

# Symptoms of Ideology? Towards an Inquiry of the OBE and ChatGPT

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**Abstract:** ChatGPT has gained a practical importance in aiding students with academic tasks, i.e., writing essays, synthesizing difficult theories, and generating ideas for class related projects. Recent observations and analysis of academics suggests that students rely significantly on artificial intelligence platforms like ChatGPT to ease the academic pressures of having to read long articles and original works, formulate and write essays for subjects that require submissions of reflective and argumentative papers. The goal of this paper, however, is not to critique the impact of ChatGPT in the classroom, but to argue that AI interfaces and platforms like this confirms Louis Althusser's thesis that education as an ideological state apparatus (ISA) turns to a mechanism that reproduces the mode of production. Althusser contends that education legitimizes and reproduces the consumerist social formation. As can be known, this thrust could be discerned from the direction of the Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) which most educational systems adapted around the world for practical purpose of ensuring quality graduates. For Althusser, besides the need to "manufacture consent" among the people, the means of production has to be secured which is accomplished by "educating" and training the learner to eventually become inducted to the labor force. Thus, the students themselves are victimized by the relentless pursuit of reproducing workers to maintain capitalist interests. This work will, therefore, argue that given the thrust of education as objective or outcomes-based, the learner begins to perceive learning through the lenses of outcomes and achievements which overlooks the process of knowledge generation.

**Keywords:** Outcomes-Based Education, Ideological State Apparatus (ISA), ChatGPT, Artificial Intelligence

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## Introduction

In this work, I will investigate the role of the Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) of the Philippine educational system in relation to the emerging obsession of teachers and students alike in using ChatGPT and other Artificial Intelligence platforms. For one, the OBE is primarily concerned with the objective of shaping and producing graduates who are suited and prepared for the labor-force. Though the program claims to produce critical and ethical thinkers, its ultimate aim, I argue, is to advance the economic interest of the state. Without a doubt, this agenda will alleviate the country's economic capacities which will then be translated to better living conditions for its people. Therefore, OBE plays a critical role in the country's pursuit of socio-economic development. I argue, however, that though the OBE is an excellent model in producing workers and professionals, its approach to learning is problematic as it is domesticating and restrictive. In Louis Althusser's critique of education, he renders the school as an "Ideological State Apparatus", that is, an instrument of the state in legitimizing the dominance of capitalism which reproduces the means and relations of production. In other words, learners and graduates are merely perceived as means to produce wealth for capitalists and corporations. Again, students are trained and engineered to become suitable for the labor-force through pedagogy. This is exactly the position of Paulo Freire, one of the main proponents of critical pedagogy, who contends that the educational system under the control of the bourgeois class, works against the interest of the learners. This is because the learners' consciousness is domesticated and formed in such a way that they are conditioned to concede to the agenda of the dominant class. I claim that the OBE fits both Althusser and Freire's description of capitalistic pedagogy.

Given the direction of the OBE to promote a culture that encourages quantifiable achievements and results, ChatGPT could be perceived as a convenient tool in reaching these aims. In this manner, the hyper productive stance of contemporary society could also be perceived from the vantage point of objective-governed pedagogical system. Given the convenience of instant information that could make objective-based learning more efficient through Chat GPT, the learner's attitude towards learning is altered. Thus, this paper also speculates in the academia's dependence on ChatGPT given its ability to speed-up both administrative tasks and academic functions. In doing this, the work will be articulating two points, first, the Outcomes-Based Education policy in the Philippines and second, Paulo Freire and Louis Althusser's critique of education in relation to the OBE which will also cover a brief speculative discussion on ChatGPT and its potential impact in the learning process.

## Outcomes Based Education in the Philippines

Historically, OBE is the recent development of "evaluation" theorists like Ralph Tyler and Benjamin Bloom. In his work, *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction*, Tyler introduced a systematic method of evaluating the way in which educational objectives are taught and delivered. The process and findings of these systematic evaluations becomes the basis of changes in methodology and policies concerning the method and content of pedagogy. Some of the key questions that his school of thought answered concerns the purpose of certain programs and its goals and how such goals could be achieved effectively. Tyler, furthermore, emphasized the necessity of aligning the direction of objectives and assessments.<sup>2</sup> In relative

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<sup>2</sup> "Father of Evaluation – Know Who Is the Father of Evaluation Theory." n.d. Textbook. Accessed March 8, 2024. <https://testbook.com/articles/father-of-evaluation#:~:text=Tyler%20advocated%20for%20a%20systematic>.

