pursuing the same goals and objectives.

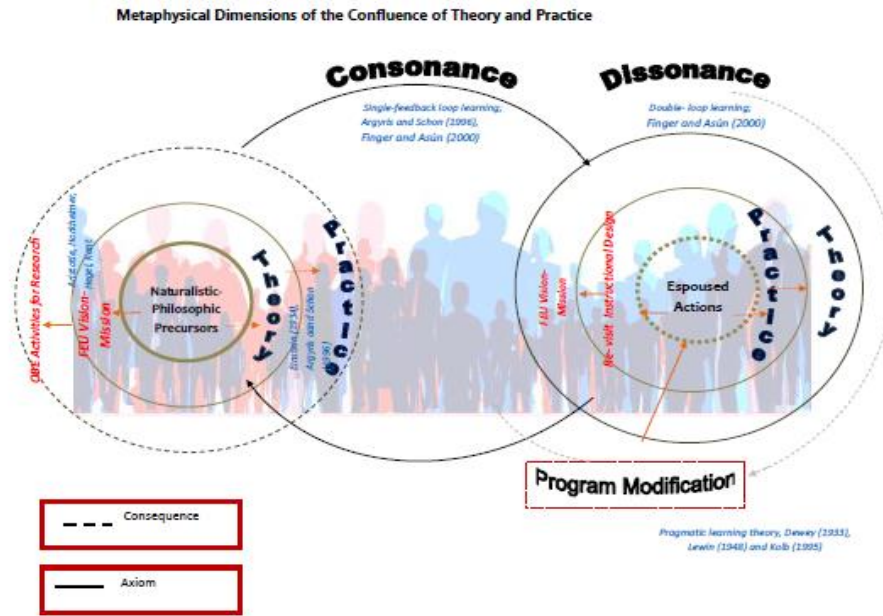


Figure 1 Metaphysical dimensions of the confluence of theory and practice

Using Argyris' concept of feedback loops and his theory of action, this paper tested for the goodness-of-fit between theory and practice at the Institute of Education- Graduate Studies via the researcher's *Methods of Research* Class. Theory refers to the vision-mission of the University and Practice, pointing to OBE-based activities set and analyzed by the researcher.

Argyris [13] claimed that a scientific feedback system is a necessary protocol that helps organizational leaders and managers analyze the extent of commitment of the organization towards attainment of its purpose or *telos*. It allows the detection and correction of errors and weaknesses within the organization while at the same time according a

gateway towards positive transformation that begins with the individual and ends with the organization (social identity theory).

He went on and further explicated that a single feedback loop is manifested when there is consonance between the espoused values (what people do, their practices) and the theory- in- use (in this case, the FEU Vision-Mission). If there is dissonance, then a double-feedback loop is necessary. This would mean that corrective mechanisms (program intervention or program modification) are necessary to deconstruct the existing dissonance that is followed up by another cycle of feedbacks.

