BEHAVIORAL IDENTITY OF TOP EXECUTIVES IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS: THE COEXISTENCE THEORY

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	Purpose: This study paper's primary goal is to develop a theory that may be used to describe the behavioral identity that Higher Education Institutions' top management faces when switching between various university contexts. **Theoretical framework:** Cheek et al. (1994) defined identity orientation as the relative weight people give to different identity features or characteristics when defining who they are. Identity traits fall into three broadly distinct categories: personal, social, and collective. **Design/methodology/approach:** The study utilized a quantitative approach with a survey questionnaire distributed to 16 top executives in Public and Private Higher Education Institutions in Zamboanga del Norte, Philippines. Factor Analysis of maximum likelihood was the statistical tool used in this study. **Findings:** Results revealed that three co-existence theory factors were established: socio-cultural, intra-personal, and socio-collective factors. **Research, Practical & Social implications:** This study explains the implications of the behavioral identity of top executives and offers suggestions for further study. **Originality/value:** The author proposes a new theory that will add to the body of knowledge in the study of behavioral identity and guide further investigation of the three identified factors of the co-existence theory.

IDENTIDADE COMPORTAMENTAL DOS ALTOS EXECUTIVOS DAS INSTITUIÇÕES DE ENSINO SUPERIOR: A TEORIA DA COEXISTÊNCIA

RESUMO

Objetivo: O objetivo principal deste estudo é desenvolver uma teoria que possa ser usada para descrever a identidade comportamental que a alta administração das Instituições de Ensino Superior enfrenta ao alternar entre vários contextos universitários.

Estrutura teórica: Cheek et al. (1994) definiram a orientação de identidade como o peso relativo que as pessoas dão às diferentes características ou características de identidade ao definir quem elas são. As características de identidade dividem-se em três categorias amplamente distintas: pessoal, social e coletiva.

Design/metodologia/abordagem: O estudo utilizou uma abordagem quantitativa com um questionário de pesquisa distribuído a 16 altos executivos em Instituições de Ensino Superior Públicas e Privadas em Zamboanga del Norte, Filipinas. A análise fatorial de máxima probabilidade foi a ferramenta estatística utilizada neste estudo.

Descobertas: Os resultados revelaram que três fatores da teoria da coexistência foram estabelecidos: fatores sócio-culturais, intra-pessoais e sócio-coletivos.

Pesquisa, implicações práticas e sociais: Este estudo explica as implicações da identidade comportamental dos altos executivos e oferece sugestões para um estudo mais aprofundado.

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Originalidade/valor: O autor propõe uma nova teoria que acrescentará ao corpo de conhecimento no estudo da identidade comportamental e orientará uma investigação mais aprofundada dos três fatores identificados da teoria da coexistência.
Palavras-chave: Identidade Comportamental, Principais Executivos, Instituições de Ensino Superior.

IDENTIDAD CONDUCTUAL DE LOS ALTOS DIRECTIVOS DE LAS INSTITUCIONES DE ENSEÑANZA SUPERIOR: LA TEORÍA DE LA COEXISTENCIA

RESUMEN
Propósito: El objetivo principal de este trabajo de estudio es desarrollar una teoría que pueda ser utilizada para describir la identidad conductual a la que se enfrentan los altos directivos de las Instituciones de Educación Superior cuando cambian entre diversos contextos universitarios.
Marco teórico: Cheek et al. (1994) definieron la orientación de la identidad como el peso relativo que las personas otorgan a diferentes rasgos o características de identidad a la hora de definir quiénes son. Los rasgos de identidad se dividen en tres categorías ampliamente diferenciadas: personal, social y colectiva.
Diseño/metodología/enfoque: El estudio utilizó un enfoque cuantitativo con un cuestionario de encuesta distribuido a 16 altos ejecutivos de instituciones de enseñanza superior públicas y privadas de Zamboanga del Norte (Filipinas). El análisis factorial de máxima verosimilitud fue la herramienta estadística utilizada en este estudio.
Resultados: Los resultados revelaron que se establecieron tres factores de la teoría de la coexistencia: factores socioculturales, intrapersonales y sociocolectivos.
Investigación, implicaciones prácticas y sociales: Este estudio explica las implicaciones de la identidad conductual de los altos ejecutivos y ofrece sugerencias para futuros estudios.
Originalidad/valor: El autor propone una nueva teoría que se sumará al cuerpo de conocimientos en el estudio de la identidad conductual y orientará la investigación ulterior de los tres factores identificados de la teoría de la coexistencia.
Palabras clave: Identidad Conductual, Altos Ejecutivos, Instituciones de Educación Superior.

