

"Adhering to a Problem-Oriented Approach, Creating Cognitive Conflict: Classroom Practice of 'Principles of Management' Under the OBE Concept"

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the integration of a problem-oriented approach and the creation of cognitive conflict in the classroom practice of the "Principles of Management" course under the Outcome-Based Education (OBE) concept. The OBE framework emphasizes achieving predefined learning outcomes by aligning teaching methods and assessments with student-centered goals. By adopting a problem-oriented approach, this study focuses on real-world managerial issues to encourage critical thinking and active learning. Cognitive conflict is intentionally introduced to challenge preconceived notions and stimulate deeper understanding. The research involves a detailed analysis of classroom practices, including the design of case studies, group activities, and reflective exercises aimed at fostering problem-solving skills and adaptive thinking. Data collected from student feedback, performance assessments, and observational studies indicate that this pedagogical approach significantly enhances student engagement, critical reasoning, and practical application of management theories. This paper also identifies challenges, such as varying levels of student preparedness and the need for instructor adaptability, and offers recommendations for overcoming these obstacles. The findings contribute to the evolving discourse on innovative teaching practices in management education, demonstrating the efficacy of combining problem orientation and cognitive conflict within the OBE framework.

KEYWORDS

Problem-Oriented Approach; Cognitive Conflict; Principles of Management

1 Introduction

The "Principles of Management" course serves as a foundational pillar in management education, introducing students to the core concepts, theories, and practices that underpin effective organizational leadership. As management education evolves to meet the demands of an increasingly complex and dynamic business environment, there is a growing recognition of the need for pedagogical approaches that go beyond rote memorization and theoretical knowledge. The Outcome-Based Education (OBE) framework, which prioritizes achieving specific learning outcomes through student-centered teaching methodologies, offers a promising pathway for enhancing the relevance and impact of management education.

Within the OBE framework, a problem-oriented approach has emerged as a powerful pedagogical strategy. By engaging students with real-world challenges and managerial dilemmas, this approach encourages critical thinking, practical application, and collaborative problem-solving. Simultaneously, the intentional creation of cognitive conflict—where students encounter situations that challenge their existing beliefs and assumptions—stimulates deeper reflection and a more profound understanding of management principles. This combination not only aligns with the core tenets of OBE but also addresses the need for students to develop the adaptive and analytical skills necessary for contemporary management roles.

This paper investigates the application of a problem-oriented approach and cognitive conflict in the classroom practice of the "Principles of Management" course. It examines how these strategies can be integrated within the OBE framework to enhance learning outcomes and better prepare students for real-world managerial challenges. The study also seeks to provide practical insights for educators, addressing key questions such as: How can cognitive conflict be effectively introduced without overwhelming students? What types of problems are most conducive to fostering critical engagement in a management context?

By analyzing the outcomes of this teaching approach and identifying its challenges, this paper contributes to the growing body of literature on innovative teaching practices in management education. It underscores the potential of combining problem orientation and cognitive conflict to create a more dynamic, student-centered learning environment and outlines actionable strategies for educators aiming to implement these methods effectively.

2 Literature Review

The pedagogical approaches to teaching management have undergone significant evolution, reflecting broader shifts in educational philosophy and the changing demands of the workplace. The Outcome-Based Education (OBE) framework has gained prominence in recent years for its emphasis on aligning teaching methods, assessments, and curriculum

design with specific, measurable learning outcomes. Spady (1994) defines OBE as an educational framework focused on achieving intended learning outcomes, with students' mastery of these outcomes serving as the primary metric for success. In management education, OBE offers a pathway to bridge theoretical learning with practical application, equipping students with the competencies required in real-world scenarios (Biggs & Tang, 2011).

The problem-oriented approach, rooted in the principles of experiential and active learning, has been widely adopted across disciplines to foster critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory underscores the importance of engaging students in reflective problem-solving processes that simulate real-world challenges. Studies in management education have demonstrated that problem-based learning (PBL) enhances students' abilities to apply theoretical knowledge to practical contexts, develop collaborative skills, and engage in critical analysis (Hmelo-Silver, 2004). For instance, the use of case studies, role-playing, and simulation exercises has been shown to promote deeper learning by exposing students to multifaceted managerial dilemmas.