parlance, Bloom's *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* categorizes various skills and abilities as indicator for knowledge. The original taxonomy, for instance, includes these categories: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.<sup>3</sup> While the most recent (2001) revision of this taxonomy would be expanded to seven categories: Remembering, Understanding, Applying, Analyzing, Evaluating, and Creating. In this manner, the way in which knowledge is delivered is not unidirectional, that is, pedagogy should not utilize a single method, but a variety of ways that will help the learner master each taxonomy. Instinctively, the increasing utilization of these pedagogical frameworks would reach the interest of the labor sector. Given the emerging need to improve the work force. It was in the 1980s when the educational systems worldwide reconstructed the curriculum in order to elevate the standards on science, mathematics, history, literature and other primary subjects.<sup>4</sup> Though the goal was to primarily improve the quality of education, a chief concern is the challenge of technological paradigm shifts. Thus, while the development of the job market is unstoppable, the learners who will then become future laborers would need to go through a shift of preparation as they enter the labor force. In this way, there is a gap in skills necessary to sustain the job market.<sup>5</sup> Given the direction of industries and later, the information age, learners would have to go through rigid evaluation to ensure the competitiveness of each graduate before they could enter the work force.

Presently, the Outcomes Based Education-thrust of most educational systems around the world including the Philippines, does not shift away from the direction of Tyler and Blooms. In practice, the principle is similar to Tyler and Blooms which as mentioned above emphasizes the mastery of the taxonomies. The earliest form of OBE could be traced back to the 1930s where around 300 colleges and 30 high schools restructured the traditional curriculum to emphasize and detail the necessary skills and abilities necessary to master learning and ultimately, become "effective adults".<sup>6</sup> The ultimate goal, therefore, is to equip the students with skills that the job market demands. This direction highlights the production of outcomes, that is, the learner becoming competitive and suitable for specific labor functions. In this manner, OBE plays a critical role in ensuring the efficacy of educational contents which, if implemented, will catapult the learner toward greater heights. In fact, studies show that through the implementation of OBE in higher educational institutions in the recent years, there are significant changes in the quality of human resources.<sup>7</sup> As can be known, the OBE has already been in action in the West, in particular, the United States since 1994 through the Educate America Act. Again, its thrust was to practically highlight the need for measurable objectives and learning outcomes which ensures the competitiveness of the student. Though currently, the

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<sup>3</sup> Armstrong, Patricia. 2010. "Bloom's Taxonomy." Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching. Vanderbilt University. 2010. <https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/blooms-taxonomy/>.

<sup>4</sup> Ravitch, Diane. 1990. "Education in the 1980'S: A Concern for 'Quality' (Opinion)." Education Week. January 10, 1990. <https://www.edweek.org/policy-politics/opinion-education-in-the-1980s-a-concern-for-quality/1990/01>.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> "Outcome-Based Education Outcome Based." 2023. Ct.gov. 2023. <https://cga.ct.gov/PS94/rpt%5Colr%5Chtm/94-R-0290.htm#:~:text=What%20is%20the%20definition%20of>.

<sup>7</sup> Asim, Hafiz Muhammad, Anthony Vaz, Ashfaq Ahmed, and Samreen Sadiq. 2021. "A Review on Outcome Based Education and Factors That Impact Student Learning Outcomes in Tertiary Education System." *International Education Studies* 14, no. 2 (January): 1. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ies.v14n2p1>.

United States have not been using a centralized program that utilizes “OBE”, the main direction remains – that is, to ensure student competitiveness through measurable evaluations. Given the demand of the global job market for competitiveness in various professions, OBE instinctively becomes the best shot to secure a country’s economic progress.

A review conducted in 2020 in Pakistan, for instance, highlights the importance of this thrust towards the economic development of countries implementing it.<sup>8</sup> The findings suggests that the OBE system addresses issues in student learning outcomes and what the student should have learned after a particular course. Though there are various points that needs to be improved such as language competencies, the system itself shows a promising approach towards pedagogy. Another study in Papua New Guinea looks into student outcomes as primary basis to “plan and prepare their programs and lessons”.<sup>9</sup> However, given certain inadequacies with the way in which the program was implemented, the OBE did not achieve its perceived ends. For instance, the inadequate teacher and student awareness concerning its implementation and the methods of pedagogy inclined to it as well as the vested interest of stakeholders towards the traditional educational setting which could be simply understood as psychological egoism. Yet, arguably, these are some of the challenges to the success of the OBE which could be considered noncritical in the theoretical viability of the OBE.