INTRODUCTION

The context of Higher Education is frequently referred to as particularly complex in terms of structure. It must deal with various markets and regulations, employ staff on short- and long-term contracts, and have a culture influenced by a variety of academic and corporate cultures of performance, norms, and values (Alajoutsijärvi & Kettunen, 2016; Bolden et al., 2009; Middlehurst et al., 2009; Gjerde, & Alves, 2020). Higher education includes all post-secondary instruction, training, and advice on conducting research at educational institutions like universities that state universities have approved. Producing leaders for both the public and private sectors has been an achievement.

Many studies have highlighted the need for top leaders in a business to demonstrate "executive presence," which includes boldness and self-assurance when handling challenging challenges. They continue to be cheerful when put under pressure to maintain an optimistic outlook in the face of obstacles. Executives interact strategically and cooperatively (Williams et al., 2010).

The priorities of top executives are their organization and its people. The executives design organizational structures that specify roles and responsibilities and pinpoint the

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resources required to accomplish mission goals to promote mission accomplishment. They consult with others' expertise and involve them in the process as they make executive-level choices. When faced with important choices, they must take prompt action. Since every organization consists of people with various identities, personalities, attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, goals, aspirations, and abilities, it is important to observe how people behave.

Leary & Tangney (2011) explain that as people gain a sense of self, such as an identity as a toolmaker, they start to care about their job, consider how others would perceive it, take pleasure in their achievements, and strive for greatness. In other words, the capacity for self-reflection enabled the pursuit of long-term, independent personal objectives.

Cheek et al. (1994) defined identity orientation as the relative weight people give to different identity features or characteristics when defining who they are. According to a component analysis of survey items conducted by the authors, identity traits fall into three broadly distinct categories: personal, social, and collective.

Identity can refer to an enduring aspect of selfhood in one instance, a collection of interpersonal processes in another, and the aggregate-level outcome of political action in a third. Its usage can change as it crosses disciplinary boundaries (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000). They assert that identity "is too vague to serve the demands of social analysis (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000; Ashmore et al., 2004).

This study addresses what it means to be genuinely top management identity, that is, who am I, and what role, that is, what should I do at this top? It tackles the experienced top-levelness missing in the top-management literature. Understanding how managers negotiate and make sense of this top-levelness could develop the theory surrounding the top-management job and identity, which has not been thoroughly studied.

The researcher in this study concentrated on the top management, which can be headed by a president, vice-president, or campus administrator - a specific representation of top managers in professions. These leaders are in charge of fairly sizable teams, frequently more than 300 human resources. Deans, Heads and Directors typically surround them, and other employees like middle and junior managers who are at least three hierarchical levels below the top and, therefore, must look both up and down.

Hence, this study paper's primary goal is to develop a theory that may be used to describe the behavioral identity that Higher Education Institutions' top management faces when switching between various university contexts.

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LITERATURE REVIEW

Like many identity theorists, Brewer & Gardner (2006) conflate the terms identity and identification, implicitly treating them as synonyms for one's sense of self. However, there is value in differentiating the terms. According to Ashmore et al. (2004), the social science literature makes contrasts between collective identity and other words that are closely similar such as social identity, personal identity, relational identity, and social roles.

Personal Identity

Personal identity is a collection of labels that people internalize to describe who they are. Internalization, the identification or attribution of these personal characteristics to the self, is frequently enmeshed in a specific social context and affirmed during social contact (Deaux, 1996; Snow & Anderson, 1987; Roberts & Dutton, 2009).

Although people frequently believe that they and others are distinct individuals, there are numerous circumstances in which they feel, think, and behave as group members. This can bring out the best or the worst in individuals, such as when they get motivated to assist their fellow citizens who are in need or when they act hostilely against others just because they belong to a different religion or racial group (Ellemers, 2012).

According to Steffens et al. (2021), who referenced Ellemers (2012) and Reicher et al. (2010), personal identity can be described in terms of an eccentric mix of traits that make them a singular person (as "I" or "me"). According to research on leader identity, leadership is a process pushed by people who have a strong sense of "myself as a leader" within themselves (Haslam et al., 2022).

