Participative Management, Organizational Procedures and Organizational Commitment in Higher Education Institutions

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Abstract

Current trends in managing educational institutions are adversely affected by many facets brought by globalization. Thus, this study sees the need to review quality management in tertiary education by employing empowerment and fairness in all institutional systems. The mean Cronbach Alpha of .94 for reliability coefficients of the three scales: Participative Management (PM), Organizational Procedures (OP) and Organizational Commitment (OC) were triangulated by employing a thematic analysis of the randomly focus-grouped data from the employees of the tertiary institutions. A multivariate analysis showed no significant difference when the three variables (PM, OP and OC) were analyzed by age, sex, type of work and years of service. However, data showed a significant difference in the level of participative management when participants are analyzed by sex. Likewise, there was a significant difference in the level of participative management and organizational commitment when participants are analyzed by type of work. Their high level of commitment and the institutions' high practice of participative management and fairness in dealings with the employees further revealed a significant report of higher organizational commitment and work performance for employees in the tertiary level. Implications of the findings are further discussed in this study.

Introduction

The success of an educational institution depends to a great extent on the quality, commitment and performance of people who work within. Human resources of the organization spell out the secret of organizational performance. One of the tasks of management is to harness the capability of human resources towards achieving quality output, thereby attain organizational goals. Among competing organizations, one who has the better human resource is likely to succeed. However, globally competitive organizational climate requires employees to be more flexible and to learn to cope with rapid change. Organizations, therefore, need to maximize their workers' potential if they want to successfully compete in the global economy through quality management (Kinicki & Kreitner, 2006). Quality management that motivates, challenges, and inspires people will result to an increased organizational performance that will redound to the satisfaction of customers, stakeholders, and employees themselves.

Quality management further argues that the quality of supervisor-subordinate exchange relationship is fundamental in boosting up employee's attitudes and behavior (Porter, 1990). By involving workers in the decisions that affect them and by increasing their autonomy and control over their work lives, employees will become more motivated, more committed to the organization, more productive, and more satisfied with their jobs (Robbins, 2005).

While there are prevalent need for autonomy, employee's involvement in decision making, fairness of organizational procedures, and good management styles among organizations (Trusty & Sergiovanni, 1966; Andres, 1989; Kinicki & Krietner, 2006), few efforts, however, have been made on assessing how employees perceive the characteristics of their organizations in terms of organizational procedures and participatory involvement in the academic sector (Das, Handfield, Calantone, & Gosh, 2000).

In the Philippines like any other country in the world, competitive pressure becomes the catalyst of embracing modern approaches of management because the workforce is becoming outspoken, articulate and less willing to be dictated to and driven without their involvement and control (Martires & Fule, 1993). More so, there is a perception that educational institutions have failed to institute staff empowerment through collegiality among its employees (Mukhopadhyay, 2005). Likewise, the educational system is seen to have rarely or inconsistently implemented fairness of organizational procedures which has impact on employees' productivity level (Greenberg & Baron, 2008). The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) under its Medium-Term Development Plan for Higher Education of 2005-2010 (MTDPHE, 2005-2010) is requiring colleges and universities to be more relevant and responsive to the needs of preparing globally competitive professionals, wherein school managers shall, among others, be accountable for the efficient and effective administration and management of the school. In Region XI alone, administrators in tertiary schools are urged to motivate their employees and stakeholders to work as teams to effectively operate cross-functionally in achieving the highest standard of school effectiveness (Dumaguing, 2006). In order for the school system to be effective and efficient, employees' participation has to be an integral part of development (Oreta, 2000).

The less committed employees may create difficulties and cause deviations with respect to the educational aims of the school (Tabuso, 2008). Thus, school administrators are challenged to revitalize their workforce by re-evaluating the present need of the work environment in view of devising relevant and fair policies that will improve employees' commitment, performance and satisfaction (Luy, 2006). As Deming (1988) advocates, "it is the management's job to do their best by constantly improving the system in which they work."

In the advent of competition in pursuing educational excellence, the need to institute programs that facilitate fair and efficient management scheme, in all aspects of the human resources is imperative. Knowledge on the level of participative management of the institution can provide baseline information in the development of faculty development plan that would improve interpersonal relationships, increase collaboration and quality work output. On one hand, ensuring organizational fairness in implementing school policies and allocation of institutional goods and resources lead to employees' increased positive attitudinal and behavioral outcomes thereby result to employees' strong support to organizational and human resource management's strategies and goals. Having in mind that these two aspects are essential to the institution, proper implementation and practice will further redound to better performance evaluation and improvement of employees' commitment to the organization at large.