Cognitive conflict, a concept derived from Piaget's (1950) theory of cognitive development, refers to the mental dissonance that arises when individuals encounter information or experiences that challenge their pre-existing knowledge or beliefs. In educational settings, cognitive conflict has been utilized to promote conceptual change and stimulate critical thinking (Lee & Kwon, 2001). In the context of management education, introducing cognitive conflict through case studies, debates, and role-playing activities encourages students to question assumptions, reconcile contradictions, and construct new knowledge.

Research by Mezirow (1991) on transformative learning theory highlights the value of cognitive conflict in fostering deep, meaningful learning experiences. By confronting discrepancies between students' expectations and real-world complexities, educators can encourage students to adopt more nuanced perspectives. Studies also suggest that cognitive conflict, when appropriately managed, enhances engagement and retention of knowledge, making it an effective tool for teaching abstract concepts and fostering adaptive thinking (Tarman, 2016).

The integration of problem orientation and cognitive conflict aligns closely with the principles of OBE, as both strategies emphasize active engagement and practical application. However, existing research has not extensively explored the combined impact of these approaches in the context of management education. While problem-oriented learning focuses on developing solutions to real-world challenges, cognitive conflict deepens the learning process by encouraging students to critically evaluate the assumptions underlying these solutions. This dual approach has the potential to create a rich, dynamic learning environment that mirrors the complexities of managerial decision-making.

Despite the demonstrated benefits of problem-oriented learning and cognitive conflict, several gaps remain in the literature. First, there is limited research on how these approaches can be systematically implemented within the OBE framework for management education.

Second, few studies have explored the specific challenges of introducing cognitive conflict in diverse classroom settings, particularly in terms of managing student anxiety and resistance. Finally, while existing studies highlight the effectiveness of these strategies in promoting critical thinking, there is a need for more empirical evidence on their long-term impact on students' professional competencies and career readiness.

This literature review provides the foundation for the present study, which seeks to address these gaps by examining the application of a problem-oriented approach and cognitive conflict in the teaching of "Principles of Management" under the OBE framework. The following sections will detail the methodology, implementation, and outcomes of this innovative teaching strategy, offering insights into its practical implications for management education.

3 Methodology

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative methods to provide a comprehensive analysis of the effectiveness of classroom practices in fostering student learning outcomes. A total of 335 students participated in the research, which focused on evaluating the implementation of a problem-oriented approach and the creation of cognitive conflict within the "Principles of Management" course under the Outcome-Based Education (OBE) framework. This mixed-methods design was chosen to capture both measurable changes in student performance and the nuanced experiences of students engaging with these innovative teaching strategies.

The quantitative component of the study involved pre- and post-course assessments designed to measure changes in students' knowledge acquisition, critical thinking abilities, and problem-solving skills. These assessments were structured to align with the course's intended learning outcomes, providing a clear metric for evaluating the impact of the teaching methods. Pre-course assessments established a baseline understanding of students' capabilities at the start of the course, while post-course assessments captured their progress and learning gains after engaging with the problem-oriented and cognitive conflict-based activities. This data was analyzed statistically to identify patterns of improvement and to assess the overall effectiveness of the instructional approach.

The qualitative component of the research offered a more detailed understanding of the students' experiences and

engagement throughout the course. Classroom observations were conducted to gain insights into how students interacted with the teaching methods, particularly during group discussions, problem-solving activities, and moments of cognitive conflict. These observations allowed the researchers to document student behaviors, levels of participation, and the dynamics of peer interactions during learning activities. Observers noted specific instances where cognitive conflict was introduced and recorded students' responses to these challenges, providing a deeper understanding of how such experiences shaped their learning processes.

Student focus groups were another key qualitative method used in the study. These semi-structured discussions, conducted with a diverse subset of participants, provided students with an opportunity to reflect on their experiences in the course. The focus groups explored various aspects of the teaching strategies, including the perceived relevance of the problem-oriented approach, the challenges posed by cognitive conflict, and the skills they felt they developed as a result of these methods. This qualitative data offered valuable insights into the emotional and cognitive aspects of learning that were not captured through quantitative assessments.

In addition to focus groups, students were asked to maintain reflective journals throughout the course. These journals served as a rich source of qualitative data, capturing students' evolving thought processes, their emotional responses to challenging activities, and the strategies they used to navigate cognitive conflict. The journals provided a window into the internal learning journeys of the participants, allowing the researchers to analyze how students reconciled new concepts with their existing knowledge and how their critical thinking skills developed over time.