Thus, the individual must be motivated, and his connection with the company must be fostered by senior management to offer a good work environment that promotes and develops competencies in material and moral ways and encourages and maintains them (Mohammed & Rashid, 2023).

Relational Identity

Relational identity is the nature of role occupants enact their respective roles vis-a-vis each other. A role is fundamentally one's role relationship, such as manager-subordinate and coworker-coworker (Brewer & Gardner, 2006). According to Hinkley et al. (1996), the relational self-theory postulates one's emotions and actions when meeting new individuals, mainly reminding themselves of previous and ongoing interactions. The authors said that being around someone who reminds you of your significant other triggers certain self-beliefs and

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alters your perspective on yourself more than being around someone who doesn't remind you of your significant other.

According to Sachit and Himyari (2022), relationship dimensions lead to the creation of value within the group and affect the activities and outcomes of people within the university organization, making it the most versatile and successful without evaluating efforts or wasting material.

Social Identity

Henri Tajfel was the creator of the social identity theory. After several decades of scholarly investigation into the relationship between the individual and society and the formation of a person's social and personal identities, social identity theory (SIT) was developed (Baker, 2012). Social identity literature makes understanding some of the psychological processes underlying group identification actions easier. It refers to the socially shared concept of what it is to be a group member, and this often involves stereotypes of in and out-groups with each other as well as an appreciation of the relative status of those groups (Van Zomeren, Postmes, and Spears, 2008; Huy, 2011).

According to Gjerde, & Alves (2020), quoted Hogg et al., 2003, the cornerstone of effective leadership is a shared social identity with the group, and the leader is viewed as embodying group qualities. Although Haslam et al. (2017) investigation, social identity research demonstrates that leadership is a process of group identity creation, it has not yet looked at how leaders might manage group identities at work. Social identity significantly influences how people's perceived attitudes and behaviors relate to one another (Terry & Hogg, 1996, 2000; Hogg, Abrams, & Brewer, 2017).

Moreover, Tajfel (1981), Tajfel & Turner (1986), and Brown et al. (1992) advocated the social identity theory, which was a product of social psychology, according to Zhou et al. (2008). It examines how group affiliation influences personal identity and emphasizes two components. One is how social categorization, in-group preference, social comparison, and social favoring affect one's sense of self-worth. The other is the variety of impacts on group membership, attitudes, and interactions of particular cross-cultural diversity (such as individualism-collectivism).

Collective Identity

People's readiness to follow is severely hampered by a profound lack of collective identity awareness since, in the absence of such awareness. For a leader, it is challenging, if not

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impossible, to actively promote the needs of the group and its members (Haslam et al., 2017). Collective identification encompasses moral and emotional ties and a person's cognitive and shared sense of identity with a group or community (Polletta & Jasper, 2001; Smith, 2013).

According to McDonald (2002), "collective identity" became one of the orthodoxies of the sociology of social movements throughout the 1980s. He goes a step further, contending that the concept of collective identity is flawed and that scholars should abandon the paradigm of collective identity in favor of conceptualizing collective action as "the public presentation of self." He views the autonomous activists' emphasis on individual expression and rejection of representative politics as proof that academics explore what might be an emergent paradigm of contemporary social movement. Moreover, one built on fluidity rather than solidarity and the shared experience of self instead of group identity.

According to Mellucci (1995), collective identity is a network of dynamic relationships, and he emphasizes the significance of the emotional component participation of activists. It entails the capacity to perceive those "others" and to distinguish one's (collective) self from them. The person whose identity is at stake defines collective identity in terms of a personal assertion or acceptance (Deaux, 1996; Ashmore et al., 2004).

Cultural Identity

According to the research by Schwartz, Dunkel, and Waterman (2009), cultural identity is heavily founded on collectivism and fundamentalist commitment to cultural or religious ideals. One of the most crucial aspects of the diversity of top management teams (TMTs) is cultural diversity, which is defined here as the representation of people with clearly diverse group connections of cultural significance based on race, ethnicity, and nationality (Cox, 1993; Ponomareva, 2022).

Kosmitzki's analysis (1996) on his study showed that although individuals of various ethnic groups within a nation-state may share elements of the larger national culture, it's possible that they do not share those elements of their culture based on ethnicity. National identity and ethnic identification can be viewed as several levels of cultural identity.