Now, the Philippines has implemented this direction when the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 was enacted, otherwise known as the K-12 program. A major shift in its educational practice, the Department of Education added two years into the traditional 10-year basic education. As can be known, the K-12 program highlights various academic and technological-vocational tracks that trains the student with point precision towards their potential college courses and professions. Intuitively, the direction of the shift was to make the Filipino graduates more competitive and employable globally. As the demands for the workforce increases foreign and domestic, the student needs to have certain competencies that will put them in a position of advantage in the labor market. Instinctively, in this manner, education becomes a means to economic development. This is not to say that the educational system solely focuses on the competitive advantage of enacting an OBE-based curricula, but it appears that the main thrust of the program like the K-12 program and the OBQA in the case of higher education, is to ensure that the student “becomes” what the learning objectives require. The CHED Memorandum No. 46, Series of 2012 states the major provisions and policies for quality assurance through the OBE. On the one hand, the document initially provides the rationale behind the measures of enhancing the quality assurance of higher educational institutions which is mainly geared towards “human development, productivity and global competitiveness”.<sup>10</sup> Section 2, on the other hand, articulates the general mission of the Philippine Higher education which will have to cited in verbatim to accurately describe its aims:

- A) To produce thoughtful graduates imbued with 1) values reflective of a humanist orientation (e.g. fundamental respect for others as human beings with intrinsic rights, cultural rootedness, an avocation to serve); 2) analytical and problem

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Contemporary, Png, and Studies. 2014. “Outcome-Based Education with Special Reference to the International Education Agency in PNG.” *DWU Research Journal* 20.  
[https://www.dwu.ac.pg/en/images/All\\_Attachements/Research%20Journals/vol\\_20/2014-V20-9\\_Asimi\\_Outcome-based\\_education\\_and\\_the\\_IEA.pdf](https://www.dwu.ac.pg/en/images/All_Attachements/Research%20Journals/vol_20/2014-V20-9_Asimi_Outcome-based_education_and_the_IEA.pdf).

<sup>10</sup> Commission on Higher Education. 2012. *Policy-Standard to Enhance Quality Assurance (QA) in Philippine Higher Education through an Outcomes Based and Typology-Based QA*. Vol. No.46 Series of 2012.  
<https://www.pacu.org.ph/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/CMO-No.46-s2012.pdf>.

solving skills; 3) the ability to think through the ethical and social implications of a given course of action; and 4) the competency to learn continuously throughout life – that will enable them to live meaningfully in a complex, rapidly changing and globalized world while engaging their community and the nation’s development issues and concerns.

- B) To produce graduates with high levels of academic thinking, behavioral, and technical skills/competencies that are aligned with national academic and industry standards and needs and international standards, when applicable;
- C) To provide focused support to the research required for technological innovation, economic growth and global competitiveness, on the one hand, and for crafting the country’s strategic directions and policies, on the other, and
- D) To help improve the quality of human life of Filipinos, respond effectively to changing societal needs and conditions; and provide solutions to problems at the local community, regional and national levels.<sup>11</sup>

Furthermore, Section 3 highlights the utmost and critical importance of the program to meet national and international standards for “disciplines/professions (e.g., engineering, information technology and computing; maritime education; accounting; nursing) with such widely accepted standard. Intuitively, these measures all contribute to the development of the country economically and socially. Providing the means through which the learner could contribute to the economy and secure career paths are, in fact, the role of the state. The ultimate rationale behind this advance could be found in the fourth section of the same document, it states:

“Section 4. The importance of quality and quality assurance is highlighted by the urgent need to move significant populations of Filipinos out of poverty and to address local, regional, and national development concerns by educating quality leaders, thinkers, planners, researchers, technological innovators, entrepreneurs, and the much-needed work force to launch the national economy”.<sup>12</sup>

As can be seen, though the initial direction of the document was to promote the humanity and intellect of the learner, i.e., to become critical and ethical thinkers, the ultimate driving force of the OBE was to respond to global demands. This could be further identified in the last section of the first article:

Section 5: The focus on quality and quality assurance is further underscored by the following:

- 1) research findings suggesting that the lack of a critical pool of graduates with the necessary thinking, technical and behavioral competencies are among the factors constraining **the re-launching of the Philippine manufacturing sector and the achievement of the full potentials of the service sector;**

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

2) the reality of an ASEAN community by 2015 which facilitate the free flow of qualified labor in the region and either open up for opportunities for graduates of Philippine HEIs or **threaten their employment even in their own country**;

3) **the commitment of the Philippine government to the evolving efforts to recognize and develop a system of comparable qualifications, degrees, and diplomas across the Asia-Pacific region under the auspices of the UNESCO and other multilateral bodies** (e.g., ASEAN, APEC); and the acceptance of internationally-agreed-upon frameworks and mechanisms for the global practice of professions.<sup>13</sup>  
[Emphasis Added]

As shown, it is clear that a huge aspect of the OBE and in fact, other sister provisions under the Commission of Higher Education and the Department of Education, i.e., the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, was to keep the educational system on a par with international standards and demands for quality human resources both foreign and domestic. Thus, the direction appears to be a stride towards economic development via global employability and competitiveness. Despite the nation-building thrust of this program, the OBE has been criticized for its limits and emphasis on achieving objectives and outcomes.