The integration of quantitative and qualitative methods ensured a robust and multidimensional analysis of the classroom practices. By combining measurable outcomes with in-depth explorations of student experiences, the study was able to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the pedagogical strategies employed. This methodological approach not only highlights the effectiveness of problem-oriented learning and cognitive conflict in enhancing student outcomes but also offers valuable insights into their practical application in management education. Through this rigorous approach, the study contributes to the broader discourse on innovative teaching practices within the OBE framework, providing a foundation for future research and educational development.

4 Implementation of the Approach and Results Discussion

The implementation of the problem-oriented approach and cognitive conflict in the "Principles of Management" course under the Outcome-Based Education (OBE) framework involved a comprehensive redesign of teaching strategies and classroom activities. These methods were deliberately structured to align with specific learning outcomes, such as enhancing critical thinking, fostering problem-solving skills, and encouraging the application of theoretical knowledge to real-world scenarios. The effectiveness of these strategies was assessed through a combination of student performance metrics, qualitative observations, and participant feedback, providing a multidimensional evaluation of their impact on learning.

The course design revolved around engaging students with real-world problems and managerial dilemmas. Case studies formed a cornerstone of the problem-oriented approach, presenting students with complex issues such as organizational restructuring, ethical conflicts, and resource allocation challenges. These cases were carefully chosen to mirror contemporary managerial scenarios, compelling students to analyze situations, evaluate alternative strategies, and justify their decisions. Simulations further enriched the learning experience by placing students in realistic managerial roles, requiring them to make decisions under constraints and manage interpersonal dynamics. Group projects allowed students to collaborate on resolving multi-faceted problems, fostering teamwork and practical application of management principles.

Cognitive conflict was systematically integrated into the learning process to challenge students' pre-existing assumptions and promote deeper reflection. Scenarios with conflicting solutions or ethical dilemmas were introduced to create moments of uncertainty, prompting students to reevaluate their perspectives. Structured debates on contentious topics encouraged critical analysis and the articulation of diverse viewpoints, while reflective exercises enabled students to document their evolving thought processes as they navigated these intellectual challenges.

The results of these methods were both measurable and transformative. Quantitative analysis of pre- and post-course assessments revealed significant improvements in students' knowledge acquisition and critical thinking abilities. For instance, the average scores on problem-solving tasks increased by 28%, highlighting the effectiveness of the problem-oriented approach in equipping students with practical skills. Surveys also indicated a high level of student satisfaction, with over 85% of participants reporting that the cognitive conflict activities deepened their understanding of management concepts and encouraged active engagement.

Qualitative data further illuminated the success of the teaching strategies. Classroom observations captured heightened levels of student participation during problem-solving activities, with students demonstrating increased confidence in presenting and defending their ideas. Focus group discussions revealed that students found the case

studies and simulations particularly impactful, as these activities bridged the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world application. Reflective journals provided additional evidence of cognitive and emotional growth, as students documented how they overcame initial discomfort with cognitive conflict to develop more nuanced and informed perspectives.

Despite these successes, the implementation also highlighted certain challenges. Some students initially struggled with the uncertainty and complexity inherent in cognitive conflict scenarios, requiring additional guidance from instructors to navigate these experiences. Furthermore, managing group dynamics in collaborative projects proved challenging in a few cases, emphasizing the need for clear guidelines and facilitation to ensure equitable participation.

Overall, the integration of a problem-oriented approach and cognitive conflict within the OBE framework proved to be an effective strategy for enhancing student learning outcomes in the "Principles of Management" course. By combining real-world challenges with opportunities for critical reflection, the course not only achieved its intended learning outcomes but also fostered a dynamic and engaging classroom environment. These findings underscore the potential of innovative pedagogical practices to transform management education and provide a valuable foundation for further research and application in diverse educational contexts.

5 Implications for Teaching

The findings of this study underscore the transformative potential of integrating a problem-oriented approach and cognitive conflict into teaching practices within the Outcome-Based Education (OBE) framework. The implementation of these strategies in the "Principles of Management" course demonstrated their effectiveness in enhancing critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and the practical application of theoretical concepts. These insights carry significant implications for educators, curriculum designers, and policymakers seeking to innovate and improve the quality of management education.

One key implication is the value of aligning teaching methods with real-world challenges to bridge the gap between academic learning and professional practice. The use of case studies, simulations, and collaborative projects allows students to engage with scenarios that closely mirror the complexities of contemporary management. This not only prepares students for future careers but also makes the learning process more relevant and engaging. Educators should consider incorporating similar activities into their courses to provide students with practical, hands-on experiences that reinforce theoretical knowledge.

