

Towards the Development of Theoretical Propositions in Innovations in Women's Business Education

Frederick A. Halcon

Abstract—This research paper stems as a culmination of several articles presented by the author in the field of innovations in women's business education. As a fitting conclusion to two case studies employing a qualitative research method, the researcher generated four (4) theoretical propositions that may be explored by future researchers interested in the same field of study. For this article, the researcher dwelled on the development of the four theoretical propositions that were evident in the practices of both institutions of higher learning for women who interested in the field of business. The realm of innovations in women's business education is governed by the following, as shown in the Halcon's Model of Innovations in Women's Business Education: (1) the teaching of subjects that cater to the interests of women; (2) the sharing of know-how of industry practitioners; (3) the school's vision and mission statements and; (4) the adoption of information and communication technology. The methodology utilized in this paper by the lead researcher is drawn from Eisenhardt (1989) and Yin (2003).

Keywords—business education, case study, innovations, theoretical propositions

I. INTRODUCTION

This paper is essentially a culmination of the various papers written by the researcher concerning innovations in women's business education. The said papers were presented in local and international conferences held in the Philippines and Malaysia. The goal of this paper is to bring into fruition theoretical propositions which may be empirically tested by interested researchers in the same field.

The main motivation for this research paper stemmed from the idea that women in the Philippines have come a long way from the traditional homemakers they once were to dynamic business leaders in the workplace and in the industry.

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Women in the Philippines have also taken on managerial roles in various industries. Two women's colleges in Metro Manila, namely Assumption College and St. Scholastica's College are offering business courses to interested young women who aspire to become agents of social change through practicing socially responsible methods in business. Both schools are members of the Consortium of Women's Colleges, which is collectively known as CWC. Both schools offer programs such as management, entrepreneurship, marketing and the like. The said programs are lodged under the Milleret School of Business and Management for Women (MSBMW) for Assumption College and under the School of Business (formerly known as School of Commerce) in St. Scholastica's College.

The researcher presented his data gathering instrument which consisted of questions forming a semi-structured interview guide in the 6th International Qualitative Research Conference (IQRC) last November 2011 held in Putrajaya, Malaysia. The said conference was organized by the Qualitative Research Association of Malaysia (QRAM). In January 2012, initial findings concerning the two schools, particularly an in-depth and critical analysis of their vision and mission statements, were presented in the International Conference on Business, Entrepreneurship and Management (ICBEM) in Manila, Philippines, which was organized by San Beda College. The initial findings concerning the innovative practices of the School of Business/Commerce of St. Scholastica's College Manila were presented in April 2013 in the International Accounting and Business Conference (IABC) held in Johor Bahru, Malaysia. At this point, it is important to highlight that all researches utilized the case study method as an approach in research.

Having amassed a critical amount of related literature and data, these findings can be consolidated to form theoretical propositions which may serve as a model that can be empirically tested in the future. It is assumed by the researcher that innovations are needed by business schools in order to remain relevant in the changing times. In addition to this, innovations are important for school administrators in crafting strategies to make learning and discovering business go beyond what is written in textbooks and other reference material. This paper also draws its research motivation from Yin (2003) which encouraged the use of the case study method in studying innovations in education as well as Eisenhardt

(1989) who suggested the idea of using the case study method in theory building. Eisenhardt (1989) also stated that the creation of theories that stemmed from case study research as “*novel, testable and empirically valid*”.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In this article, the lead researcher seeks to answer the research problem: *What theoretical propositions can be developed concerning innovations in women’s business education by using a qualitative research method with two women’s colleges in Metro Manila serving as units of the case?*

III. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Educators of business courses and program administrators. This paper is of primary significance to lecturers, professors or educators of various business courses or subjects who wish to explore the use of innovative ways of teaching young women the fundamentals of commerce. Furthermore, administrators of these programs in business may wish to explore the incorporation of innovations in their course offerings or curricula to make them more relevant to the needs and interests of young women who wish to embark in the dynamic field of business in the future. As teachers, policy makers and managers of the school, they carry the responsibility of making business courses relevant to the changing times.

Researchers in the field of innovation and education. Since this research paper made use of the case study method and the qualitative approach to yield theoretical propositions, interested researchers in the field of innovation and education may explore testing the model presented in the latter part of this paper using metrics or quantitative methods to validate it.

IV. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

In line with the research problem, this paper aims:

- To consolidate the results of the case studies done by the researcher concerning two women’s colleges in Metro Manila particularly their schools of business
- To generate and propose theoretical propositions emerging from the qualitative data gathered by the researcher in the said schools
- To present theoretical propositions concerning the innovations practiced by the schools of business of these two women’s colleges that may be empirically tested by future researchers who are interested in the same field

V. RESEARCH DESIGN & METHODOLOGY USED

The table below shows the description of the cases studied by the researcher, the research problem, the various data sources, the investigators and the output of this study.