One of the salient criticisms against the OBE is held by Jim McKernan in his work published in 1993 entitled “Perspectives and Imperatives: Some Limitations of Outcomes-Based Education”.<sup>14</sup> He contends that OBE “reduces teaching and learning to human engineering” which could, in fact, be identified through the series of learning outcomes that the teacher should deliver through various pedagogical strategies and methodologies.<sup>15</sup> For McKernan, knowledge could not be broken down and categorized as it is an “open-ended” inquiry and not the mastery of facts.<sup>16</sup> In this manner, the only way through which learning could be measured would be through outcomes and products which misses completely the most important part of learning – the process of exploration and creativity. He contends further that through outcomes or objective-based evaluation, the “tests” becomes the measurement of what students knows and do not know. In fact, most often, tests and examinations evaluate the students for what they do not know. One could discern this phenomenon when students fail exams – an implication that students “fail” to grasp the contents of the subject. The critical point of McKernan’s position was the proposition of an alternative to the OBE which he calls “Procedural Inquiry Model” consisting of three main components, first, “the broad aim of advancing understanding of controversial issues,” second, “the principles of procedure (which) rests on the assertion that discussion is the best strategy for meeting this aim, and that the teacher should function as a facilitator who remains neutral on “values” issues.” The last component is concerned with the assessment of student performance which includes “indicators as how well students use concepts and knowledge to explore issues.”<sup>17</sup> In this manner, McKernan’s position shores up the idea that education should not be restricted to outcomes and objectives as the process through which content and “knowledge” is acquired also plays a critical role in holistic education.

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> McKernan, Jim., “Perspectives and Imperatives: Some Limitations of Outcome-Based Education.” *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision* 8:4 (Summer 1993): 343-353

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> McNeir, Gwennis. 1993. “Outcomes-Based Education: Tool for Restructuring.” ERIC. April 1, 1993. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED357457>.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

## Freire and Althusser's Critique of Education

Now, Paulo Freire's critique of the banking method of education is a clear concurrence to McKernan's exploratory education. In his *magnum opus* the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire problematizes the thrust of traditional pedagogical system which highlights the act of depositing information and content instead of training the learner to become critical thinkers. The banking method which is implied in the OBE is mechanism or strategy which inhibits and restricts the critical thinking and creativity of the learner. This is because the learner's knowledge is simply imposed, prescribed, and deposited.<sup>18</sup> In Freire's critical pedagogy, it is understood that the root cause of *mutism* in the context of schooling is the absence of dialogue in the learning process.<sup>19</sup> In fact, Freire characterizes the banking method of education as monological in nature.<sup>20</sup> This is because the learner simply becomes a passive recipient of knowledge which Freire claims to be "detached from reality, disconnected from the totality that engendered them and could give them significance."<sup>21</sup> Though the OBE envisions a humanistic curriculum, that is, a student-centered development, it nonetheless carries the tendencies of engineering human capacities and behavior best fitted to meet the standards of international human resources. For Freire, education should be seen as a practice of freedom where the teacher and student are mediated by the world in creating and recreating it. As an alternative to the banking method, Freire proposes an exploratory model of pedagogy akin to McKernan's position. Freire calls this the problem-posing method of education. In the problem-posing method students are not merely recipients of knowledge but contributors to its critique and transformation.<sup>22</sup> The educator and the contents prescribed by the curriculum is no longer the sole source of knowledge as the student, now, becomes a partner or a sojourner in the attempt to validate and transform knowledge. As Freire writes, "authentic education is not carried on by 'A' for 'B' or by 'A' about 'B,' rather 'A' with 'B,' mediated by the world – a world which impresses and challenges both parties, giving rise to views or opinions about it".<sup>23</sup>

Louis Althusser, a French Marxist philosopher, explains the justification behind this pedagogical practice. Identifying education as an apparatus of state control, Althusser contends that pedagogy is utilized by the bourgeois to normalize the conditions by which the mode of production is sustained. Through the lenses of Marxist political economy, capitalist social formation is perceived as an interplay of apparatuses that legitimizes the contradiction in the mode of production. Althusser posits that the superstructure is that which provides the ideological basis for the stability and reproduction of the material base or the infrastructure. The superstructure is divided into two aspects, the Repressive State Apparatus (RSA) and the Ideological State Apparatus (ISA). The RSA refers to institutional mechanisms that carries and imposes hardline measures – the government, the army, the police, the prisons and the like. These institutions utilize violence and coercion and its operability hinges on force and threats

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<sup>18</sup> Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of Freedom: Ethics, Democracy, and Civic Courage*. Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 36.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>20</sup> Freire, *Education as the Practice of Freedom, Ethics, Democracy, and Civic Courage*. Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 24. See also: Cortez, "The Prospect of Liberation Pedagogy in the Thoughts of Amable G. Tuibeo." *The Mabini Review. Polytechnic University of the Philippines*, Vol. 3, No. 1. (2014), 20.