MATERIAL AND METHODOLOGY

This study utilized the descriptive survey as its main research design through a modified questionnaire. The purposive sampling method is utilized, considering that the respondents were the top executives in public and private higher educational institutions in Zamboanga del Norte, Philippines. They were either the president or vice president, campus

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administrator, and academic dean of their respective Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). There was one respondent every HEIs. They were given a questionnaire to determine their behavioral identity in the institutions where they connected.

This study focused on the 16 top executives, eight female and eight male, and 75 percent whose age was above the 46 years old bracket. 3, or 18.75 percent were Dapitanons; 5, or 31.25 percent, were Dipolognons; and 4, or 25 percent, were Cebuano and did not specify their ethnicity, respectively. There were 3, or 18.75 percent, college graduates or bachelor's degree holders; 5, or 31.25 percent, have completed graduate education, and 8, or 50.00 percent, have completed post-graduate education.

The researcher analyzed the importance of the top executives' behavior in the HEIs. The five (5) constructs of behavioral identity, namely: personal, relational, social, collective, and cultural identity, were rated from 1, "Not important to my sense of who I am," to 5, "very important to my sense of who I am." The data were manually tallied and tabulated. After that, the data were treated statistically using frequency count, percentage, mean, and factor analysis of maximum likelihood using the *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software.*

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As presented in Table 1 are the data on the respondents' ratings on behavioral identity. The data in the table shows that collective identity is very important to the respondents, which was proven by the mean of 3.85. This means that generally, the respondents value their group's identity as a member of it. The identity of the group they belong to is very important to them since this would also tell the kind of member they are. If a group has been perceived as a good group, usually, those affiliated with such group enjoy the same reputation due to the concept of collective identity.

According to Polletta and Jasper (2001, quoted by Smith, 2013), collective identification encompasses moral and emotional ties and a person's cognitive and shared sense of identity with a group or community. According to Snow (2001), a social group can only be considered to have a collective identity when it is "infused" or imbued with a shared sense of affectivity and morality.

Next, the mean for social identity, which is also very important, was rated equivalent to 3.78. This suggests that the respondents place a high value on their social identities since it allows them to be recognized by their friends, peers, and other social network members. The element of a person's self-concept formed from perceived social identities is called a social identity belonging to an appropriate social group. Terry and Hogg (1996, 2000), cited by Hogg,

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Abrams, and Brewer (2017), emphasized that social identity significantly influences how people's perceived attitudes and behaviors relate to one another.

Table 1 – Behavioral Identity of Top Executives in Higher Education Institutions

Variables	Average Weighted Mean	Equivalent Description
Personal Identity	3.74	Very important
Relational Identity	3.53	Very important
Social Identity	3.78	Very important
Collective Identity	3.85	Very important
Cultural Identity	3.67	Very important
Grand Mean	3.71	Very important

Source: Prepared by the author (2022).

The constructs of behavioral identity are shown in Table 2, analyzed using the factor analysis approach. According to the results of the maximum likelihood non-interrupted factor analysis, social identity (0.349) and cultural identity (1.030) had the two most significant factor loadings in the first factor. Personal identity (1.230) and relational identity (0.986) requested the largest factor loading on the second factor. In contrast, the third factor had the highest factor load, with social identity (0.816) and collective identity (0.436).

Table 2 – Factor Analysis on the Behaviorial Identity Indicators of Top Executives in Higher Education Institutions

Variables	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Personal Identity	-0.010	**1.230**	-0.482
Relational Identity	0.013	**0.986**	-0.187
Social Identity	**0.349**	-1.00	**0.816**
Collective Identity	-0.024	-0.00	**0.436**
Cultural Identity	**1.030**	0.000	-0.258

Source: Prepared by the author (2022).

In light of the findings, the researcher developed the following terminology to describe the behavior of executives in higher education institutions. For social and cultural behavior, the term derived from the factor is socio-cultural. For personal and relational identity, the behavior is termed intra-relational. On the other hand, the nomenclature given to such factor is socio-collective behavior on the third factor where social and collective behaviors were observed.

Factor 1: Socio-cultural Factor

The sociocultural theory explains how cultural, institutional, and historical differences affect individuals think and behave. As a result, the sociocultural perspective focuses on how participation in social interactions and culturally sanctioned activities affects psychological development (Scott & Palincsar, 2013). According to Klar (2012), principals are urged to

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strengthen schools' organizational capacities by spreading leadership and launching professional communities to meet accountability standards.