Theoretical Framework

McGregor's theory of participative management suits the educational setting, where collegial practice is presumably common. It is on this ground that this study anchors on McGregor's theoretical assertions which are relevant in explaining equity and commitment theories.

Douglas McGregor, who presented a convincing argument in 1960, unknowingly becomes the most influential pioneer of participative management today. According to McGregor's (1960) propositions, Theory X spells out some negative assumptions viewed by managers to their subordinates. On contrary, Theory Y expresses positive viewpoint: effort in work is as natural as work and play wherein people will apply self-control and self-direction in the pursuit of organizational objectives, without external control or threat of punishment. He further added that under proper conditions, people accept and seek responsibility. A person who is committed to the objectives will exercise self-direction and self-control. Therefore, McGregor proposed, participation in decision-making, challenging jobs, and maintenance of good group relations as approaches that would maximize job motivation and stability among personnel and the organization.

This study is also premised on Stacy Adams' (1965) equity theory that has widespread use in managing many organizations today. Equity theory explains that when employees feel fairly treated, they are more likely to be motivated; when they feel unfairly treated they are highly prone to feelings of disaffection and demotivation. Adams further emphasized that continuous balance on employees' inputs such as effort, loyalty, hardwork, commitment and the like through giving outputs in the form of financial and intangible rewards (salary, perks benefits, recognition, sense of advancement, job security and the like) help ensure a strong and productive relationship inside the organization.

Furthermore, this study uses the views of Meyer and Allen (1991) on the three-component model of commitment. The two theorists expound the following employee's 'mind-sets' which can characterize one's commitment to the organization: (1) Affective Commitment - an employee who is affectively committed strongly identifies with the goals of the organization and desires to remain a part of the organization; (2) Continuance Commitment - an employee who commits to the organization because he/she perceives high costs of losing organizational membership; (3) and Normative Commitment - an individual who commits to and remains with an organization because of feelings of obligation derive from the organization.

Statement of the Problem

The main thrust of this study was to assess the institutions' extent of practice of participative management, the institutions' extent of implementation of organizational procedures and the level of organizational commitment of the employees of the three Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Digos City.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the extent of practice of participative management in the three higher education institutions in terms of the following dimensions:
    a. information sharing;
    b. knowledge and development;
    c. rewards and recognition systems; and
    d. empowerment?

2. What is the extent of implementation of organizational procedures of the three higher education institutions in terms of the following categories:
    a. distributive justice;
    b. clarity of policies;
    c. consistency of implementation of policies; and
    d. transparency of policies?

3. What is the level of organizational commitment of employees among the three higher education institutions?

4. Is there a significant difference in the extent of practice of participative management among the three higher education institutions?

5. Is there a significant difference in the institutions' extent of implementation of organizational procedures among the three higher education institutions?

6. Is there a significant difference in the level of organizational commitment of employees among the three higher education institutions in terms of the following areas:
    a. affective;
    b. continuance; and
    c. normative?

7. Is there a significant relationship between the institution's participative management and the employees' level of organizational commitment in the three higher education institutions?

8. Is there a significant relationship between the institutions' organizational procedures and the employees' level of organizational commitment in the three higher education institutions?

9. Is there a significant difference in the performance of the three higher education institutions when participants are grouped by:
    a. age;

b. sex;
c. type of work; and
d. years of service?

Method

The descriptive-correlational method was employed to describe what actually exist such as current conditions, practices and situations of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Digos City in their practice of participative management and extent of implementation of organizational procedures. A correlation between participative management and organizational commitment was designed; likewise, a correlation between organizational procedures and organizational commitment was explored. To verify survey results, data were also collected through the Focus Group Discussion conducted in the three identified institutions.

Quantitative and qualitative data were gathered to describe the situation of the three higher educational institutions in the areas of participative management, organizational procedures and employees' organizational commitment.

Setting

The study was conducted in the three higher education institutions in Digos City, Province of Davao del Sur. Before its conversion into a city in 2000, Digos was regarded as the capital town of the Province of Davao del Sur, long before it gained the status of a First Class Municipality in 1993, being the center for trade, commerce and education, accruing to its strategic location at the cross point of two principal thoroughfares in the south (National Statistical Coordination Board). It is approximately 56 kilometers from Davao City, 112 kilometers from General Santos City and 120 kilometers from Cotabato City. As part of the Metropolitan Davao, Digos City has approximately 145,514 population in 26,306 households with a land area of 287.1 km². Having the four big tertiary institutions in the city, it has approximately 7,464 college students for the school year 2009-2010.