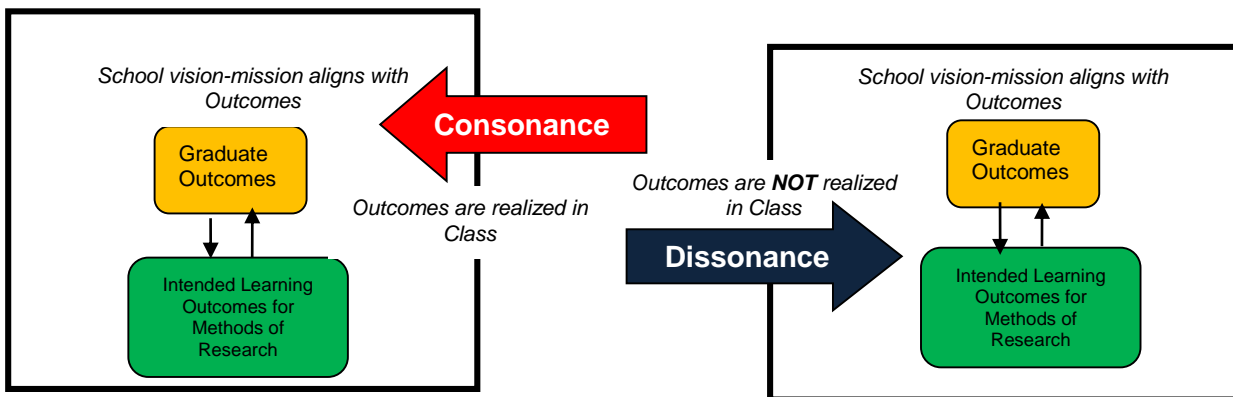


Figure 2 Operational dimensions of the confluence of theory and practice

## 2.0 EXPERIMENTAL

This classroom research utilized the mixed method of research. Green (1989), as dissertated by Pelayo [14], identified its five components, these being a) triangulation (b) complementarity (c) development (d) initiation and (e) expansion.

*Triangulation* means determining the consistency of findings obtained from different instruments; it was achieved in this paper via student self- surveys, peer evaluation and assessment of the practitioner-researcher of selected student portfolios.

*Complementarity*, on the other hand, illustrates results from one method with the use of another method; this was accomplished via analyzing both the quantitative (through peer evaluation) and qualitative data (via student self- surveys) generated from triangulation.

*Development* aims to use the results from one method to help develop or inform the other method, this including sampling and implementation, as well as measurement decisions.

*Initiation* is on the discovery of paradox and contradiction, new perspectives of frameworks, the recasting of questions or results from one method with questions or results from the other method.

Lastly, *Expansion* intends to extend the breadth and range of inquiry by using different methods for different inquiry components.

The latter components (development, initiation and expansion) of mixed method of research were magnified in the recommendation section of this paper.

This academic endeavor involved three (3) Graduate Students who voluntarily accomplished the student self- survey in the researcher's *Methods of Research* Class for the Second Semester, Academic Year 2014-2015.

## 3.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

With the final student learning outcome of the course being to write and present in a public colloquium a quasi- experimental action research that is consistent with what the FEU Vision- Mission requires, these are the generated results of this action research:

### 3.1 How Is The Institute Of Education- Graduate Studies Translating Theory Into Practice Via Evaluation Of OBE Activities For Methods Of Research?

It was ascertained in this study that the learning outcomes set by the Professor for the course are mostly manifested/ observed in the Graduate Class as revealed by a high 92.31% of students imbibing the research skills (magnified in their GPAs and rubric-based peer- assessments) required by the course. Further, they collectively agreed on their increased confidence in writing research as this course allowed

them to explore various opportunities outside the classroom.

However, some prerequisite research skills are weakly manifested/ observed in the Graduate Class (as could be gleaned in their self- surveys and portfolios). Specifically, issues of concern pointed to (1) lack of confidence in manipulating statistical equations, whether mechanical or software- assisted; and (2) weak understanding of the application of statistics in research.

### 3.2 How Shall This Confluence Of Theory And Practice In The Institute Of Education- Graduate Studies Via Evaluation Of OBE Activities Be Interpreted?

The findings generated in the first stated problem were interpreted by the researcher to be caused by the following: (1) Statistics is not a pre- requisite course for the *Methods of Research*; and (2) Students who already took Statistics discovered the difference between (abstract) number manipulation and the intricacies and challenges of applying statistical formulae in real- world data gathering and interpretation.

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

The null hypotheses that were earlier stated are accepted in this research.

Although most learning outcomes are achieved by the students at the end of the course, still there is dissonance between theory and practice as revealed by the triangulated evaluation of OBE activities for *Methods of Research*.

Pre- requisite skills in research, specifically in the nature of statistical tests and alignment of statistics with data gathering and interpretation, were weakly manifested.

A double- feedback loop is therefore necessitated; there is a necessity to go back and question the interpretation of the governing variables (theory) before crafting mechanisms for practice.