<sup>21</sup> Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 57.

<sup>22</sup> Giroux, *On Critical Pedagogy*, New York, USA: The Continuum International Publishing Group, 2011, 12.

<sup>23</sup> Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 82. See also: Cortez, "The Prospect of Liberation Pedagogy," 20.

while ideological state apparatuses operate insidiously through the civic society. It is worth mentioning a few examples of the ideological state apparatuses, namely:

the religious ISA (the system of the different churches), the **educational** ISA (the system of the different public and private schools), the family ISA, the legal ISA, the political ISA (the political system, including the different parties), the trade-union ISA, the communications ISA (press radio and television, etc.), and the cultural ISA (literature, the arts, sports, etc.).<sup>24</sup>

For Althusser, the task of ideological state apparatuses is to reproduce the relations of production. Althusser puts into question which of these ideological state apparatuses is most pervasive and influential. Contextualized in modern bourgeois hegemony and democratic republics, he contends that the schooling system is the most dominant ideological state apparatus against the old ISA, that is, the church which in absolute monarchies is regarded as the educational ideological state apparatus.<sup>25</sup> This explains the disenchantment of society from religious ideological dictates of dogmatism. One could argue, however, that it is not the educational state apparatus that is the dominant ideological apparatus, but the political ideological state apparatus. This is because no matter what political system is dominant, the bourgeoisie seems to have interfered with traditional and revolutionary political system. Time and time again, it is the elite – the bourgeois that holds a seat in government. Yet, for Althusser, the educational ideological state apparatus remains to be the dominant ISA in capitalist social formations. For Althusser, the main reason why the educational ideological state apparatus is the dominant ideological apparatus is precisely because of the exposure of the children to ideology from their formative years towards their training to become a part of the labor market. Let me quote Althusser in extent:

It takes children from every class at infant-school age, and then for years, the years in which the child is most ‘vulnerable, squeezed between the Family State Apparatus and the Educational State Apparatus, it drums into them, whether it uses new or old methods, a certain amount of ‘know-how’ wrapped in the ruling ideology (French arithmetic, natural history, the sciences, literature) or simply the ruling ideology in its pure state (ethics, civic instruction, philosophy).<sup>26</sup>

Being subjected to this socio-cultural paradigm, the children are exposed at an early age to the normative order expressed in school subjects that they are expected to master and in fact, externalize, that is, to exercise and practice both in private and public existence. Thus, the consciousness of the individual has already been shaped in such a pattern that is favorable to the ruling social order. Furthermore, Althusser contends that while the aforementioned disciplines mentioned above delivers the technicalities of grammar, arithmetic, and science, the succeeding contents of instructions are more specialized (filling the demand in the division of labor). For Althusser, “another portion of scholastically adapted youth carries on: and, for better

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<sup>24</sup> Louis Althusser, *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus*, 15. Althusser provides a parallel analysis of political authority as in the case of absolute monarchy. Here, one asks the question of what the ideological state apparatuses is if there is a singularity of legitimate authority. Unlike republics and parliamentary democracy which held pluralistic repressive state apparatuses and ideological state apparatuses. In the case of absolute monarchies, Althusser opines that it is the religious ISA that stands as the main legitimating institution that justifies the “divine right of kings”. At the same time, taking on the task of educational ISA, the church ISA was also the academic and scientific authorities. One could, therefore, understand the role of the church in political affairs, for instance, during the Crusades of the Holy Land. However, in the capitalist era, the bourgeois hegemony shifted to the schooling system to ensure the stability of the social order.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 24.



or worse, it goes somewhat further, until it false by the wayside and fills the posts of small and middle technicians, white-collar workers, small and middle executives, petty bourgeois of all kinds.”<sup>27</sup> Althusser, moreover, enumerates a hierarchy of social positions that reached a degree of dominance in the social formation.

a last portion reaches the summit, either to fall into intellectual semi-employment, or to provide, as well as the ‘intellectuals of the collective laborer’, the agents of exploitation (capitalists, managers), the agents of repression (soldiers, policemen, politicians, administrators, etc.) and the professional ideologists (priests of all sorts, most of whom are convinced ‘laymen’).<sup>28</sup>