TABLE I
OVERVIEW OF THE CASE STUDY AND DELIVERABLES OF THE RESEARCH

Description of Case	Research Problem	Data Sources	Output
<i>Assumption</i> <i>College – San Lorenzo, Makati (Milleret School of Business and Management for Women)</i>	<i>-Developing theoretical propositions -Innovations in the delivery of business education for young women</i>	<i>-Archives -Direct observation and participation</i>	<i>-Identification of various innovations in the delivery of business education for women -Development of a model or framework</i>
<i>St. Scholastica’s College, Manila (School of Business, formerly called School of Commerce)</i>		<i>-Semi-structured interviews</i>	<i>concerning the innovations in the teaching of business courses for young women</i>

This article is essentially a culmination of the cases studied by the researcher in past years. It attempts to synthesize the results concerning the innovations practiced by the women’s colleges, specifically their Schools of Business or Commerce.

To increase the reliability and validity of the research, the lead researcher utilized a triangulation process as far as the data sources were concerned. Triangulation is a process used in the social sciences. The three data sources utilized are: (1) archive analysis; (2) semi-structured interviews; and (3) direct observation and participation. For the archive analysis, the lead researcher examined, grouped and investigated several office documents sourced from the two schools. For the semi-structured interviews, the researcher interviewed faculty members and administrators from both schools. These interviews were then transcribed by the research assistant. From the transcript of the interviews, the lead researcher clustered the responses of the interviewees to identify similar responses and emerging themes. A total of thirteen (13) faculty members, administrators or lecturers were interviewed from both schools. As part of the qualitative research methodology, these emerging themes must have supporting evidences from other sources of data. The output of this research is a model or a framework concerning the innovations in women’s business education practiced by these schools. As mentioned earlier, researchers interested in the same field may opt to empirically test the model in the future. They may create metrics by which innovation in education can be measured.

As for the research approach, the lead researcher utilized the case study method. In this method, the lead researcher described patterns and events concerning the delivery of business education in the two schools mentioned. Patterns or events discussed in case studies are suggested to be examined in an in-depth manner as suggested by Edralin (2000). Salkind (2009) described case study research as highly detailed and involve rich descriptions. He also supported the idea that the case study method could take time to finish but it can yield a wealth of details and insights. This idea is supported by Leedy and Ormrod (2013) as they described this same method as a qualitative approach where “*a particular individual, program, or event is studied in depth for a defined period of time*”.

VI. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Given the results of the semi-structured interviews, as supported by the archives of both schools and the lead researcher's observation and participation, the following framework is proposed as a model of innovations in women's business education:

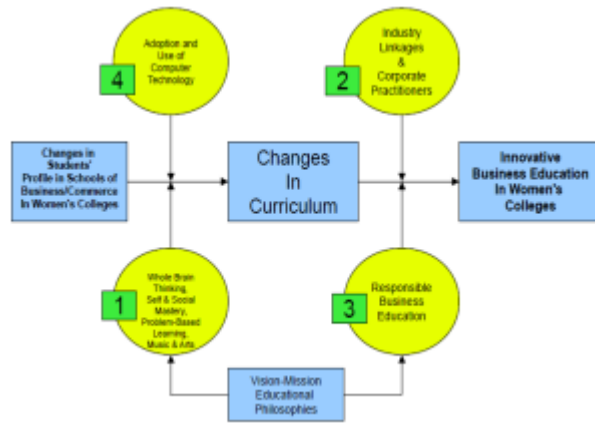


Fig. 1 Halcon's Model of Innovations in Business Education for Women's Colleges

The model above suggests that changes in the curriculum form the heart and soul of innovation, thus its place in the center of the diagram. This supports the idea that innovation is essentially dynamic and never static. Changes in the profiles of students help catalyze innovation as schools need to keep themselves abreast with demographic changes as well as changes in the business landscape.

As suggested by the various data sources, the women's colleges studied encourage Whole Brain Thinking (WBT), Self & Social Mastery (SSM), Problem Based Learning (PBL) as well as Music and Arts in their curricula as seen as in the above model. WBT encourages students to use both hemispheres – left and right brain, showing flexibility in thinking styles. SSM, on the other hand lets students to think creatively, use their intuition, develop their empathy, communicate well and develop their potential to reach self-actualization. PBL is an approach in which students are given a problem trigger, which is usually, ambiguous. The students are then expected to react to this problem trigger by developing and proposing solutions to such. Thus, theoretical proposition #1 is given below:

Proposition No. 1: Innovations in the curriculum are made by the administrators of the schools as they take into account the changing profiles of their students.