Participants

Participants of the study were: the administrative personnel, non-teaching staff and faculty of the three (3) Higher Education Institutions in Digos City. They were chosen using convenient sampling. The study involved 19 administrative personnel (8 from HEI A; 7 from HEI B; and 4 from HEI C), 29 non-teaching staff (8 from HEI A; 10 from HEI B, and 11 from HEI C), and 72 faculty members (29 from HEI A; 26 from HEI B; and 17 from HEI C). The participants of the study is 127, seven (7) were the non-categorized personnel of the study.

Measures

Three sets of survey questionnaires were designed by the researcher for individual data collection among the participants. The survey questionnaire obtained quantitative data regarding participants' views and perceptions on their commitment, and their rating of organizational procedures and participative management in their own institution. Qualitative data were collected through Focus Group Discussion participated in by randomly selected employees of each school.

The questionnaires prepared by the researcher were refined by the thesis panel during the proposal defense, after which, an in-depth refinement of the three instruments were made by the 13 expert validators composed of 4 Human Resource Heads, 2 Research Specialists, 2 School Heads and 5 Faculty members. The expert validators ensured the content validity of the items under the following criteria: clarity, logically, adequacy, suitability and objectivity. Revisions of the items and formatting of the survey based on experts' recommendations were also undertaken. After ensuring the construct and face validity of the survey questionnaire, the researcher also assured the reliability of the instrument through the conduct of a pilot test at UM Bansalan College. Then, the collected data from the pilot-tested institution were carefully analyzed by an expert using Cronbach Alpha.

The final survey instruments administered to the participants are as follows:

1. The Participative Management Scale (PMS) is an instrument that measured the extent of practice of participative management of the three institutions. PMS is the researcher's self-constructed questionnaire categorized into the following dimensions: information sharing, knowledge and development, rewards and recognition systems, and empowerment.

2. The Organizational Procedures Scale (OPS) is also a researcher-made questionnaire that measured the extent of the institutions' organizational procedures using four indicators: distributive justice, clarity of policies, consistency of implementation of policies, and transparency of policies.

3. The Organizational Commitment Scale (OCS) is the instrument sought to determine the level of organizational commitment using three indicators –affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. The researcher used the instrument developed by Meyer and Allen (1997). However, most of items included in the OCS survey questions were modified by the researcher so as to fit with the respondents of this study. The total number of items of the instrument is 55. Having 5 questions per indicator, the questionnaire for PMS has 20 items, 20 items for OPS, and 15 items for OCS.

Data Analysis

The following statistical tools were used to analyze quantitative data of the study to find the answers of the research problems:

1. The weighted mean was used to determine the extent of practice of participative management, the extent of implementation of organizational procedures and the level of organizational commitment to answer subproblems 1, 2 and 3 respectively.

2. The Analysis Of Variance (ANOVA) was used to measure the significant differences in the extent of practice of participative management, extent of implementation of organizational procedures and employees' organizational commitment of the three higher education institutions in answer to subproblems 4, 5, 6 and 9.

3. The Pearson r was used to measure the correlation between the extent of practice of participative management and employees' level of organizational commitment in answer to subproblem 7. This measure was also applied to determine the significant relationship between extent of implementation of organizational procedures and the level of organizational commitment in answer to subproblem 8.

Summary

The main purpose of the study was to determine whether the extent of practice of participative management, extent of implementation of organizational procedures, and employee's commitment level to the organization are related. This study accepted the following hypotheses: First, there is a significant difference in the performance of employees of the three higher educational institutions in terms of the level of participative management, organizational procedures and organizational commitment. Second, there is a significant relationship between the school's participative management and employees' organizational commitment among the three higher educational institutions. Third, there is a significant relationship between the implementation of organizational procedures and employees' organizational commitment among the three institutions. This study used the descriptive - correlational method in order to describe and interpret the conditions of relationship that exist among the studied variables. The study used convenient sampling among administrators, faculty and non-teaching staff. Data were gathered using a survey tool which underwent validation and reliability testing. The gathered data were subjected to several test measures such as Average Weighted Mean, Analysis Of Variance and Pearson r to determine the extent of implementation, the level and significant relationship among the studied variables. To further validate the survey results, the researcher conducted Focus Group Discussion (FGD) in every institution involved in the study.