Intuitively, there is a corresponding ideology behind each role in society. For instance, the ideology behind a soldier or a policeman is the imposition of the notion that they could give orders without the need for negotiation or discourse or an agent of exploitation being able to give orders without using force, only utilizing soft-line measures in “human relations”.<sup>29</sup> These aptitudes are all taught in the educational sector which subjects the individual to become what the curriculum, that is, the criteria for standardization and competitiveness expects them to reach. Of course, other ideological state apparatuses like the church and family state apparatuses are also capable of inculcating such values of virtue, goodness, honest, nationalism, and godliness, but the extent of ideological imposition are exponential under the educational ideological state apparatus.<sup>30</sup> It follows, therefore, that the schooling system, though it appears neutral and apolitical, is the primary culprit of the reproduction of the relations in the material base. One could, then, infer that the agenda of the dominant class are translated to the content and performance standards of the schooling system.<sup>31</sup> As discussed earlier, an indisputable direction of the OBE is the production of learners that will be globally competitive and employable – best suited for the demands of the labor market.

The goal of this paper, however, is not to invalidate the development of the educational system through the direction of the OBE. Though the crux of this paper is obvious, that is, the OBE structures learners that could fulfill the demands of manpower in the labor market, one could not fully ignore and reject the pragmatic aspects of this direction. After all, it is through employment and economic development that the individual could fully realize his humanity. Thus, my appropriation of Louis Althusser’s critique of education as an ISA is not totalizing, I argue that the OBE as an ideological state apparatus carries the tendency to engineer learners to eventually become part of the labor force. Arguably, as the learner begins to internalize the objective-driven attitude of OBE which, again, for Althusser, renders education as a means towards an end. The problematic is that, in this paradigm, results or outcomes in the classroom could take centrality in the dynamics of the pedagogy at the expense of the exploratory process and the expansion of one’s critical consciousness. In turn, I argue that the obsession of the academia with ChatGPT is a symptom of the objective-drive educational system. In order to

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 26. Althusser contends further that the school appears to be neutral, that is, its only goal is humanization and development of the individual. The reality, however, is that it is an apparatus that ensures the continuity of the relations of production.

<sup>31</sup> Udas, Ken, and Adrian Stagg. 2019. “The University as Ideological State Apparatus: Educating to Defend the Corporate Status Quo?.” *The International Education Journal: Comparative Perspectives* 18, no. 1 (April): 66–79.

situate the OBE and ChatGPT in the same page, let me discuss key points on Chat-GPT and its impact in academia.

## ChatGPT in an OBE Culture

The potential application of generative AI in the academia is, without a doubt, revolutionary. Arguably, AI tools could speed up processes and data analysis which is, intuitively, advantageous for users given the hyper productive culture of academia in the recent years. On both ends, teachers could create assessments in a matter of minutes while students could summarize a lengthy reading assignment by asking a chatbot through a series of prompts. Arguably, this direction, for some scholars, is an avenue for students to learn better as it increases the comprehensibility of learning contents.<sup>32</sup> In this way, the popularization of the platform caused a “strong response” from the academe.<sup>33</sup> It is not a surprise that the research trend is fixated on how ChatGPT impacts the student’s key performance indicators or how universities should catch up by formulating a comprehensive ethical regulatory framework in order to adapt to the paradigm shift. For instance, a study conducted in 2023 shows that 89 percent of students use ChatGPT for their school homework which make it a challenge for educators to grade written tasks.<sup>34</sup> Given the comprehensive capacity of the chat interface, a wide range of topics could be answered and analyzed.

Being initially developed in 2018, ChatGPT was developed only to the extent of “understanding tasks, using books as training data” in predicting the next word a writer may be intending to say in a sentence. The second version in 2019 exhibited a significant shift as it could already generate coherent paragraphs. The third version being trained on 175 billion parameters<sup>35</sup> which enables it to create poetry, codes, answer questions and translate phrases and sentences to different languages. While the recent version which is being currently used by students and professionals (GPT – 4) has these improvements, for instance, “improved model alignment” which is able to follow the intention of the user, “lower likelihood of generating offensive or dangerous output, increased factual accuracy, better steerability (the ability to change behavior according to user requests), internet connectivity (the latest feature includes the ability to search the Internet in real-time).”<sup>36</sup> These features, intuitively, attracts students as it provides an instant and reliable response to questions. On an experimental study in 2023, ChatGPT is perceived to have the potential to “improve” the learning outcomes of students.<sup>37</sup> Given the comprehensive

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<sup>32</sup> Sain, Zohaib Hassan, and Victa Sari Dwi Kurniati. “Exploring the Impact of Chat GPT on Higher Education: Advantages, Hurdles, and Prospective Research Avenues”. *Tamansiswa International Journal in Education and Science (TIJES)* 5, no. 1 (December 1, 2023): 34–61. Accessed March 12, 2024. <https://jurnal.ustjogja.ac.id/index.php/TIJES/article/view/16274>.