The introduction of cognitive conflict as a pedagogical tool has broader applications beyond the "Principles of Management" course. By challenging students to confront and resolve conflicting perspectives or dilemmas, cognitive conflict stimulates deeper reflection and promotes the development of adaptive thinking. This approach can be adapted to other disciplines where critical analysis and decision-making are essential, such as law, engineering, or healthcare management. However, instructors should be prepared to provide guidance and support to help students navigate the discomfort and uncertainty often associated with cognitive conflict, ensuring that it becomes a constructive rather than overwhelming experience.

The study also highlights the importance of fostering a collaborative and inclusive classroom environment. Group projects and discussions were found to be effective in encouraging peer learning and the exchange of diverse viewpoints. However, ensuring equitable participation in group activities remains a challenge. Educators can address this by establishing clear roles and responsibilities within teams, using peer evaluations to promote accountability, and offering facilitation techniques to manage group dynamics effectively.

Another critical implication is the need for ongoing professional development for instructors to implement innovative teaching strategies successfully. The design and delivery of problem-oriented and cognitive conflict-based activities require a high level of preparation, adaptability, and skill in facilitating discussions. Institutions should invest in training programs that equip educators with the tools and knowledge needed to adopt these approaches effectively. Sharing best practices and encouraging collaboration among educators can also help create a supportive community of practice.

Finally, this study underscores the importance of continuous feedback and assessment to refine teaching strategies. Collecting data on student performance and engagement provides valuable insights into what works and what needs improvement. Educators should integrate mechanisms for regular feedback, such as surveys, reflective journals, and peer observations, to adapt their methods to the evolving needs of their students.

In conclusion, the integration of problem-oriented learning and cognitive conflict into the OBE framework offers a powerful model for enhancing teaching and learning in management education. By fostering critical thinking, real-world problem-solving, and adaptive skills, these strategies prepare students for the challenges of a rapidly changing professional landscape. As educators and institutions strive to innovate, the findings of this study provide actionable insights for creating more dynamic, effective, and student-centered learning environments.

6 Conclusion

This study demonstrates the transformative potential of integrating a problem-oriented approach and cognitive conflict into the teaching of the "Principles of Management" course under the Outcome-Based Education (OBE) framework. By redesigning the course to emphasize real-world challenges and fostering critical engagement through cognitive dissonance, the study achieved significant improvements in students' learning outcomes. Quantitative analysis revealed enhanced critical thinking, problem-solving, and knowledge application skills, while qualitative data provided rich insights into how students internalized and applied management concepts through these innovative teaching strategies.

The findings underscore the effectiveness of using real-world scenarios, such as case studies, simulations, and collaborative projects, to bridge the gap between theory and practice. These methods not only made the learning experience more engaging but also equipped students with the practical competencies needed for contemporary managerial roles. Cognitive conflict, introduced through challenging scenarios and debates, further enriched the learning process by encouraging students to question assumptions, reconcile diverse perspectives, and develop a deeper understanding of complex issues.

Despite these successes, the study also highlighted challenges, including the initial discomfort experienced by students when confronted with cognitive conflict and the difficulties in managing group dynamics in collaborative activities. These challenges point to the need for careful facilitation, clear guidelines, and instructor support to ensure that these innovative methods are both effective and inclusive.

The implications of this study extend beyond the "Principles of Management" course, offering valuable lessons for educators in other disciplines. By aligning teaching practices with real-world applications and encouraging critical reflection, educators can foster the skills and mindsets needed for success in an increasingly complex professional landscape. The findings also emphasize the importance of ongoing professional development for instructors and the continuous refinement of teaching strategies based on student feedback and performance data.

In conclusion, the integration of problem-oriented learning and cognitive conflict within the OBE framework represents a powerful approach to transforming management education. By creating a dynamic, student-centered learning environment, this approach not only enhances academic outcomes but also prepares students for the multifaceted challenges of modern management. As institutions and educators seek to innovate and improve the quality of education, the insights from this study provide a valuable foundation for further research and application in diverse educational contexts.

Funding

This article is a research outcome of the project titled "Research on the 'Internal Expansion and External Extension' Model of Cultural Governance in Private Universities for Innovation and Entrepreneurship Practices" (Project Number: CANFZG22323), funded by the 2022 Annual Planning Project of the China Association for Non-Government Education.

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