Findings of the Study

The findings of the study were as follows:

1. With the overall mean rating of 2.84 or .51 standard deviation, data indicated high extent of practice of participative management among the involved institutions, while the extent of implementation of organizational procedures was also high with an overall mean rating of 2.96. Also, the 2.94 overall mean achieved in the level of organizational commitment variable is high.

2. The overall *p*-value of .000 for both the participative management and organizational procedures is less than the .05 level of significance; thereby the hypothesis that there is a significant difference among the three higher educational institutions in terms of the level of participative management and implementation of organizational procedures was accepted. Similarly, there is a significant difference in the level of employees' organizational commitment among the three institutions. There is a significant difference in the score of the three schools in organizational commitment which have varied *p*-values: affective commitment (.012), continuance commitment (.001), and normative commitment (.048).

3. The overall p-value of .73* on the degree of relationship between school's participative management and organizational commitment denotes high correlation. This means that there is a marked relationship between the compared variables, thereby accepting the hypothesis that a significant relationship exists between school's participative management score and the level of organizational commitment of employees of the three higher educational institutions.

4. The overall p-value of .73* on the degree of relationship between school's implementation of organizational procedures and employees' organizational commitment denotes high correlation. It means that there is a marked relationship between the compared variables, thereby accepting the hypothesis that a significant relationship exists between school's implementation of organizational procedures score and the level of organizational commitment of employees of the three higher educational institutions.

5. The significant difference in the performance of the three Higher Education Institutions when participants are grouped by age, sex, type of work and years of service showed no significant difference. However, there was a significant difference in the level of participative management when analyzed by participant's sex. Likewise, it was found out that organizational procedures have significant difference when analyzed by participant's type of work.

Conclusion

In the light of the findings of the study, it is concluded that Higher Education Institutions in Digos City practice participative management as key element to implement programs and activities of the college. Participative management as a tool to enhance leadership and management skills of employees, to improve decision making quality, and to increase sociability of its employees since this type of management requires collaborative effort and teamwork. In terms of organizational procedures, it is also concluded that employees of tertiary schools in Digos City perceived clarity, consistency of implementation of policies, transparency of policies, and distributive justice as important factors that sustain and build stable human resource (workforce). Furthermore, the level of organizational commitment among the three Higher Educations in Digos City is high, thus it suggests that employees are committed to the organization where they are working with.

The significant difference in the mean scores among the three institutions in terms of practice of participative management, implementation of organizational procedures and employees' organizational commitment showed that there are several factors that might contribute to the variation of the mean scores. Based on FGD results, it was revealed that the reason could be attributed to the type of school, culture or practices and the kind of leadership or management styles of the organization.

Analysis on the significant differences of the variables of the study when analyzed by participant's age, sex type of work and years of service showed no significant difference except in the following: (1) there is a significant difference in the extent of practice of participative management when analyzed by participant's sex which means that employees' sex influence participative management; (2) there is a significant difference in the extent of implementation of organizational procedures when analyzed by type of work which means that employees' type of work influence the level of organizational procedures.

Lastly, there is marked relationship between participative management and organizational commitment, while at the same time there is also a marked relationship between organizational procedures and organizational commitment among the three higher education institutions in Digos City.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were suggested:

1. The higher institution having low mean scores which was also verified by the FGD analysis in the practice of participative management is encouraged to further enhance involvement and collaboration among its employees through incorporating this management approach as part of the faculty development plan, thereby enhancing good interpersonal relationships, increase sociability and maintain collaborative effort among its members in order to achieve more success and quality work output.

2. The substantial relationship exists between organizational procedures and organizational commitment as also verified by FGD analysis would mean that employees' good perception on fairness, consistency and transparency in implementing school policies can improve work performance and employees' commitment. Therefore, ensuring organizational fairness, consistency and transparency in implementing school policies should be continually done so that employees lessen their negative feedbacks towards the organization.

3. The substantial relationship exists between participative management and organizational commitment as also verified by FGD analysis would mean that employees' good perceptions in the institutions' practice of participative management can influence their sense of belongingness and loyalty to the organization. Therefore, activities that encourage involvement and collaboration should be maintained and enhanced in the organization since it will help in fostering higher commitment and productivity among the employees.

4. The organization should continue to improve employee empowerment by creating more opportunities for self-managing work teams and quality circles to further enhance employees' participation in decision making as means in developing leadership potentials.

5. Involving similar type of participants, further investigation is suggested to measure the linear relationship between participative management and organizational commitment. On the same vein, another study should be done so as to determine the relationship of organizational procedures and organizational commitment. Other factors that may have relative impact to the level of commitment of the employees should also be considered in the study.

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