Operationally henceforth, it is suggested by the researcher that the curricular offerings for Graduate Education be re- visited or re- aligned. Specifically, Inferential Statistics may be a concurrent course offering alongside *Methods of Research* in the Graduate Education Curriculum. Further, its learning outcomes may be made parallel to that of *Methods of Research* (or vice- versa) thereby promoting multidisciplinary learning. This approach will not only help students maximize their research writing potential, but will also ease the tedious teaching task of Statistics and Research Professors.

Accordingly, student research public colloquia could be initiated at a regular cycle by the Institution and the pool of Graduate Professors handling both Statistics and *Methods of Research*. After all, research is supposed to be communicated at an audience or

its very purpose (skill transfer, problem identification and action modification) becomes futile.

The standpoints recommended in this study, (1) realignment of statistics and research classes; and (2) regular public colloquia for graduate students, are areas that will magnify the last three components of a mixed- method of research, i.e., development, initiation and expansion. These could be the focal points to be analyzed in the next cycle of feedback evaluation for another practitioner-action research (program modification).

Consonance, using Argyris' concept of feedback loops, will eventually be achieved once the self-identity of an FEU-IE Graduate Student already mirrors the organizational identity of the Institution.

To sum up, Outcome-Based Education is the most opportune avenue to analyze the truthfulness and commitment of any institution to its Organizational Identity (vision- mission). Through this exercise, the cascading of the Institutional Identity to classroom practice was scientifically and systematically captured and analyzed which may now be used as reference for constant and consistent total quality management of the University.

### Acknowledgement

The researcher is grateful to the following individuals who were vital in the completion of this study:

- a) Dr. Elsa Gerardo, former Dean of the Institute of Education and Dr. Elisa Mañalac, OIC-Dean of the same Institute of FEU, for the gracious assistance and support they have constantly afforded to the researcher;
- b) Dr. Priscila Doctolero, Program Head of the IE-Graduate Studies of FEU and her co- author, for her unwavering faith in the academic potentials of the researcher;
- c) Dr. Jennifer Florida, Director for General Education of the FEU- IE, for her warm accommodation of the researcher's queries and for her generosity to share intellectual conversations with the researcher;
- d) Lastly, to her *Methods of Research* Class, whose valuable feedbacks made this synthesis of classroom practice possible.

### References

- [1] Hatch and Schultz 2001. Transparency and Identity: Modeling Organizational Identity Dynamics. An Unpublished Dissertation: Center for Corporate Communication, Copenhagen Business School, Denmark.
- [2] Mead, G. H. 1934. *Mind, Self and Society*. University of Chicago Press.
- [3] Argyris, C. 1990. *Overcoming Organizational Defenses. Facilitating Organizational learning*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- [4] Davis, MH. 2003. Outcome- Based Education. *Journal for Medical Education*. United Kingdom.
- [5] Spady WG.1993. ACSA Report no. 5. Belconnen. Australian Curriculum Studies Association.
- [6] [Harden RM. Crosby JR. 1999. An Introduction to Outcome-Based Education. *Med Teacher Journal*. 21.
- [7] Lui, G. and Shum, C. 2014. *Outcome-Based Education And Student Learning In Managerial Accounting In Hong Kong*
- [8] Donnelly, K. 2007. *Australia's Adoption of Outcomes Based Education: A Critique*. Issues in Educational Research.
- [9] Argyris, C. and Schön, D. 1996. *Organizational learning II: Theory, method and Practice*. Reading, Mass: Addison Wesley.
- [10] Dutton J. and Dukerich J. 1991 Keeping An Eye On The Mirror: Image And Identity In Organizational Adaptation. *Academy of Management Journal*.
- [11] FEU Website. 2015. <http://www.feu.edu.ph>
- [12] Gioia, D. A., Schultz, M. and Corley, K. 2000. Organizational Identity, Image and Adaptive Instability. *Academy of Management Review*.
- [13] Argyris C. 2012. *Organizational Traps: Leadership, Culture, Organizational Design*. Oxford University Press.
- [14] Pelayo, R. 2011. *The Wave Leadership Model*. An Unpublished Dissertation, The National Teachers College