In sociocultural theory, people from individualistic cultures place a premium on independence and self-sufficiency. They belong to various groups and are less likely to depend on them. They will prioritize their financial gain or loss and experience guilt rather than a shame if they fail in their goals. After a certain age, they stop interfering in their children's lives and emphasize the growth of independence (Hui & Triandis, 1986; Gilani, 2005).

For Lee (2007), the sociocultural theory has also challenged the promotion of instructional strategies that could address inequalities in the current educational system. A look at literacy training from the teachers can better comprehend the situational complexity of literacy practice using a sociocultural theory lens. According to this viewpoint, educators would view literacy as a tool to be used in particular circumstances. As a result, the individual would be taught how to negotiate numerous forms of literacy for use in various contexts. Elenkov & Manev (2005) study revealed that sociocultural context directly influences leadership.

Factor 2: Intra-relational Factor

Relationships are significant because they enable people to grow in their sense of self. The aspect of a person's self-concept, known as the relational self, is made up of sentiments and beliefs about oneself that emerge from interactions with other people. In other words, one's past relationships have an impact on their current feelings and behaviors. Accordingly, the relational self-theory postulates that experiences with new people, particularly those that remind one of the other people in their life, impact one's feelings and behaviors. According to studies, encounters with people who resemble significant others trigger particular self-beliefs and alter one's current perspective on themselves more than encounters with people who do not resemble significant others (Hinkley & Andersen, 1996).

According to Stoetzer (2010), at work, interpersonal relationships refer to the regular interactions between coworkers, managers, and staff. These relationships are an inherent workplace component and are typically positive and productive, but they may also be a source of conflict and annoyance. It can describe interpersonal interactions at work from either an individualistic or an organizational perspective, and the individual perspective describes how each person assesses the connections.

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Factor 3: Socio-collective Factor

According to Subiyantoro et al. (2017) study, the sociocultural aspect of society tends to be more socially collective than professional. The artisans consequently have less time to handle business management competently. For Jamaludin et al. (2012), socio-collective learning is founded on the idea that individuals have dormant creative potential through their inclinatory affinities when they engage in groups. At the same time, conscious of their social peers, their dormant potential may be exposed and further developed.

The study by Figueiredo et al. (2019) showed that social educators believe interventions have a good impact, mainly on indicators at the individual level, indicating the projects' limits at a collective level. Mere & Ngarawula (2015) said that humans engage in socio-collective thinking, which involves living in harmony with others in the group, the tribe, and the community. The signs of social-collective thinking manifest because other people are important. Only one will only be meaningful if he participates in social activities on a general level since he can survive in the community. Based on Keo's theory, the social collective's thoughts and feelings, all citizens are influenced by kinship, marriage, and tribalism to think socially collectively and in unison.

The Proposed Coexistence Theory

The Theory of Coexistence was then put forth in this study. The fundamental tenet of the coexistence hypothesis is that no one person exists in isolation. To exist and survive, one needs the other. The others are interacting with one another. Additionally, executives envision a healthy coexistence within the institution with development or other cooperative efforts for the institution's improvement. Many business leaders are prepared to contribute to creating a link between all spiritual views, lifestyles, and guiding principles. They are open to and accepting of everyone's uniqueness.

This implies that a leader cannot carry out his supervisory duties inside an organization without the assistance of his subordinates. Similarly, subordinates require a leader to help them achieve their company goals. Furthermore, a team effort between the management and the employees will help a firm succeed. Organizations are fundamentally driven and inspired by leadership. As the ones in command, they engage directly with the general workforce and manage the organization's business. Leaders inform staff members about the organization's objectives, visions, and ideas. They also manage and practice the organization's policies and procedures and have the last say in hiring, firing, and promotion (Jhing-Zou et al., 2010).

It is a fact that leaders may occasionally receive adverse comments, feedback, and criticism from their staff members. However, leaders should view this favorably, as it helps them strike a better balance in their management, supervision, and leadership.

CONCLUSION

The researcher has concluded that all top executives exhibit collective identity based on the study's findings. By analyzing the behavior of the heads of offices and applying the coexistence theory that this study suggests, behavior identity can be categorized. This study explains the implications of behavioral identity characteristics and offers suggestions for further study. The author suggests that future researchers study behavioral identity when grouped according to their profile. The researcher also suggests further research in other contexts, considering the limitation of sample size. Lastly, suggests utilizing the coexistence theory that the study proposes.

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