Based on the wealth of qualitative data amassed by the lead researcher and his assistant, there is evidence suggesting that both schools of business employ part-time faculty members who are industry practitioners. The idea behind this is that they complement the business concepts and theories of the full-time faculty members through the sharing of their practical and technical know-how in their respective fields of specialization, be it marketing, finance, operations and other related fields. Thus, theoretical proposition #2 is given below:

Proposition No. 2: Academic linkages are established, strengthened and nurtured when industry practitioners become part of the faculty line-up of a school.

Both units of the case study concretely highlight their vision and mission statements as guideposts by which the academic affairs of students are conducted. Thus, both schools drive the idea that their students are catalysts for social transformation having obtained their education from these institutions. Interestingly, both schools are managed by congregations of nuns: Assumption College is overseen by the Religious of the Assumption (R.A.), a French congregation, while St. Scholastica's College is overseen by the Order of St. Benedict (OSB), a German congregation. Both schools emphasize ethics and social responsibility in their curricula and in student activities, whether academic or otherwise. Students are also active in religious and spiritual formations. There is also a consciousness that all school activities should be aligned with the respective schools' vision and mission statements. Thus, theoretical proposition #3 is given below:

Proposition No. 3: Responsible business is emphasized in the curriculum and activities of the business schools of the women's colleges, given their respective Vision and Mission statements.

Finally, evidences from various data sources also show that these women's colleges particularly their schools of business utilize information and communication technology in their course offerings. It is assumed that the use of these technologies will help prepare students for business as they study programs or computer applications that are used in running and managing a business. Thus, theoretical proposition #4 is given below.

Proposition No. 4: Women's colleges specifically their schools of business/commerce, adopt to changing technology to make business education more timely and relevant to the needs of the students and the industry.

VII. TRIANGULATION TEST

Triangulation of constructs used in the aforementioned theoretical propositions was also conducted to ensure that the said statements are reliable and valid. In this case, the constructs should be seen in the data sources together with supporting evidences. As mentioned, the three data sources were utilized throughout the case study. To pass the triangulation test, each construct must be present in all data sources and at the same time, there should be sample evidence present in the case study database. This test is conducted to increase the reliability and validity of the results of the research. The table below shows the four (4) different constructs which were carried forward as theoretical propositions. The three questions that need to be answered affirmatively so as to pass the triangulation test are as follows: (1) Was the construct stated in the semi-structured interviews? (2) Was it recorded in the field notes? (3) Was evidence present in the archives?

Sample evidences for each construct were also enumerated in the last column. These evidences range from simple office documents to photographs documenting school activities.

TABLE II
THE TRIANGULATION TEST OF CONSTRUCTS IN THE THEORETICAL PROPOSITIONS

Construct	Was it stated in the semi-structured interviews? <i>(Interviews)</i>	Was it recorded in the field notes? <i>(Field Observation)</i>	Was evidence present in the archives? <i>(Archival Analysis)</i>	Sample Evidences
Curriculum Innovations -Whole Brain Thinking -Self & Social Mastery -Problem Based Learning -Music & Art	YES	YES	YES	-sample curricula -sample syllabi -photographs -teaching materials, aids and kits -photographs
Responsible Business -Theology and Social Responsibility -Vision & Mission statements	YES	YES	YES	-faculty manual -sample curricula -photographs -classroom activities -participation in religious formations -photographs
Academic Linkages -Industry practitioners are part of the faculty live-up	YES	YES	YES	-photographs -credentials of faculty members in sample curriculum vitae (CV)
Use and Adoption of Computer Technology -Information and communication technology are encouraged to be used in the delivery of subject matter	YES	YES	YES	-sample curricula -sample syllabi -photographs

VIII. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the theoretical propositions and methodology presented in the preceding section, it can be said that the case study method can be utilized to generate a theory that may be empirically tested by future researchers. It is recommended that future researchers may explore to further validate the theory by replicating a similar study or developing metrics by which innovations in education can be measured. This study also validates the suggestions made by Eisenhardt (1989) and Yin (2003) as far as qualitative data and the case study strategy are concerned. Though one drawback of the case study approach is that takes a considerable length of time to accomplish, it is interesting to note that this research approach yields rich insights to a particular phenomenon like innovations which is rarely studied by schools or institutions of learning. Innovations may eventually be a source of strength from which schools can use to attract more students to pursue business programs in the future.

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