<sup>33</sup> Wang, Shizhen. “CHAT GPT Explore the Relevance With Higher Education Classroom”. *Journal of Education and Educational Research* 5, no. 2 (September 20, 2023): 33–35. Accessed March 12, 2024. <https://drpress.org/ojs/index.php/jeer/article/view/12199>.

<sup>34</sup> Westfall, Chris. n.d. “Educators Battle Plagiarism as 89% of Students Admit to Using OpenAI’s ChatGPT for Homework.” *Forbes*. Accessed March 8, 2024. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/chriswestfall/2023/01/28/educators-battle-plagiarism-as-89-of-students-admit-to-using-open-ais-chatgpt-for-homework/?sh=667b533e750d>.

<sup>35</sup> Note: Parameters are “factors that determine an AI’s behavior” which controls the input of the chat interface.

<sup>36</sup> Marr, Bernard. n.d. “A Short History of ChatGPT: How We Got to Where We Are Today.” *Forbes*. Accessed March 8, 2024. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/bernardmarr/2023/05/19/a-short-history-of-chatgpt-how-we-got-to-where-we-are-today/?sh=59377e71674f>.

<sup>37</sup> Hakiki, Muhammad, Radinal Fadli, Agariadne Dwinggo Samala, Ade Fricticarani, Popi Dayurni, Kurniati Rahmadani, Ayu Dewi Astiti, and Arisman Sabir. 2023. “Exploring the Impact of Using Chat-GPT on Student

capacity of artificial intelligence, i.e., language translation and simplification of difficult theories, students tend to perform better in the classroom. In this manner, ChatGPT as a tool seems to emancipate the learner from the rigorous discipline of having to read and study long texts which allows them to participate more in class. Though class participation is a loose indicator of learning, arguably, ChatGPT proves to have a critical role in the learning process in recent studies.

Given the innovative contribution of ChatGPT, research concerning its potential implication in scientific researches and creative functions holds significance. In Makoto Kureha's article entitled "Implications of Automating Science: The Possibility of Artificial Creativity and the Future of Science", artificial intelligence is perceived as an instrument that could finally liberate scientists and scholars from the non-creative tasks required in academia and the scientific field.<sup>38</sup> This means that through generative artificial intelligence, humans could focus more on creative and scientific explorations. Though this might be a categorical advance for the scientific community, the educational sector holds a modest reservation given its implication in the cognitive development of the learner. This is precisely the concern of Christopher Ryan Maboloc, a Filipino educator, concerning ChatGPT. For him,

Knowledge is not just the transfer of information from the teacher to the learner. The critical function of pedagogy is rooted in the ability to challenge existing social and cultural norms that undermine human well-being.<sup>39</sup>

In this light, ChatGPT given its capacity to absorb data from the internet might "ruin the critical aspect of the learning process".<sup>40</sup> Thus, the fundamental reservation in the academia is not only the possibility of ChatGPT to be used unethically, but the dependence of the learners on generative artificial intelligence which may, in fact, set the value of the learning process to plummet. Interestingly, this form of suspicion is not original to the emergence of ChatGPT. In fact, the concern that the learner's cognitive development shrinks as a result of technology could be traced to an underrated analysis of Nicholas Carr, a Harvard journalist, about the internet. In his work entitled *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains* published in 2010 (prior to the debut of generative adversarial networks in 2014) he claimed:

We don't constrain our mental powers when we store new long-term memories. We strengthen them. With each expansion of our memory comes an enlargement of our intelligence. The Web provides a convenient and compelling supplement to personal memory - but when we start using the Web as a substitute for personal memory, by bypassing the **inner processes of consolidation**, we risk emptying our minds of their riches.<sup>41</sup>

It is critical to note that Carr was not referring to generative AI yet, but merely the World Wide Web in general. This means that the mere function of the internet and its conveniences affects the way in which the individual's mind operates. Intuitively, the neurological changes are discernibly greater with ChatGPT as it offers prompt synopsis of ideas and concepts which,

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Learning Outcomes in Technology Learning: The Comprehensive Experiment." *Advances in Mobile Learning Educational Research* 3, no. 2 (October): 859–72. <https://doi.org/10.25082/AMLER.2023.02.013>.

<sup>38</sup> Makoto Kureha, "Implications of Automating Science: The Possibility of Artificial Creativity and the Future of Science," *Journal of Philosophy of Life* Vol. 13, No.1 (January 2023): 44-63.

<sup>39</sup> Christopher Ryan Maboloc. 2023. "ChatGPT: The Need for an Ethical Framework to Regulate Its Use in Education." *Journal of Public Health*, July. <https://doi.org/10.1093/pubmed/fdad125>.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Carr, Nicholas. 2010. *The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains*. S.L.: W.W. Norton.

otherwise, could only be understood through rigid immersion and engagement of the text. Carr points out exactly this process.

The bond between book reader and book writer has always been a tightly symbiotic one, a means of intellectual and artistic cross-fertilization. The words of the writer act as a catalyst in the mind of the reader, inspiring new insights, associations, and perceptions, sometimes even epiphanies. And the very existence of the attentive, critical reader provides the spur for the writer's work. It gives the author confidence to explore new forms of expression, to blaze difficult and demanding paths of thought, to venture into uncharted and sometimes hazardous territory. "All great men have written proudly, nor cared to explain," said Emerson. "They knew that the intelligent reader would come at last, and would thank them."<sup>42</sup>

It appears, however, that this symbiosis between the reader and the author in the age of the prominence of generative AI becomes nonexistent. The reader no longer reflects or fuses his horizon with another and "understanding" concepts becomes a mechanistic process of prompts and bullet-pointed response. The *telos* of learning, therefore, is no longer an explorative and continuous journey of *becoming*, but a fixed point of objectives and outcomes. Learners, in turn, are reduced to objects and stripped off of the potential to develop her cognitive and critical thinking skills. As discussed earlier, Freire fathoms this phenomenon when the educational system failed to resist the alienating function of the banking model of pedagogy. For him, again, the banking model treats the students as objects or as vessels that are made to be passive recipients of knowledge.<sup>43</sup> While this phenomenon in the pedagogical process may not need to cut across political ideations, Freire contends that it is inherently political given its indisputable manifestation in society and in turn, the prospects of a holistic social transformation. Althusser, on the other end, renders education as an ideological apparatus that molds the learner to eventually become replacements of the current labor force. In both lenses, the individual appears to have been transmuted from a human person who has an ontological freedom to automatons of the capital.

For the most part, ChatGPT and its promise of convenience could be perceived simply as a symptom of a colossal predicament which may, in fact, be impossible to expunge. Given the mystifying functions of artificial intelligence, in particular, generative models like ChatGPT, the inconspicuous atmosphere of the social and political could be easily overlooked. Arguably, technology could be perceived as a neutral tool with hyper productive functionalities. Yet, its ramifications are multifaceted. Emerging discourses concerning ChatGPT should transcend policy-making or the crafting of ethical frameworks as the root source of its conception lies in the ubiquitous influence of capitalism and the underlying norms in its system – hyper productivity and the reproduction of capitalist ideology. Though productivity and convenience are highly valued commodities in the contemporary society, the critical aspect of learning as a process of cognitive development and exploration of concrete reality should not be abandoned. Yet, the question of regulation and prohibition persists, that is, in what way could ChatGPT be used ethically in such a way that cognitive development and critical thinking is not relegated to the margins? As scholars round the world prophetically announce that generative AI is here to stay, the open-ended question is that will AI be in or out?

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 64.

## Conclusion

In this work, I have investigated the Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) thrust of the Philippine Educational system and situated it as a response to the global trend of standardized educational system and the call for student's competitiveness in the labor market. In the paper, I have argued that the OBE is a manifestation of Althusser's *Ideological State Apparatus* and Freire's banking model of pedagogy which reduces the learner to pedagogically engineered laborers for the capital. In this way, though the OBE envisions a generation of students with critical thinking, its ultimate direction is to make the students globally competitive in the labor market. This direction of education, I qualified, is practical given the necessity to advance the economic interest of the country, yet the indispensable aspect of learning, that is, the cognitive development and critical thinking skills should not be sacrificed in the pursuit of outcomes and objectives. The work speculated further into the role of ChatGPT in the academia and the learning process. I argued that though ChatGPT and other generative AIs are helpful in meeting the demands of hyper productive contemporary society, it bears the tendency to damage the organic process of knowledge generation. Learning from Nicholas Carr's analysis of internet learning, the reader bypasses the "inner processes of consolidation" which puts a risk the potential mental connections that could be made and fortified by rigorous reading of texts. As can be seen, this work suggests that ChatGPT may, in fact, be a symptom of ideology, that is, a result of objective and achievement-based pedagogical system which is problematic in itself as it shows the one-dimensionality of education in the modern society. Yet, this symptom also reflects an existential threat – the decline of human intelligence.

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